

# ISIS

## History, Evolution & Contemporary Challenges

### FIVE-YEAR PLANS

A map purportedly showing the areas ISIS plans to have under its control within five years has been widely shared online. Apart from large areas of Asia and North Africa, it also reveals the ISIS' ambition to extend into Europe.



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# **ISIS**

**History, Evolution & Contemporary Challenges**



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## Preface

There is no doubt that we are passing through a critical phase in human civilization. Our material gains, quantum of knowledge and new technology have taken us to a new zenith. However, at the same time, we are also witnessing a resurrection of medieval religious consciousness leading us to even existential danger. This contradiction is rooted in the history of the politics and exclusivity of religion and its dogmas. Religious wars in the past often lasted for decades and sometimes centuries, forcing the Western mind to innovate secularism as a means to bring about harmony among philosophies and modes of worship opposed to each other. Why did violent conflicts afflict religions and their sects? The answer lies in the tendency of fundamentals of religion assuming unchangeable contours, shutting out critical assessment and thereby blocking any possibilities of a new philosophy or religious worldview germinating and expanding. It is then that religion becomes a mere tool of reaction. The possibilities of reaction then become more viable than progressive thoughts.

However, the aforesaid traits or dogmatic religions are by no means universal. There is indeed an alternative worldview that emerged out of Hindu philosophy. The Hindu approach to religion permits and respects unfettered freedom to the human to define his relation with the universe and embark on the quest for the ultimate Truth. In the worldly journey, this quest assumes the form of sects, philosophies and modes of worship. Thus, the diversity of approaches and perspectives form the core of spiritual discourse. Nothing is final, and nothing is beyond critical appraisal. Spiritual consciousness, modes of worship and philosophy, and the spiritual or religious heroes of a particular age do not make the future their prisoners. The possibilities of new spiritual discourse and new philosophy - even though they may negate the past - are protected by the collective consciousness of people who consider their consciousness the mother of spiritualism, rather than vice versa. This merit lends human consciousness the highest position and is known as Dharma.

Religion and Dharma thus, are not synonymous. The imperialism of religions did not allow the discourse of Dharma to prevail; rather, powerful politico-religious forces imposed their definition of religion on us. Here, we realize the need to accelerate discourse on Dharma and religion. Without such initiative, it will be difficult to understand the philosophical differences and distinct features of Dharma and religion.

The Western idea and dogma of secularism presupposes religion that must be divorced of the affairs of the state. Secularism in India has somehow been interpreted that all religions are equal. But *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* has only degenerated into a political slogan and obstructs the critical and comparative study of religions. The actual Indian worldview of *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* means all philosophies and sects, modes of worship and those believing in critical rationality more than emotionalism have an equal status. But those who deny space to critical rationality to evaluate philosophies, religions, modes of worship cannot really support multiculturalism, despite their lofty rhetoric. They breed fundamentalism and contempt for 'others'. It is their discourse that has given birth to the process of 'Othering'.

The process of othering only strengthens the notions of purity, fundamentals and dogmas, and makes followers of various religions mere agents of their respective prophets and gods. It accelerates the tendency towards religious imperialism, which is the root of the birth of movement like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The names of such movements keep changing, but the trait remains fundamentally the same throughout various ages. The ISIS may well be fought and vanquished by weapons, but unless we identify the traits and reasons that give birth to such anti-human forces we cannot retain stability and harmony in life.

This intervention paper examines the origin, evolution and contemporary challenges emanating from the emergence of the ISIS. It is of course, understandable that there can be differences of opinion regarding the content and arguments of the paper. It is indeed, healthy disagreements that help to lead creative debate for a better philosophical understanding which is a critical factor in the quest for a more harmonious and humane world.

– **Prof. Rakesh Sinha**  
Hony. Director,  
India Policy Foundation

March 8, 2015



## **Caliphate Movement in India (1919-1924)**

As the world faces the existential threat posed by the ISIS- committed to set up the Khilafat or Caliphate, many questions, both new and old have cropped up. This war, being waged to restore the Islamic Khilafat, and its ramifications over the civilized world, has for obvious reasons created both fear and revulsion. In real terms, Khilafat means, a rule of Sharia which translates into conversion of the 'Unbelievers'-polytheists and infidels alike, and when not so, their brutal elimination. Right now, we are seeing before our very eyes what a terrible fate has befallen the Yezidis, Shias, Christians in Syria and Iraq while anticipating similar disaster for the rest of the 'Unbelievers' elsewhere.

The *Economist* gives this definition of the phenomenon: "Indeed, Syria and Iraq can nowadays barely be called countries at all. This week a brutal band of jihadists declared their boundaries void, heralding instead a new Islamic caliphate to embrace Iraq and Greater Syria(including Israel- Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and bits of Turkey) and-in due course -the whole world. Its leaders seek to kill non- Muslims not just in the Middle East but also in the streets of New York, London and Paris".<sup>1</sup> The only lacunae in this definition is that it has left out India, which as we all know has been one of the oldest victims of this scourge for centuries.

According to the latest reports emanating from the USA, its government feels that it might take three years to destroy the ISIS. The basis for this certitude remains unknown. Whether such statements would provide further encouragement to the Pan Islamic forces committed to world domination and destruction of the 'other', or provide much needed confidence to the victims is not very clear at this stage. Certainly, such developments have triggered serious apprehensions. President Barrack Hussain Obama's statement that the US would "degrade and destroy" them, appears to be of an uncertain value in light of USA's overall policy

regarding the Islamic terror ideology and its machine.<sup>2</sup> Irrespective of the dismissal of Chuck Hagel as the US Secretary of Defence, one of its alleged reasons being his failure to prevent the rise of the ISIS, the world remains skeptical of the US attitude towards it. The days of visionaries and idealists in the domain of world affairs are unfortunately over!

We shall now have a look at this British media observation on the previous Khilafat movement and what the Whitehall had thought about it. In one of the recent issues of *The New Statesman* (London), a few months back while reminding about the "end of the Sykes-Picot"(1916) agreement, and the renewed attempt at re-establishing the Caliphate, which was abandoned by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) after the formal collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1924", it went on to point out, "even before the outbreak of the (1st world war) war, in which the Ottoman empire sided with Germany, a growing number of British Foreign Office officials (particularly the Arabists in the Cairo bureau) were flirting with the notion of establishing a non-Ottoman, Arab-led Caliphate, based in Mecca. By being the sponsor of such a scheme Britain would be able to secure its own interests in the region, which centred around unfettered passage through the Suez Canal and access to emerging oil markets".<sup>3</sup>

Parallel to this ran another line of thinking. Looking back at that time (1920s), we find that London's *Daily Mail*, in a leading article had stressed the need to placate the Muslims of India who were restive at British policy towards Turkey and Greece. "It is impossible to discern any good reason why we should thus alienate our Muslim fellow citizens in the East...". We may tend to think that perhaps the British were not instinctively hostile to the Caliphate as Mustafa Kamal was.<sup>4</sup> The Daily Mail again emphasized the need for putting an end to the policy of drift, and ensure maintenance of British interest in the Middle East with "a firm hand". Hence, it called for the settlement of the Caliphate problem to "disarm Muslim hostility in India".<sup>5</sup>

While many things have changed in the world, yet certain factors, like commitment to Pan- Islamic goals, shows sign of a phenomenal growth while geo-strategic interests of nations remain vital. Only time would tell if any effective plan is being worked out currently in the Foreign Offices of various countries to put an end to this dangerous phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> It is a fact of contemporary times that besides some rogue nations, some established democracies of the world have been encouraging and abetting this hydra-headed monster of Islamic imperialism operating through terrorism, for serving their long-term objectives. And if India suffers in the process, it is

not their concern. At the same time, there are large sections within India too who are claiming to be 'secularists' and 'progressives' of all varieties, who ignore the most obvious acts of Islamic terror and are thus rationalizing and abetting this scourge of the centuries. This is one of the major problems that India has unlike most of the countries of the world.

### **Historical Background: The Indian Scenario**

The focus of this essay, however, is the Indian experience with the earlier Khilafat movement (1919-1924), so as to understand those religio-political impulses which draw people to it, to examine its various dimensions, including the stance taken by India's political leaders/thinkers, and to discuss its significance in light of the ongoing challenge being put up by the ISIS and its various sympathizers who operate with different names, so that the world is better prepared to understand the entire gamut of the problem, and possibly work out an appropriate strategy to deal with this. It is often said that those who refuse to learn from history have a pay to price.

We would do well to remember that most, if not all the mega religio-political developments taking place in the Islamic world or countries with significant Muslim population are usually replicated in India. This calls for a sociological and political explanation.

As Nirad C. Chaudhuri had suggested, "There are historians who regard the Islamic period of Indian history as if it were an independent entity and Indian in essence, with only an Islamic veneer. This view is certainly wrong. Throughout the period of their domination the Muslims of India regarded themselves as part and parcel of the Islamic world and always took particular care to maintain their affiliation with the parent society."<sup>7</sup>

Chaudhury further offers an explanation, "The close integration of Muslims of India to the bigger Islamic world is to be expected from the very nature of the Islamic conquest of India.... In other words, India was a colonial empire of Islam"<sup>8</sup>. In some of the major writings of Naipaul we find many examples from the Islamic world about this sort of mindset and behavior pattern.<sup>9</sup>

As India has been a victim of Islamic aggression over the centuries, ruled and devastated by Muslim rulers, and then divided on the basis of religion in 1947, and subsequently saddled with a polity based on a communal vote-bank, and then subjected to an unending acts of Islamic terrorism-both

internal and external, no one should better know than us what the Khilafat related concepts hold in store for all. After all, in the heydays of the nationalist movement with Gandhi's 'secular' credentials in place, we had experienced a Khilafat movement on our own soil with all its dangerous consequences.

### **Ideological Lineages - Pan Islamic Heritage**

To understand the significance of the current turmoil in Iraq, Syria and other places in the Islamic world, like the *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, and create an awareness about their sinister designs inherent in the revival of such ideas, one may go back to the origins and nature of the *Khilafat* movement in the early twentieth century, to see how it was triggered by the movement for the restoration of *Khilafat* in the Ottoman Empire. But to do that one must take into account the advent and influence of Pan Islamic ideas on the Indian soil. As there is no need to elaborate the well known ideas of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and Al Afghani's visit to India and its impact, we may well begin with Bipin Chandra Pal (1852-1932), one of the Indian visionaries who had alerted his countrymen in 1913 about the danger posed by it.

Cautioning his fellow countrymen, Pal stated,

"It can no longer be denied that Pan Islamism is gradually coming to be a very important factor in the social and political evolution, in any case of modern India, if not indeed, of the modern world. Any outburst of Moslem fanaticism, such as this may very easily be fanned into flame by the Pan-Islamic propaganda, will only help to break up the strength of Islam instead of consolidating it. This is how the ordinary European publicists and politicians feel. This is how even many of my own educated Hindu brethren feel about Pan-Islamism. But the estimate seems to my mind to be entirely erroneous".

Pal had further warned,

"If Pan-Islamism cherishes the wild dream of once more acting, in the coming centuries, the part that Islam played in the past in shaping the course of historic evolution in the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, it is foredoomed no doubt to absolute and ignominious disappointment. History has never been known to repeat itself in this fashion. Islam as an invincible military force has not the ghost of a chance in the modern world."<sup>10</sup>

We shall now take a look at a British colonial report to know what the authorities had thought of Pan-Islamism at that time.

"In the case of a complex phenomenon such as Islamism, to the formation of which a number of subtle tendencies have contributed, it is necessary to disentangle one or two ideas to show how their operation appear to have produced the result. The movement is religious as well as political. The former is practically universal; the latter, though widespread, has features peculiar to India and Turkey, but with different objectives. The bonds of sympathy between Moslems of India and elsewhere is very strong and real, and their susceptibilities were wounded by the recent misfortunes befalling their co-religionists in Tripoli and Persia. Mohammedans imagined a Christian coalition to encompass the ruin of Islam which could only be averted by a Muslim federation justified on religious or humanitarian grounds. Such appears to have been the origin of the Pan-Islamic religious movement."<sup>11</sup>

### **Some Preliminary Facts**

In 1915, Gandhi (1869-1948) had returned from South Africa and was gradually establishing himself in the Indian political arena through the Champaran satyagraha and other successful forays. The First World War had ended, and there were much political expectations in the air. Gandhi had also come to notice that large sections of the Indian society were keeping themselves aloof from the mainstream politics/ the national movement. The reluctance of the Muslim community in general, exceptions apart, often bordering on hostility to the our freedom movement, was a problem for Gandhi. And it was to bridge this gap that he encouraged the Khilafat movement.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of the 'infidel' Allied Powers in the First World War, and the imminent prospect of its dismemberment had caused much humiliation and shock to millions of Muslims. The resultant Treaty of Sevres (14 May, 1920) had left the only surviving Muslim (Sunni) Empire severely diminished and marginalized in the Comity of Nations. Mustafa Kemal Pasha who had no respect for an Islamic polity and its social norms had abolished the office of Khalifa/Caliphate. *The Khalifa* or *Caliph*, as the Turkish Emperor was called had fled to Malta under British supervision. A new Khalifa was also appointed, Abdul Majid, but he had nothing to do with the modern state Kemal had set up.

Since Khilafat was primarily a religious-political issue, one would do well to recall the role played by the *ulemas* in Indian society and politics over the centuries. Without going back to the history of the advent of the ulemas along with the invaders from Central Asia in the medieval times, we will come to more recent times for the purpose of this paper, and see how they had again become very active in the early 20th century when India's nationalist movement was attaining new heights led by the likes of Surendranath Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Womesh Chandra Banerjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Aurobindo Ghose, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and many titans like them.

As for the Muslim segment of the Indian population, exceptions apart, there was already growing opposition and hostility to the secular nationalist movement. Building up on the primordial division of society on a theological basis between the *mominis* and *kafirs*, Dar-ul-Harb and Dar-ul-Islam, traumatic memories of Islamic rule in India, various revivalist religio-political movements committed to violent ways, like Wahabbis, Faraizis and similar groups built on the concept of animosity to the neighbouring community, the communal differences had continued to grow. It is on this foundation that Sir Syed Ahmad (1817-1898) had set up the Aligarh Muslim University and institutionalized communalism on a different plain. With the setting up of the Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 (then in British ruled Bengal Presidency), Shimla Deputation (1906) with its demand for separate communal electorate, and its prompt acceptance by the colonial authorities, the tone and tenor of the Muslim separatist movement had further distanced itself from the nationalist movement while its bonding with the Islamic world beyond India and a sense of brotherhood with the co-religionists tended to increase.<sup>12</sup>

### **Caliphate related Developments in India**

Now we would see how Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) looked at the early history of Pan Islamic movement in India. He writes, "When Italy suddenly attacked Turkey in the Tripoli War of 1911, and subsequently during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, an astonishing wave of sympathy for Turkey roused Indian Moslems. All Indians felt that sympathy and anxiety but in the case of Moslems this was keener and something almost personal. The last remaining Moslem power was threatened with extinction; the sheet-anchor of their faith in the future was being destroyed. Dr.M. A. Ansari led a strong medical mission to Turkey and even the poor subscribed."

Nehru further says, that the "money came more rapidly than for any proposal for the uplift of the Indian Moslems themselves. World War I was a time of trial for the Muslims because Turkey was on the other side. They felt helpless and could do nothing. When the war ended their pent-up feelings were to break out in the Khilafat movement."<sup>13</sup>

Before proceeding further on Nehru's viewpoint, we will take a look at what Bipin Chandra Pal had thought of it. Pal unlike Nehru had a different perception and said,

"The Turko-Afghan conflict of 1911-12 while giving a new impetus to Pan-Islamism, particularly in India, helped also to bring out its true motive and character before all the world. Encouraged by the success of his game of bluff in the matter of the Indian Council Reforms, Syed Amir Ali now almost openly avowed his allegiance to Pan-Islamism; while his following commenced to exploit the natural sympathy of the Indian Mussulmans with the Ottoman Government in their conflict with Italy".

Pal further points out, "The Indian Mussulman was, strictly speaking, under no religious obligation whatever to side with Turkey as against Italy in the last war." But he suggested that, "The religious obligation would come not merely to side with, but even to fight for Turkey, unto death itself, if the Holy Places of Islam were threatened with possession by the Kaffir, and the Turkey stood up for their defense. Neither Tunis nor Tripoli, neither Adrianpole nor Stanboul are counted as the Holy Places of Islam".

Pal tells us what Nehru did not- that political Pan-Islamism "which is represented by Mr. Zafar Ali Khan and Syed Amir Ali and the Muslim League" happens to be the "common enemy of Indian nationalism in its truest and broadest sense."<sup>14</sup>

Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) felt, "I have no intention of offending anybody's susceptibilities, but if the existing conditions are properly analysed it will be seen that sectarianism and narrow-minded bigotry have been very much strengthened within the last three years. The Khilafat movement has particularly strengthened it among the Mohammedans, and it has not been without its influence and reaction on the Hindus and Sikhs." He further said, "It was unfortunate that the Khilafat movement in India should have taken its stand on a religious rather than political basis. There were political grounds to support it. It was still more unfortunate that Mahatma Gandhi and leaders of the Khilafat movement should have brought religion into such a prominence in connection with a movement which was really and

fundamentally, more political than religious."<sup>15</sup> We shall see that many Indian 'scholars' and politicians both in the pre-independence and the post-independent period have not said what was obvious to Pal and Lal (Lajpat Rai).

Nehru in his autobiography provides an eye-witness account of a meeting of the Khilafat committee and its views on a non-violent movement (Jan 1920), where he found that, "it was not easy for the Moulvies to grasp this idea. But they agreed, making it clear that they did so as a policy only and not as a creed, for their religion did not prohibit the use of violence in a righteous cause."<sup>16</sup>

Be that as it may. It was indeed a proud moment for millions of Muslims in India, who had valiantly stood by a battered Khalifa. May be, it was a question of extra territorial loyalty, but no one could question their commitment, and it was this commitment that both the Khilafat leaders and Gandhi were capitalizing on. Lajpat Rai after his travels in the Muslim countries of Central Asia and Egypt and interactions with the local Muslims had observed that "Indian Muslims are more Pan-Islamic and exclusive than the Muslims of any other country of the globe, and that fact alone makes the creation of a united India more difficult than would otherwise be."<sup>17</sup>

Nehru smothers this overwhelming issue of anachronism. Nehru predictably does not talk about it anymore in his '*Discovery of India*' on what all happened in India between 1919-1924, and we shall see how post-independence generation of 'progressive' Indian historians dealt with the subject matter.

Maulana Azad, (1888-1958) who after independence became Nehru's Minister for Education, and who was one of the important leaders of the Khilafat movement, and was party to many of the decisions regarding the conduct and course of the movement, does not mention what kind of retrograde and absurd this movement was. Nor does it occur to him that the movement was just a ploy to set off the elemental forces, besides being a question of extra territorial loyalty. As Mujeeb points out, "To most it seemed a very hopeful sign that the ulama were active in the political field."<sup>18</sup>

In the meantime, Anjuman-e-khuddam Ka'aba (Society for the servants of the Kaaba), had its headquarters set up in Delhi (1913) with the objective of protecting the Muslim holy places, and plans were drawn up for

purchasing of ships for carrying Muslim pilgrims to Jeddah from India, and also organize a Muslim fleet for the protection of their Holy places to the extent of providing for a Dreadnought for the Turkish navy.<sup>19</sup>

Then came Maulana Abdul Bari's suggestion that if the British did not do justice to the Sultan of Turkey-the Khalifah, Muslims should migrate to a Muslim land- dar-ul-Islam -Afghanistan. Following Bari's fatwa on *hijrah*, about 18,000 Muslims sold their properties to move to Afghanistan. "This was nothing short of ruin for the 18,000 families;" the khilafatists in India however took care to help those who returned back. Many more might have joined them in Afghanistan if only their government had not put a restriction on their entry.<sup>20</sup>

It would be interesting to see what Gandhi, who had been leading the Khilafat agitation and attending the Khilafat Committee meetings had thought about it. "The flight of Mussulmans is growing apace-they are cheered en route. That it is better for them to leave State which has no regard for their religious sentiment and face a beggar life than to remain in it even though it may be in a princely manner."<sup>21</sup>

Sensing the impending collapse of the Ottomans, some of the Muslim leaders in India were shocked and tried their best to retrieve the situation as best as they could. Mohammad Ali went to the Peace Conference in March 1920 and presented the following 3 demands:

- Turkish Sultan as Khalifa to retain control over the Holy Places.
- To be left with enough territory to defend Islamic faith.
- The area of Jazirat-al-Arab must continue to remain under Muslim sovereignty.

One of the founding fathers of Indian Congress, also called the Prophet of Indian nationalism, Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925) tells us that, "While in England, I was asked to preside over a meeting of the Mohamedan residents in connection with the khilafat question, for I entirely sympathize with the demand of the Indian Mohamedan for its settlement, on lines in conformity with the declaration of the Prime Minister (Lloyd George)."<sup>22</sup> Thus we see that even a person of Banerjee's stature who had come to be known as "Surrender-Not" for his principled stand and courage of conviction on a wide range of public/private issues had failed to see the danger inherent in this religious campaign. However, Banerjee would

subsequently change his opinion unlike many of his eminent contemporaries.

There were some Muslim leaders who were getting impatient, and made it quite clear how Khilafat movement was to be carried on in future. Faqir Qayam Uddin and Mohammad Abdul Bari jointly wrote to Miya Mahomed Haji Jan Mohammad Chotani (14 May 1920), the President of the Central Khilafat Committee that, "Lessons of forbearance and patience are troublesome. Tell Mr. Gandhi that while I myself will be guided by his advice, I will not restrain those people who in their haste go against it although I will not stimulate them, because in spite of entertaining different opinion, I have promised to go by his consent... But it should be borne in mind that we shall not sit (idle) relying upon him but thanking him for his sympathy, will fulfill our religious obligation. This is a religious duty which is unalterable. In its discharge, reliance can be placed on no one but God – whoever, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, prevent us from this, his tool will be included in the list of enemies."

As against this, there was an early voice of dissent at the early stage of the Khilafat movement -a minority view, which urged patience and caution. Badruddin Koor, the Honorary Secretary of the Khilafat Committee responded by saying that the Khilafat would further weaken the position of the Muslim community vis-à-vis the Hindus, because the latter would fill up the jobs left by the Muslims, and Islam would suffer. Koor further pointed out, "If Muslims embark on this ruinous course, I am afraid we may have to suffer even long after Khilafat controversy terminates. It is clear that non-cooperation report emphasizes that the Indian Mussulman should refrain from violence and bloodshed. But those who are fully acquainted with the Muhamedan temperament and feelings and who see the Indian atmosphere as at present charged with religious incitement and fervor will hesitate to believe that the advice will be acted upon if non-cooperation is to be made a living factor-I do not expect a large and unwieldy community of uneducated and highly sensitive people goaded to disappointment and despair by the apathy of Great Britain and its allies in the Khilafat question will ever do so. This risk is therefore clear."<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the talk of violence was very much in the air, and people who had gone out of the way to ignite the Khilafat fire in India remained oblivious of the looming danger. But then Gandhi, as always had his own ideas and took this stand and wrote to the Viceroy in 22 June 1920, "Muslim soldiers did not fight to inflict punishment on their own Khalifa or to deprive him of

his territories. Mussalman and Hindus have as a whole lost faith in British justice and honor- because I believe in British Constitution that I have advised my Mussulman friend to withdraw their support from Your Excellency's Government and the Hindus to join them."<sup>24</sup>

Amidst all this, there were other developments too. The All India Shia Conference held at Nagina on 3 April 1920 passed a resolution of loyalty to the British Empire.<sup>25</sup> Another dimension of the multiple reactions evoked in India, is evident in the request made by the domiciled European community to the Viceroy to inform the Prime Minister and Parliament of their strong feeling in favour of retention of Constantinople and the Sultan of Turkey and his recognition as head of the Moslem religion.<sup>26</sup> This may be seen as an indication of the fact that a section of Europeans were sympathetic to the Khalifah.

At this point, one may look back at an earlier viewpoint regarding the duty of Indian Muslims when their masters- the British, would get involved in confrontation with the Muslim nations. Sir Syed Ahmad (1817-1898) while referring to the 19th century conflict involving Turkey and European powers had advised, "The utmost that we can do is to pray to God that the relations between the British government and Mussalman States, such as Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan may always remain cordial and friendly and that there may not be any conflict between them. But suppose the British government is compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey, we according to the plain teachings of Islam cannot shake Muslims free from those obligations of obedience and submission which we owe to our ruler. Our duty as plainly set forth by our religion is to obey only our rulers and remain quite loyal to them." Sir Syed was a typical loyalist of the Raj but having tasted the might of the British and the inevitable decay of Muslim powers, he was misinterpreting the theological injunctions to suit his personal interest or what he thought would help his co-religionists.<sup>27</sup>

### **Leaders of the Caliphate in India**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, was then known as the ex-editor of *Al-Hilal*, and founder of the *Hizbullah Society* and *Dar-ul-irshad College* at Calcutta and was described as "a Pan Islamist of the extreme type, rabidly anti-British and extremely fanatical." He was found to be associated with Sufi Amba Prasad in Lahore and Ajit Singh, and assisted them and their associates in extreme propaganda" - who was "believed to have expressed admiration of the Bengali Anarchists."<sup>28</sup> Then there were Mohammad Ali,

his brother- Shaukat Ali, Dr . M.A. Ansari, who had earlier led a Medical Mission to Turkey (1912), Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Abdul Bari. All the leadership of the Khilafat movement in India held the view that "the Khalifa must have adequate temporal power in order to be able to discharge his responsibilities as head of all Muslims and protector of their holy places." Mohammad Ali was clearly of the view that,

"The Sultan of Turkey is something more than the ruler of the Ottomans. He is- an Emperor and Pope in one, and combining in himself as the successor of the Caliph of our Prophet- the two-fold function which is the logical sequence of the most rational abhorrence that Islam has for any lacerating separation between things temporal and things spiritual- you must remember Islam is not only a religion in the ordinary sense, but also a theocracy, a Government, though it be the Government of God Himself."<sup>29</sup>

Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, who in Sept 1920, had advised Muslims for amity with Hindus, seeking their cooperation, necessity to stop killing of cows, also went on to say this in Sept 1923,

"Abdul Bari, the erstwhile apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity, came to the fore again. Now he spoke the language of the zealot. He urged the Muslims to sacrifice cows without regard to Hindu feelings, and declared: 'If the commandments of the Shariat are to be trampled underfoot then it will be the same to us whether the decision is arrived on the plains of Delhi or on the hilltops of Simla. We are determined to non-cooperate with every enemy of Islam, be he in Anatolia or at Agra or Benares."

The simple explanation for such a volte face was that when the Khilafatists needed the support of the Hindus, they had turned sugary but once the Khilafat had been dumped by the Turks themselves, they were back to their true colours. As Sita Ram Goel puts it, these leaders were "Islamic imperialists" who would be paraded as "nationalist Muslims". In fact, he describes the Ali Brothers as "Pan-Islamic conspirators and habitual embezzlers of public funds." According to Goel, "That was an unpardonable folly. The sin and the folly combined in due course to close every other option of the national leadership and forced it into an abject surrender-acceptance of Partition."<sup>30</sup> It may be mentioned here that Mohammad Ali Jinnah who led the movement for Pakistan had opposed the Khilafat Movement.

### Motivations behind the Caliphate Movement

As Bimal Prasad has pointed out that while the religious factor was important, one cannot

"completely ignore the quest for power which had always been a major factor, along with the feeling of a religious bond with the Muslims outside India, behind the Pan-Islamic movement in India. Because of the close association of Islam with political power in British India, Indian Muslims drew considerable psychological comfort from the existence of powerful Muslim states outside India and became seriously alarmed whenever there was a threat to their continued existence. The Turkish empire was the greatest source of such comfort because of its extent and power, apart from the fact that its Sultan also bore the title of Caliph and was considered the head of all Muslims."

On the thinking of Gandhi, Prasad points out he had ignored the "power factor in the background of the movement," having "concentrated purely on its religious motivation." Certainly Prasad refrains from telling the obvious. As we have seen it over the centuries, and are witnessing currently all over the world, that any encouragement of the primordial passions as was being done in the name of rescuing the Khilafat in the 1920s was a blunder of unimaginable proportions.

While exhorting the Hindus to join the Khilafat movement, Gandhi said, "The Turkish question concerns eight crores of Indian Muslims, and a question that concerns nearly one-fourth of the nation must concern the whole of India. It is impossible that one of the four limbs of the nation be wounded and the rest of the nation remains unconcerned. We cannot be called one nation, we cannot be a single body, if such a wound has no effect on us." The liberal *Manchester Guardian*, known for its sympathetic attitude towards India, pointed out, that Gandhi had addressed several meetings in the Malabar region a few months earlier (*Manchester Guardian* 25 Aug, 1921).

However, we may note as Prasad says, that the Khilafat-non-cooperation movement could at best be described as a joint struggle and not a common struggle. The forces of Indian nationalism and Muslim nationalism had only formed an united front; they had not merged into one nationalism."<sup>31</sup>

Judith Brown, added another dimension on the significance of the Khilafat movement in India in saying that Gandhi's support for the Khilafat had blinded him to the interests of millions of other Indian Muslims, particularly those who were provincial majorities and saw little profit in anti-British action when their local numerical weight would advantage them under the reformed constitution."<sup>32</sup> In saying so, Brown had missed one important aspect of the Muslim politics in India which has consistently maintained its special relationship with the Islamic world and flaunted its unflinching loyalty to the ummah.

Thus, while both the secular nationalists like Gandhi and theologically driven Khilafat protagonists remained firm on the restoration of the Khalifa, and set on a course of confrontation, Kamal Pasha warned the Turkish theologians after he had already decided on the abolition of Khilafat in Nov 1922, that if they refuse to accept the "simple fact", then "what is natural would happen anyhow, with the only difference that a few heads will probably have to be chopped off."<sup>33</sup>

### **Ramifications of the Caliphate Movement**

It must be said to the credit of the Khilafatists that even at a time when communication and travel was not very easy, they had been able to set up organizations to propagate the Khilafat cause which was spread over from London to Lhasa and Kashmir to Kerala. As for London, then as now, was always open to all sorts of propaganda, even those inimical to the Empire, and the Pan Islamists remained active with people like Aga Khan and Syed Amir Ali in the forefront.<sup>34</sup>

"Mussalman traders based in Lhasa" were found engaged in circulating pamphlets issued by the Bengal Khilafat Committee.<sup>35</sup> The North West Province, a disturbed area even in normal times also experienced much commotion caused by the Khilafat movement.<sup>36</sup> Speaking at Karachi on 22 July 1920, Gandhi warned the Hindus, If they didn't help the Muhammadans in their time of trouble their slavery was a certainty.<sup>37</sup> How prophetic Gandhi was!

Addressing a public meeting at Vadtal (Gujarat), on 19 January 1921, Gandhi said, "I tell all the Hindu Sadhus, that if they sacrifice their all for the sake of the Khilafat, they will have done a great thing for the protection of Hinduism. Today the duty of every Hindu is to save Islam from danger. If

you do this, God Himself will inspire them to look upon Hindus as friends and Hindus will look upon Muslims as friends."<sup>38</sup>

Gandhi again said, "Let the Hindus not be frightened by Pan Islam. It is not it need not be anti-India or anti-Hindu. And Hindus if they are true friends of Muslims cannot but share the latter's feeling. We must, therefore, cooperate with our Muslim brethren in their attempt to save the Turkish Empire in Europe from extinctions."<sup>39</sup> Even for the protection of cow, about which Hindus had been much agitated, and who earnestly wanted a ban, an idea with which Gandhi also sympathized, his advice went like this, "'The Hindus' participation in the Khilafat is the greatest and the best movement for cow-protection. I have, therefore, called Khilafat our Kamdhuk" (The latter meaning a mythical cow that gave whatever one asked of her).<sup>40</sup>

Bengal, then as now, has been a happy hunting ground for all kinds of highly successful Islamic activities, contrary to the repeated protestations of its jihad-friendly 'secularist' propagandists-protagonists.<sup>41</sup> It is known that the Muslims of Bengal had joined the Non-cooperation movement chiefly because of Khilafat question, and, "even at the height of the Khilafat movement it was hardly possible to induce Muslims to take any interest in Non-cooperation except in terms of the Khilafat. When the Khilafat-Non-cooperation movement ended, the Muslims left the Congress in large numbers".<sup>42</sup>

Similar reports on the spread of Khilafat ideas poured in from various parts of India. One report '*The Non-cooperation Movement in the Madras Presidency*' mentioned that though Hindus had come to lend their support to the Khilafat movement because they had been asked to do so by Gandhi, it was not so everywhere. In the Madras presidency, Rajagopalachari, described as 'a Salem vakil' was urging the Hindus to cooperate with the Muslims and it was under his influence that Hindu shopkeepers closed their shops and the bazaar was closed. There was another report from Karur (Madras) of a clash between the Hindus and Muslims, when a travelling theatre party refused to give a benefit performance for the Khilafat funds and became a victim of Muslim mob attack.<sup>43</sup>

One may add something about a well-known "Caliphate agitator", a Muslim from Bengal, Badshah Mian, who was described by the British Agent and Consul at Jeddah, as a strong supporter of King Hussein as Caliph.<sup>44</sup>

About the impact on Bengal, it is said that the "Muslim support for the Khilafat caused a great deal of confusion in non-Muslim circles about their loyalty and patriotism. Such an obsession as, Pan Islamism affected the psychology of Bengal Muslims and promoted a kind of parochial nationalism in them, politically unifying them, at least for the time being, with the Muslims of northern India."<sup>45</sup>

It was this dimension, the over emphasis on extra-territorial loyalty and that also for an obscurantist and most unwarranted cause which neutralised whatever influence the impact of enlightened secular nationalism had on some of them.

#### **Pogrom in Kerala: The Macabre Dance of Khilafat-Moplahs in Kerala**

The most important, and the most disastrous consequence of the utterly misguided Khilafat movement in India was the horror let loose on the hapless Hindus of Kerala, who suffered in the worst possible way at the hands of the Muslims suffused with the Khilafat spirit. Sought to be passed off as a Moplah 'rebellion', it was one of the most horrific anti-Hindu pogroms of the colonial times- and all in the name of Islam.

It all began with the Moplah-Muslim soldiers of the British Indian army returning back to India-Kerala in this case, after the end of the First World War when at the political plane, Congress-Khilafat committees were being set up in the 1920s. It is these Muslims with British-Indian army background, who prepared the ground for the Moplahs' all out offensive against the Hindus. As Minault puts it, "Other signs of trouble included the presence of a sizeable number of demobilized Muslims who had returned from overseas duty, trained in the use of arms and accustomed to concerted action. These provided the nuclei around which grew a number of Khilafat volunteer groups. Clad in khaki and armed with knives and spears, these volunteers held political meetings in support of the Khilafat demands and championed a form of non-cooperation which condoned violence."<sup>46</sup> It would be interesting to know if preparation on this scale and of such a nature was taken into account or ignored by those Congressmen who were compelling people to join the Khilafat movement without rhyme or reason.

Those who have justified the pogrom of the Hindus at the hands of the Moplah Muslims have sought to focus on the agrarian grievances, while others who were more realistic and less ideological, have found Islamic fanaticism with its inherent hatred for the "others" as the real cause. If it was

just another agrarian issue, why was so much of Islamic colour to it? What we find in Malabar is a theologically sanctioned anti-Hindu pogrom. After all, there were vast areas in India, which had a majority of Hindu landed gentry and poor Muslim peasantry or those with Muslim dominated landed gentry with poorest of Hindu peasants at the bottom of the social hierarchy. After all, agrarian grievances were common everywhere in India- whether in the Muslim majority areas or the Hindu majority areas, and there was a surfeit of them in 20th century India with growing consciousness of entitlements. In Kerala, the Hindus in that district had turned into a minority and a burgeoning Muslim population had been acquiring strength over the years. One British document in the early 20th century had described the Moplahs as "remarkable for the savage fanaticism displayed in successive revolts against the Hindus."<sup>47</sup>

Since the merciless mayhem of the Hindus of Kerala was so much religious in all its manifestations, one just can't call it anything but the height of religious bigotry. Hence, any attempt to smother its nature as has been done by its apologists- notably by India's public sector intellectuals, is not justified.

The *Manchester Guardian* pointed out that despite agrarian grievances, "one certain element is a desperate religious fanaticism." After a few months it further commented, "and over all, India broods the horror of the cold-blooded massacres by the Moplahs, still daily showing how hindus fare in the hands of fanatical Mohammedans. The public obscurely but rightly, connect the holocaust of Hindu lives and property with Khilafat preachers, and realize that the rule even of the arrogant British is better than no rule."<sup>48</sup>

One Moplah leader, Ali Musaliar was reportedly asking for "Khilafat, Tenancy and Swaraj." He had claimed that in a dream he saw Thangal exhorting people that "the time for establishment of the Khilafat had come," and promised all paraphernalias of a Khilafatisque religio-political order. Leadership of the movement soon slipped from the hands of Congress leaders like Madhavan Nair, Gopala Menon and other leaders to Thangals and Hajis, and by mid 1921, Swaraj had retreated into the background and replaced by the vision of a state resembling the Khilafat version of a State system.<sup>49</sup>

As for the consequences many Hindus were converted by force to Islam. As Wood points out that there is a difficulty to point out the number of people who were actually killed for refusal to convert to Islam. According to the

Arya Samaj sources, the number of Hindus forced to convert to Islam was about 2,500 or so. B.R. Nanda accepts this figure. There were obviously cases of rape of Hindu women. The number of temples desecrated/destroyed numbered about 100. Not only this, many a Hindus converted to Islam were further compelled to join these soldiers of Islam and attack the Hindus who had not yet embraced Islam. These 'peasant leaders' as our Marxist/Nehruvian historians and 'secular' politicians described them also smothered the fact that the rampaging Moplah Muslims were often accompanied by the Mullahs facilitating quick conversion to Islam on the spot. Surely, it was a well planned and comprehensive attack on the Hindus. That it was not motivated by Bolshevik ideology is further attested by the fact that Hindu victims were just not Nambudiris and Nairs but also Ezhavas and Cherumas.<sup>50</sup> It is indeed unacceptable that it was "a rebellion, a traumatic experience both for the Mappilas and Malabar Hindus." Both the perpetrators and their hapless victims can't normally belong to the same category! But then our 'progressive' historians can say anything they want!

The colonial authorities called the army to suppress the most organized communal assault on the Hindus of Malabar, and all in the name of the glory of the Khilafat. According to the official sources, 2339 Moplahs were killed and the wounded accounted for 1652. 5955 of them were captured and 39,348 surrendered while the total number of Moplahs convicted during and after the rebellion was approximately 24,167. Capital punishment was awarded to 301 of them, of whom 191 were hanged till the report was made.<sup>51</sup>

As Sir Sankaran Nair put it, "All this due directly to the visit of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali and the organization of Khilafat." Further commenting on Gandhi's statement rationalizing as to why the God-fearing Moplahs unleashed such horrendous atrocities on the Hindus, Nair had observed, "There are two possible answers. The first, and the most probable, is that the politician within him had for the time being enthralled the saint-his aim was to keep the Hindu-Mahommedan entente alive; the second, that the saint had mastered the man: religious anarchy with all its horrors being infinitely to be preferred to law and order under Satanic British rule."<sup>52</sup>

Talking about the consequences, Gandhi said, "The Moplah revolt is a test for Hindus and Muslims. Can Hindu friendship survive the strain put upon it? Can Muslims in the deeper recesses of their heart approve of the conduct of the Moplahs? Time alone can show the reality. A verbal and

forced philosophic acceptance of the inevitable is no test of Hindu friendship. The Hindu must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruption. A verbal disapproval by the Muslims of Moplah madness is no test of Muslim friendship. The Muslims must naturally feel the shame and humiliation of the Moplah conduct about forcible conversion and looting and they must work away silently and effectively that such things might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them?"

After a few months, Gandhi while addressing a mass meeting in Madras, said, "I am aware that our Moplah brethren, indisciplined as they have been all these long years, have gone mad. I am aware that they have committed a sin against the Khilafat and their own country. The whole of India today is under an obligation to remain non-violent even under the gravest provocation."<sup>53</sup> The liberal *Manchester Guardian*, known for its sympathetic attitude towards India, pointed out, "A notable feature of the Malabar disturbance was the hoisting of a green flag bearing Turkish emblem and the raising of a war cry", and said that the agitators have been working on the religious fanaticism of the ignorant Moplahs. A volunteer corps was formed and supplied with uniforms and added that Gandhi had addressed a few of their meetings earlier. It also added that Gandhi had addressed several meetings in the Malabar region a few months earlier.<sup>54</sup>

The massacre of the Hindus in Kerala by the Moplah Muslims (see the end-note) had created deep revulsion in large sections of the Hindu society. Nine members of the Madurai Municipal Corporation wrote to their Chairman withdrawing their consent to an earlier decision for moving a resolution favouring an address to Gandhi on the occasion of his visit to the town. Subsequently, 23 members of the Council refused to be a party to give Gandhi an official welcome.<sup>55</sup>

Here we take a look at the contrasting world views of Bose and Nehru, both considered to belong to the Leftist camp, on Pan Islamism and understanding of Islamic terror. As for Subhas Chandra Bose, this was his thinking: "Though after some years the Ali Brothers parted company with the Mahatma, I do not think one could find fault with the latter for his intimate association with them. The real mistake in my opinion did not lie in connecting the khilafat issue with the other national issues, but in allowing the Khilafat Committee to be set up as an independent organization throughout the country, quite apart from the Indian National Congress. The result of this was that when later on Ghazi Mustafa Kemal

Pasha, as the leader of the new Turkey, forced the Sultan to abdicate and abolished the office of Khalifa altogether, the Khilafat question lost all meaning and significance and the majority of the members of the Khilafat organizations were absorbed by sectarian, reactionary, and pro-British Moslem organizations. If no separate Khilafat Committees had been organized and all Khilafat Moslems had been persuaded to join the ranks of the Indian National Congress, they would probably have been absorbed by the latter when the Khilafat issue became a dead one."

Bose further observed: "The Moplahs of Kerala were a section of the Muslim community. Their rising was directed against the local Hindus; nevertheless it was also an attack on the government and as such caused them considerable anxiety and embarrassment. It has significance also because it was the first incident to loosen Hindu-Moslem unity." He reiterated, "The introduction of the Khilafat question into the Indian politics was unfortunate. As has already been pointed out, if the Khilafatist Moslems had not started a separate organization but had joined the Indian National Congress, the consequences would not have been so undesirable."<sup>56</sup> One would further add, "Though Netaji did not say that Khilafat was basically an issue of extra territorial loyalty, and had also desisted from saying it had nothing to do with Indian nationalism, yet he could at least see that its consequences were quite unpleasant."<sup>57</sup>

What however, Nehru observed about the terror unleashed by the Moplahs was queer and it seems was deliberately misleading. "The communalists of various denominations, mostly political reactionaries, had been forced to lie low because of the overwhelming mass support for the non cooperation and civil disobedience movement. They emerged now from their retirement. Many others, secret service agents and people who sought to please the authorities by creating communal friction, also worked on the same theme. The Moplah rising and its extraordinarily cruel suppression- what a horrible thing was the baking to death of the Moplah prisoners in the closed railway vans!- had already given a handle to those who stirred the waters of communal discord."<sup>58</sup>

Nehru was thus, showing the path for India's next generation of 'successful' historians/social scientists in particular, and their 'secular' leaders in general- not to tell the truth if it was an issue related to acts of violence/terror caused by the Muslim groups, obfuscate and confuse everyone about it by telling absurd things.

"It is unbelievable that Nehru is criticizing the role of the colonial authorities in suppressing this unprecedented and organized violence perpetrated by the Moplahs against the Hindus of Kerala. After all, 2500 Hindus had been converted to Islam by force and many Hindu women had been raped. There was well planned arson and burning of properties besides widespread destruction of the transportation and communications network. Yes, the British suppressed it quite "ruthlessly" to protect the helpless Hindus of Kerala. Any further delay would have decimated that community."

It has been said that, "Nehru puts the marauders and the victims in the same category. He is oblivious of the Hindu victims of this pogrom. He is also covering up the issue of extra territorial loyalty involved in the Khilafat issue." We will now see what Nehru had said, "Because of the communal tension, Muslim political reactionaries, who had taken a back seat during all these years of non-cooperation, emerged into prominence, helped in the process by the British government." Moreover, "He smothers the all important fact that the obscurantist Khilafat issue had been projected as a nationalist issue by a secular organization such as the Indian National Congress".<sup>59</sup>

It is this Nehruvian 'vision' which continues to influence the 'secular' historians in independent India. Here we will see how the Marxist historian, Bipan Chandra faithfully follows the Nehruvian line. In his much publicised book on Communalism spread over 400 pages, he does exactly as Nehru did -the massacre and mayhem perpetrated by the Moplah find no mention at all. In Maulana Azad's account, obviously there is just no mention of the Moplahs at all. So is done by the historians of Pakistan. It is Negationism at its worst.<sup>60</sup>

Namboodripad, stresses the "anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character of the Moplah peasantry," which made it extremely unlikely that they would remain non-violent as "laid down by the bourgeois leadership of the national movement," and thus they were being prepared not for a non-violent non-cooperation movement but for "real militant action of the masses." He however, grudgingly admits that "religious fanaticism" was not absent. The number of forced conversions which did take place (even if Pandit Rishi Ram's figures are excessive, coming as they do from an Arya Samajist, cannot by any stretch of imagination be explained by any other motive than religious fanaticism." Namboodripad had some sort of intellectual honesty which Nehru and Nehruvian 'progressive' historians

did not have. As the *Manchester Guardian* had put it, "The circumstances attending the Moplah revolt are not calculated to help those who try to persuade the young Hindus that the idea of Mohammedan rule is a bogey invented by his British nurse to care him into good behavior."<sup>61</sup>

### **Significance of the Caliphate Movement in India**

Besides loss of innocent Hindu lives, it only confirmed the religio-cultural-political differences between the Hindus and Muslims at various levels. It was a blunder on the part of Gandhi to have systematically encouraged the Muslims to deepen their Pan Islamic solidarity and thus further their distance from their closest neighbours from whom came their not-too-distant ancestors. Gandhi had failed to anticipate the danger in playing up with the primordial forces, and he would be repeating the same blunder on a larger scale leading to the partition of India in 1947.

As for the other consequences of Khilafat, we'll take a look at what some of the eminent contemporaries had thought. As Surendranath Banerjee observed, "and from a hatred of the government to that of political and religious opponents and of other castes and creeds, the transition was rapid and irresistible." Banerjee cites Gandhi as saying, "they were non-cooperating among themselves by carrying on a programme of hatred and violence amongst themselves." Banerjee further elaborated, "it is this sentiment of hatred fostered amongst the masses, directed in the first instance against the British government, that came, by a natural process of growth to be extended to all others who worshipped in a different temple, culminating in these communal and caste feuds that have darkened our recent history. I cannot help thinking that these leaders were playing with fire. But in judging of the communal strifes, which we all deplore, let us not for the sake of historic justice, forget the part Non-cooperation movement had in fostering and promoting it." Without directly mentioning Khilafat, it is obvious what he is referring to.<sup>62</sup>

Sri Aurobindo, who had retired from active politics but had not lost sight of the political reality told his disciple, "I am sorry they have made a fetish of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; some day the Hindus may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given away. The best solution would be to allow the Hindus to organize themselves and Hindu-Muslim unity will take care of itself; it would automatically solve the problem. Otherwise, we are lulled into a

false sense of satisfaction that we have solved the problem when in fact we have only shelved it."<sup>63</sup>

Neimeijr suggests that the Khilafat movement probably did something to promote- Muslim communalism. "In the first place, it made Indian Muslims fully realize what the loss of worldly power meant to them as Muslims; and, in the second place, by their participation in this movement they got entangled in international politics and therefore became aware that they had to act as the equals of other nations. Nevertheless, the Khilafat movement remained largely a communal movement; its failure furthered Muslim communalism, and in its wake, Indian Muslim nationalism".

Neimeijr further suggests that, "In the Khilafat movement Indian Muslims played a more important role than any other Muslim outside Turkey," and attributes it to Indian Muslims' "unsatisfactory situation with respect to national feelings" in India that drew them to Pan Islamism. "But Muslim League leaders may well have drawn from the events between 1919 and 1924 the conclusion that, in order to get a hold on the Muslim masses in India, one had to make an emotional appeal to Islam. This could not fail to bring about in their following enthusiasm, but hatred as well. In preparing the way for Muslim nationalism the khilafat movement was pointing to the future but also to its ugly aspects."<sup>64</sup>

It was this dimension-the over emphasis on extra-territorial loyalty and that also for an obscurantist and most unwarranted cause which neutralised whatever influence the impact of a non-sectarian nationalism might have existed on the Muslims of India.<sup>65</sup>

As we see right now, even a hundred years after the Khilafat movement, much of India's 'secular' Muslim politics is centred around the perceived interests of the Islamic ummah-Israeli-Gaza issue, and the news regarding the participation of Muslims of India in the new Khilafat movement in Iraq/Syria region.

As Gilmartin shows, "With the state, no longer defining the moral parameters of the community or its political form, individuals remade the community in the public realm by attaching their hearts to Muslim symbols and making these inner hearts public in open contestation." Moreover, the Indian Khilafat experience taught Indian Muslims how to organize other campaigns.<sup>66</sup>

The gory stories that we hear about the inhuman atrocities inflicted upon the Yezidis and the fate of the people in Mosul, have once again shown that any attempt at reviving an irredentist idea and reviving an obscurantist institution is just like playing with fire whose flames could rapidly spread and become dangerous, bringing in devastation and destruction on an unimaginable scale.

### **Conversion to Islam and other Islamisation efforts**

No discussion on communal movements like the Khilafat and inter-communal relations in India would be complete without an understanding of the challenge thrown up to the followers of Hinduism by Islam. As Sri Aurobindo had put it so succinctly in response to a question from a disciple (13 July 1923), "There is also the question of Hindu-Muslim unity which the non-violence school is trying to solve on the basis of their theory." Sri Aurobindo had replied: "You can live amicably with a religion whose principle is toleration. But how is it possible to live with a religion whose principle is 'I will not tolerate?' How are you going to have unity with these people? Certainly Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be arrived at on the basis that Muslims will go on converting Hindus while Hindus shall not convert Mohammedans. You can't build unity on such basis. Perhaps the only way of making the Mohammedans harmless is to make them lose their faith in their religion."<sup>67</sup>

A section of historians have highlighted the decision of some Muslim leaders asking their followers to desist from cow slaughter after the Khilafat movement had begun as a mark of gratitude towards their Hindu neighbours for supporting an Islamic cause. Certainly an example of not further hurting the Hindu sentiments, but then, as we look back we find that cow slaughter was not a ritual sanctioned by the Islamic law (there was no cow in Arabia), and it had been deliberately adopted by the Islamic conquerors/theologians in India to cause humiliation to a defeated people on their own land. Moreover, it was for an extremely short period and it continued to fester as a major cause of communal tension.

While this prohibition was short-lived, other efforts to hurt the Hindu society never stopped. Apart from the massive scale of forced conversion in Kerala, the anti-Hindu activities went on with full Islamic gusto. In this connection, a typical view that we get is that of the Communist leaders like Namboodripad, trying to push under the carpet a traumatic event of horrible proportions. He had pontificated, "Two thousand five hundred

forced conversions in an area with four lakhs Hindus is very low indeed, if it was a communal riot."<sup>68</sup>

One of the more celebrated cases of conversion of this period may be gleaned from a question in the Parliament, "as to whether Syed Hassan or Hussain, a member of the Khilafat Delegation has recently at the instance of Pandit Motilal Nehru been accused of the forcible proselytization of the latter's daughter."<sup>69</sup> As we know that the sister of Nehru was subsequently known by her Hindu name.

The Muslim newspaper the *Zamindar* carried an article regarding an announcement made by the Begum of Bhopal that unless the activities of Shuddhi Sabha cease, propaganda of the Islamic Faith will be taken up earnestly in the Bhopal State.<sup>70</sup> It may be pointed out that some of the descendants of the Begum of Bhopal had carried on this tradition subsequently by converting non-Muslims to Islam in independent and secular India.

#### **A Practical Lesson from the Past: Any Takers for it?**

There are two interesting developments by 1924, with Mustafa Kamal firmly in saddle, that holds important lesson for many 'secular' governments in the world, particularly Britain and various European countries, the USA practicing the failed project of multi-culturalism and, of course India saddled with Nehruvian 'secularism'. A Government of India's Home Department letter dated 14 March 1924, made it clear to the Khilafat Committee that no non-Muslim would be allowed to accompany the deputation to Angora, and secondly, "the members of the deputation will have to give an undertaking that they will not do anything in relation to political affairs of the States they were going to visit, and a programme in detail should be submitted along with the application on prescribed form individually."<sup>71</sup>

It's already too late for many governments having put no restriction on the people going out to fight Jihad. But everything is not lost as yet. Even now, if all the governments on the other side of the civilizational war in 2014, follow up this advice given by the authorities in colonial India, they might drastically bring down the number of Jihadis leaving their countries to fight one of the most unnecessary wars of all times.

As the Khilafat movement became meaningless, we find another kind of response- which was felt by a section among the Muslim community who

had expressed their opposition to the Khilafat movement, and one of the most prominent among them was the Nizam of Hyderabad. He had earlier prohibited the 'promotion of the Khilafat agitation' in his territory, and when the Khilafat itself was abolished, the Nizam of Hyderabad, had put forward a proposal to grant life-time pension of 300 pound sterling per month to Abdul Majid, the ex-Khalifa and the former Sultan, as he was "penniless". This idea was however, rejected by the Colonial authorities. There is another very interesting development in Hyderabad as the British authorities could sense it. It was reported that the Nizam of Hyderabad had attended a Eid prayer at the Edgah, which he had not done earlier and it was "being interpreted by some as his aim at recognition as Khalifa locally."<sup>72</sup>

Before we conclude this, one more aspect may be highlighted. While the world was being turned upside down in the name of the suffering of Muslims and humiliation of Turkey, no one among the Indian nationalists had uttered a word on the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey. Not that it had no spokespersons for their cause in India.<sup>73</sup> It seems 'liberal' leaders in India had totally forgotten Gladstone.<sup>74</sup>

### **A Methodological Problem**

What usually prevents a realistic appraisal of the convulsions in the Islamic world and its reverberations in India is the very nature of politics in India. And it is this peculiar theory and practice of 'secularism' that shapes the ideologically driven history/social science related studies/research, media content in contemporary India. It is hoped that with the change of government in New Delhi, our collective capacity to see things as they are would be more balanced. The kind of statements and articles by 'specialists', many of them being apologists of Islamic terror, which appear in the public domain are attempts at smothering the most obvious, so that both the people in general and our government in particular remain indifferent to the most obvious danger. Here one word of caution is necessary perhaps. As a people, Hindus have repeatedly shown an utter incapacity to anticipate cataclysmic events and take the requisite action. And this has happened on numerous occasions in the past.

### **Toward a Conclusion**

This intervention paper is an attempt of trying to point out the folly of what one of Sir Vidya's character had said about himself, "this habit of non-

seeing.<sup>175</sup> The colonial authorities had noted very early- "Thus, it was that at the time of inception, the Non-Cooperation movement was given by its founder a destructive Muhammedan bent." Harcourt Butler, Governor of United Provinces felt, "Religion and force alone sway the Oriental. I can't make out what is happening in Turkey. Pan-Islamism as a practical policy does not seem to have much vitality. It is a feeling rather than a force. Reformed Islam is really not practicable. For the strength of Islam is in the spirit of fanaticism and this dies down under Reforms. But the Musalman can give us a lot of trouble and I hope we may come to some compromise."<sup>176</sup>

The absurdity, disaster and fiasco of the Khilafat movement in India in the 1920s was inevitable, given the changing international order, the surge towards an enlightened era in Turkey, complexity of inter-communal relations in India, and the diametrically opposite views of the main political actors. While the nationalists led by Gandhi had a laudable objective to bring the unwilling in the nationalist camp, but they had misread the history, and hence their strategy was bound to boomerang, and end in an unmitigated disaster. The Pan Islamic groups, then as now- even after a hundred years remain steadfast in their objective, however, flawed and dangerous it might be for others. Abd al-Bari of Firangi Mahal was honest in his opinion that "The only true Home Rule' for Muslims would be achieved by the enforcement of the Sharia."<sup>177</sup> Lajpat Rai wondered after the Hindus had been brutalized in Kohat (1924), "Is it that the Kohat Hindus are being punished for participating in the Khilafat movement? Are the Frontier Hindus being held responsible for the help rendered towards the Khilafat by Amirchand Bamwal and other Hindu leaders? When the Kohat incident happened, Mahatmaji's heart was so struck that he cried out in agony: I had persuaded Hindus to render help to have the Muslim temple of Khilafat, and today my own temples are being destroyed by the Mohammedans."<sup>178</sup>

The fact remains, as Minault has pointed out that, "The ulama were effective political agents in rallying support for the Khilafat movement and for the strategy of non-cooperation, but they were still basically concerned with the defence of Islam. In this, they tended to outrun the non-cooperation program. If Jihad was incumbent upon the faithful, why not resort to force?" In addition, the ulama's constant appeals for religious justice gave their Hindu compatriots pause. Were the Muslim leaders, and especially the ulama, really dedicated to the cause of Indian freedom, or only seeking to build their own sphere of influence? One interpretation of

the ulama's position which has been suggested is that they envisaged a return to the medieval relationship between religion and polity in India. That is, the independent Indian government would presumably control most government affairs but, like the sultans, leave control over the education and personal law to the separate communities. The ulama as custodians of the Islamic sciences and interpreters of the sharia, would thus guide the Muslim community in all aspects of life touched by the sharia. This vision was, in effect, a juridical partition of India along religious lines.<sup>79</sup> It is a sad commentary on the politics of India- in both pre-partition and post-partition politics in India that few have publicly accepted this truth.

Rebuffed on the home-ground, the millennium old Dar-ul-Islam in Central Asia, the Pan Islamic forces had to turn all their attention towards the Dar-ul-harb of India which has ceased to be a Dar-ul-Islam since the establishment of British hegemony. In the process, they had learnt a lesson from nationalists-that the latter were amenable to their pressure tactics, and more often willing to compromise with the very fundamentals of a secular anti-colonial movement for an elusive inter-community understanding. From there to Kohat to Calcutta (Direct Action) to Noakhali became well laid steps in breaking India.<sup>80</sup>

Yet, people who are determined might go on doing what they are committed to, unless they are stopped in their tracks in time. We may not be very mistaken in forecasting that these Khilafatists would perhaps prove in action a bit of Maya Angelou (1928-2014), the Black-American poet, (with some modification).... "you may write me down in history/ You may trod me in the very dirt/ But still, like dust, I'll rise".

### Endnotes

1. 'The Tragedy of the Arabs,' in *The Economist*, 5 July 2014.
2. The US Secretary of State John Kerry told the NATO summit meeting at Wales in early September 2014 that "We have the ability to destroy ISIS. It may take a year, it may take two years, it may take three years. But we're determined it has to happen" (*The Indian Express quoting the New York Times, 9 Sept 2014*). Only time will tell- possibly after three years whether his confident assertion was a routine measure of reassurance or act of deliberate confusion or based on more reliable forecasting methodology and a realistic understanding of the historical forces at work for centuries (reported in all Indian newspapers).

American President Bush's surprise (feigned perhaps!) to the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, when the latter told him that there was no Al Qaida

elements in India is revealing, not so much because of its inherent ridiculousness but because Singh's subterfuge at smothering the very root and nature of Islamic terror in India which is a millennium old.

3. John Bew, 'The Tragic Cycle: From Sykes-Picot to the rise of ISIS-the Western Powers and the Middle Ages,' p. 23-27, in *The New Statesman*, 15-21 Aug 2014, London.
4. *The Daily Mail*, 15 January, 1922 (All the British newspaper sources cited in this paper are from the British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London, collected by the author. Similarly all the primary archival materials have been collected by the author from New Delhi, London and Hull).
5. *The Daily Mail*, 22 January, 1922.
6. Elliot Friedland, 'Reasons Why the US Coalition Against the ISIS is an Empty Shell,' The Clarion Project, Sept 18 2014. Gopal Krishna, 'Khilafat Movement in India' in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1968, p. 37-53.

For more on Khilafat/Caliphate, see Anwar Shaikh, '*Islam and Terrorism*', Principality Publishers, Cardiff, 2004. Hindu writers' Forum Delhi (ed.) 2009. Chapter 8, Caliphate, p. 205-234. He mentions that in mid 1990s, Hizb-ul-Tahrir, which had its representatives in London believed that "all the Muslims in the world must unite to form a Khilafat." Originally, they sought to accomplish this goal through peaceful means but the method having failed to prove its efficacy, it soon turned into terrorism, the most significant tool of realizing Islamic purposes. I recall with pleasure a meeting with Anwar Sheikh at his Cardiif home in July 1994, when he had spoken at length about some of these aspects of Islamic behavior pattern and what sustains it). Also see, Saradindu Mukherji, "Soviet Experience with Islam" in *Manthan*, vol.xiv, nos.3,4, July-December 1993.

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8. *Ibid.*
9. Vidya Naipaul, '*Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*' (1979), '*India: A Wounded Civilization*' (Penguin, 1980), '*Beyond Belief. Islamic Excursion Among the Converted*' (Vintage, 1998), shows brilliantly how the people converted to Islam change their mindset and culture.

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Hereafter Memorandum Indian Muslims
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14. Pal, pp.372-73, p.390.
15. B.R. Nanda, (ed), The Collected works of Lala Lajpat Rai. Vol.II, Manohar, Delhi,2008. pp.144,
16. Jawaharlal Nehru, Autobiography , p.46
17. Lajpat Rai, op.cit, p.165
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20. Mujeeb, Ibid, p. 400.
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"Enlarged by alleged insults to their religious leaders, the Moplahs of Malabar, Muslims of descended from Arab immigrants, rose in rebellion, first against Hindu landlords. An "independent Muslim state" was declared, arson and murder took place, and some Hindus were forcibly converted."In Understanding the Muslim Mind"(Penguin,1987), p.102. In a similar vein, the Pakistani historian casually mentions, "In their enthusiasm, the Mappilas forcibly converted many Hindus to Islam, though no exact figure is available", p. 449 He however accepts, " But jihad and ahimsa could hardly go together", p. 447 in Pan Islamism in British Indian Politics. A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924. Leiden, Brill 1999. Read Koenraad Elst's masterly study of this negationist mindset in Negationism in India: Concealing the Record of Islam. Enlarged edition. Voice of India, Delhi, 2014.
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## India and New Caliphate

It hardly needs reiteration that India is one of the biggest victims of terrorism, and is now in the crosshairs of two of the most dangerous terrorist organizations, namely the Al Qaeda and the Taliban, and now the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or the ISIS. These Islamic fronts are doing their utmost to gain strike-roots in India. Along with the Students Islamic Movement of India, which is a homegrown terrorist front, these global Islamic organizations are seeking to whip up religious frenzy in India. No wonder India's new government is alert to these growing threats.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had announced in Parliament the government's decision to ban the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, signaling the government's intent to deal with these terror organizations firmly. The Home Minister, addressing a conference of Director Generals of Police at Guwahati, stated that the ISIS was enticing Muslim youth in India. Expressing concern over the extremist ISIS making inroads among India's Muslims, the Home Minister also issued directions to the country's security agencies to maintain a strict watch over any likely ISIS activities.

Security agencies have arrested a youngster from West Bengal, Mehdi Mashroor at Bangalore. This particular individual was active for the last two years on the social media propagating the ISIS' cause, while the security setup remained oblivious of his activities. It was only after a British channel that discovered the identity of this youngster spreading his venomous propaganda in favour of the ISIS on social media that India's security agencies woke up and began a hunt for this individual. It was discovered that Mehdi Mashroor had been working for three years in a firm in Bangalore, drawing a handsome pay. His colleagues were completely unaware of his anti-national activities. His family is based in West Bengal where his father runs a homoeopathic dispensary after his retirement.



New Islamic Empire that included India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Courtesy : Mail Today, July 1, 2014

Intelligence agencies are now investigating into this and have questioned Mashroor's family.

More importantly, Mashroor has shown no regret or remorse at what he has been doing, as he considers his activities as a part of Islamic jihad. He says Indian Muslims are cowards and are therefore afraid to take to armed jihad. It is alleged that this arrested social media jihadi has tweeted over 30,000 tweets in English, Arabic, Persian, Lebanese Arabic and Kurdish. Experts on some of these West Asian languages aren't available in India,



ISIS spreading its wings in India. Courtesy : Mail Today, July 1, 2014



Video released by ISIS showing beheading of Qutubi Christians who were held hostage. Courtesy: Mail Today, 17 February, 2015

because of which security agencies have been thus far unable to decipher what messages were sent out via Mashroor's tweets.

Despite Mashroor's arrests, there are still many websites active in India in about 30 languages, exhorting Muslim youngsters to join the New Caliphate of the ISIS and take to jihad. And despite much effort, India's security agencies have still not been able to unearth who is behind this vast propaganda endeavour for the ISIS. Their surmise is that mashroor may possible have links to Arif Majid, a Muslim youngster from Kalian in Maharashtra who was among the four youngsters from the state who disappeared from their town to surface in Iraq, fighting alongside the ISIS. Majid was traced to Syria, fighting for the ISIS. After being wounded in hostilities, he fled to Turkey from where he contacted his parents in India, expressing his desire to return to the country. The government arranged for his return to India and he was taken into custody by the security agencies upon his arrival here. But despite trying a lot, they failed to garner any valuable information from Arif Majid. His



Arif Majid

relatives and acquaintances too were questioned but were unable to supply any clue as to who had arranged for his passport and finance his travel to Iraq under the cover of a religious pilgrimage. Not only that, the cunning youngster has also been misleading India's security establishment by deliberately supplying contradictory answers.

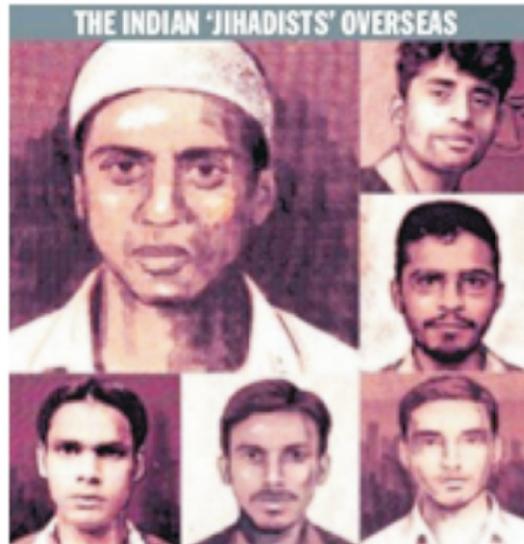
One cannot deny any further that the New Caliphate of the Islamic State, not to forget the Al Qaeda, have gained a foothold in India. These organizations are closely linked to many murderous jihadi outfits. There are also anti-national elements in India who are assisting these organizations, whose web has spread to areas like Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and India's northeastern states. It is also strange that India's intelligence agencies have remained largely ignorant about the anti-national activities of these global terrorist organizations. There is no doubt that the country's intelligence agencies are marked by an utter lack of coordination, and they are mired in nepotism and corruption. Many experts and journalists have written many books exposing the sad state of affairs of India's intelligence setup, but successive governments till now have not made any serious effort to address the situation. The central and various state governments together spend an estimated Rs. 10,000 crores of taxpayers' hard-earned money on maintaining an elaborate intelligence establishment, who however, have largely failed to unearth the nefarious designs of the country's enemies. Terrorists continue to strike at will wherever they choose to and India's hapless citizens are left counting the dead of their near and dear ones.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Lt. Gen Subrata Saha of the Indian army has expressed concern at some youngsters in the state waving the black flags of the New Islamic Caliphate recently established in Iraq. Lt. Gen Saha has said that incidents of jihadi sympathizers wearing masks and shouting anti-India slogans is a warning sign for the country, while former J&K Chief Minister Umar Farooq wanted people to "ignore these incidents", dismissing them as "pranks by some youngsters" not to be taken seriously.

But who can deny that there have been pro-ISIS demonstrations in the Kashmir Valley over the last year and more. It is astounding that the government has chosen to ignore such happenings. No demonstrator has been arrested by the police so far. These demonstrations of empathy with the ISIS began in Srinagar with the onset of Eid-ul-Fitr, when some youngsters waving black ISIS flags shouted anti-India slogans. There have been at least four such demonstrations and yet the government hasn't deemed it necessary to take them with the seriousness these incidents merit.

Another terrorist outfit called the Ansar-ul-Tauheed has sprung up in the Kashmir Valley, which has in its website openly welcomed the

establishment of a new caliphate in Iraq. This new terrorist gang has also incited Muslims to "free India of the slavery of infidels" by taking to the path of jihad, and living up to the deeds of Muslim invaders like Mohammad bin Qasim, the Mahmud of Ghazni and Ahmed Shah Abdali. It wants Muslims to jump into jihad with the Qur'an in one hand and the sword in the other. The website reportedly belongs to one Maulvi living in Karnataka, Abdul Qadir Imar of 40 years of age. Imar is said to have been educated in the Dar-ul-Uloom Nadwa Islamic seminary in Lucknow. It was reported that this Maulvi had fled to Pakistan and is now counted among the Pakistani extremist outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban's leaders. A few months ago, Imar was also reported to have sneaked into India via Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, in order to lure Kashmiri youngsters to his new outfit.



Clockwise from top: Sultan Abdul Kadir Armar, Mohd Sajid, Salim Isakki, Mohd Hussain Farhan, Mohd Shafi Armar, Mirza Shadab Baig

Indian youths who had gone to participating in Islamic Jihad

This jihadi gangleader has, in a recent tweet message, said, "After the dawn of a new era in Iraq, it is the duty of every Muslim to embark for Afghanistan to take part in jihad. Let the cow-worshipping Brahmins and all infidels of the world know that Indian Muslims are not cowards. They can sacrifice their lives for the sake of taking Islam to its pinnacle". Photos of secret terror training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan, in which terrorist recruits from India are being trained, too have been posted with this tweet.

The ISIS has opened three websites in Urdu, Tamil, Malayalam and English, in which appeals to Muslims in India to join jihad in large numbers if they wish to be free of "atrocities by infidels on Muslims". According to this website, Shahnawaz of Azamgarh, Dr. Abu Rashid Ahmed of Mumbai, Muhammad Sajid of Bangalore and Mirza Sadab Beg of Aurangabad have joined the cause of jihad as a result of its appeal.

And yet the country's security agencies have failed to show the required seriousness regarding the growing threat to India from these Islamic extremists, which is amply evident from the fact that no arrests of any youth going abroad for joining the ISIS jihad have been made so far. Neither has there been any serious effort to discover the organizations that lure Indian youngsters to the jihadi cause.

It is also interesting to note that most of India's Urdu newspapers have been trying to whitewash the activities of this outfit Ansar-ul-Tauheed, by saying that the New Caliphate of the ISIS is actually set up by the US and Israel, who wish to divide the world's Muslims so that they cannot stand up to the threat of America and Israel. The Urdu press in India also accuses the US of wanting to engineer conflict between Shias and Sunnis. It accuses Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, who was earlier in Al Qaeda, of forming the ISIS at America's behest and thereby making Muslims a target of ISIS atrocities and American reprisals. Ancient Shia religious sites, which were hundreds of years old, have been demolished by bombs and rockets. The 1,200-year-old tombs Caliph Umar and Farooq located in Iraq have been reduced to rubble. The new self-styled Caliph has also threatened to destroy all holy sites of the Shia sect in Iraq and to sell Shia women and children as slaves.

However, despite the reverse propaganda by Urdu newspapers, a large section of the country's Muslims is taking the self-styled new Caliph's words rather seriously. For instance, a well known professor Salman Nadwi, who is a nephew of the deceased founder of the Dar-ul-Uloom Ali Miya, has announced that one lakh Sunni Muslims must march to Iraq to enlist in the New Caliphate's jihad. Salman Nadwi also wrote to the Sultan of Saudi Arabia, requesting him to make arrangements for this proposed Muslim jihadi contingent and also the money to equip them with modern weapons. It is another matter that Nadwi had to retract his statement within a few months, under intense pressure.

Shia's of course, were not to be left behind. Anjuman Hyderi, a Shia organization set up camps asking Shia Muslims to join in large numbers in their own jihad against the New ISIS Caliphate. It also claimed that one lakh Shia Muslims had already enlisted to leave for Iraq. This Shia organization even demanded passports and immediate visas from the Iraqi embassy in India, for ten thousand people, including women, to enable them to leave for Iraq rightaway.

After the 46 Indian nurses from Kerala abducted by the ISIS in Iraq were freed after India's intervention, dozens of Muslim youth demonstrated at Chennai's Jama Masjid, waving the ISIS black flag. Astonishingly, the police did not deem it necessary to take any of them into custody. There was only some slight questioning of the mosque's imam.

The country's security agencies have finally admitted that many Muslim youth from various parts of India have joined the ISIS and are fighting in its jihad. Four youngsters from Mumbra near Mumbai were the first ones to write to their family members of their having left for Iraq to join the ranks of jihad. Police questioning of their families revealed that the youngsters had left for Iraq under the pretext of pilgrimage, only to join the ISIS. It is also surprising that while on one hand the government has signalled its intent to deal with terrorism firmly, on the other the police are saying that anyone who returns to India peacefully after having gone abroad to join the jihadis, will not face police action. The families of Arif majid, Aman Tandel, Fahd Sheikh and Shaheen Tankal met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and requested him to somehow bring their children back home safely. Reports say that of these youth, Arif Majid has been killed in Iraq. Home Minister Rajnath Singh too has been rather dismissive of the threat the ISIS and its sympathizers pose.

However, the country's security and intelligence agencies have finally become alert. Security agencies are of the opinion that about 200 to possibly 1,000 members Indian youngsters, both male and female, are currently active in the ISIS jihad. Police in Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh arrested 40



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

youth in this connection, who were headed for Iraq. The Islamic State has been appealing to Indian Muslims through its websites, in various Indian languages, to join its jihad. A resident of Canada called Abu Muslim, has been shown using a rocket launcher in one of the website images. Not only that, the new Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi is shown appealing to youngsters in fluent Tamil and Malayalam to join the

Caliphate's jihad against "non-believers". Books in Urdu, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam are also available on the website. Images of the destruction of the Babri Masjid and communal riots in India have also been posted on YouTube in order to inflame Muslim passions.



A Jordanian pilot was set ablaze

The ISIS has also spread its wings in the Kashmir Valley, a fact corroborated by the Daily Mail (July 1, 2014). A dozen jihadi outfits in Pak-occupied Kashmir have been brought under a single umbrella called the "United Jihad Council". Its chief Syed Salahuddin has claimed that the portion of Kashmir under "India's illegal occupation" will be "freed" with the help of the "Islamic warriors" fighting in Iraq. Salahuddin also claimed that various terrorist organizations like the Harkat-ul-Ansar, Hizb-ul-Mujahiddeen, Jamait-ul-Mujahiddeen, Al Jihad, Al Barak, Al Badr, Akhwan-ul-Musalmeen (Muslim Brotherhood) Tehreek-e-Mujahiddeen have established ties with Islam's new Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi and also that all these jihadi organizations have cast their network in the part of Kashmir under India's control. Salahuddin said they would welcome any Islamic jihadi outfit wishing to take part in the cause of "Kashmiris' freedom". He bitterly opposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif extending a hand of friendship to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Speaking at a function at Muzaffarabad in pak-occupied Kashmir, Salahuddin said that the Islamic world supported his terrorist organization's anti-India jihad and they would not rest until they had attained "freedom" for Kashmir. Talks between India and Pakistan to solve the Kashmir issue had failed to yield any result, and jihad was the only answer. All Muslims of the world must join this jihad to free Kashmiris from India's slavery.

*The Dainik Munsif* (October 23, 2014) reported that the police apprehended two youngsters at the Secunderabad railway station. They had reportedly come from Maharashtra to lure Telangana's Muslims to join the jihadi cause. Police said that Shah Mudassar aged 25 came from Umarkheda,

while Shahab Ahmed Khan of 24 years of age was from Angoli. Written material on how to make bombs was found with them. Upon being questioned, the duo revealed that Muttasam Ballah of Hyderabad had made contact with them over the Internet and enticed them with the promise of arranging a trip to Afghanistan and then onwards sending them to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi's camp. Mudassar is a graduate and was an active member of the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) till it was banned, after which he joined an organization called Indian Minority Students. Shahab was the associate of Mansoor Ali Peerbhoy, media-in-charge of the Indian Mujahiddeen. The police say that both these youngsters have been propagating the jihadi cause among Muslim youngsters in the social media.

They were also promised a visa to Afghanistan along with economic assistance. They also came into contact with Abu Sheikh and Qamran Shah in Pakistan through Facebook. Mudassar and Shahab were then told to contact Zahid al Hindi who was then living in Afghanistan, who asked them to go back to Hyderabad and contact Mir Shaukat, Sameer Khan and Masad Balla, who would arrange for their trip to Afghanistan and jihadi training. The duo were asked to later return to India to do jihad for establishing an Islamic state. A cash of Rs. 20,000 was recovered from them. Police sources said that Masadallah is the son of Maulana Abdul Alim Islahi of Hyderabad, whose elder brother Azmi was gunned down by the Gujarat police in an encounter. The Gujarat police had come to Hyderabad to arrest him. In the ensuing encounter with Azmi along with other terrorists, the Gujarat police team eliminated this terrorist.

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## **New Caliphate—a saga of Bloodshed and Barbarism**

The civil war raging in Syria has assumed serious proportions. Syria's jihadi forces, battling the country's Asad regime, have entered Iraq too in a bid to topple Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's regime. After capturing Tikrit and Mosul in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) announced the establishment of a new Caliphate. The self-styled Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has declared himself to be the leader of 'all Muslims' and that subservience to his command is mandatory for them. According to Baghdadi, 73 countries of the planet are part of his Caliphate as Muslims had once ruled over them. Baghdadi has named himself caliph Ibrahim and has exhorted Muslims all over the world to come to Iraq and Syria to join his jihad to make his Caliphate victorious.

The entire area of India has been included in the new Caliphate's proposed territory. The new Caliph has announced that all of India, and indeed all countries ruled by non-Muslims will soon be Islamized. The self-declared Caliph has also declared that jihad against India will begin from Kashmir. The chairman of the United Jihad Council in Pak-occupied Kashmir, Syed Salahuddin too has been boasting of "freeing Kashmir from India's clutches".

Since India imports a fourth of its oil from Iraq, civil strife there is bound to affect India's economy and its military preparedness too. It is therefore, of utmost importance that we monitor the developing situation in Iraq closely.

At a seminar organized by the India Policy Foundation (IPF) last year, the Syrian ambassador had revealed the stark truth that Indian nationals were present in Syria, taking part in the rebels' offensive against the Bashar al Asad government. The UPA government in India was prompt to deny this, but the new government has admitted that many Muslim youngsters from India are indeed in Syria and actively taking part in the ISIS jihad. These

youngsters are reportedly from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir. Intelligence agencies are looking into the matter.

The self-appointed Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has also announced that the New Caliphate will have no place for Shias and non-Muslims. He has also threatened to destroy all religious sites of Shias in Iraq, which has triggered a sharp reaction among the Shia Muslim community everywhere including India. Anjuman Hyderi, a prominent Shia organization in India, has threatened to send one lakh youngsters to Iraq to fight for the Shia cause, sparking off tensions between Shias and Sunnis and incidents of violence too in Lucknow.

Most in India do not know much about the Caliphate and it is therefore necessary to shed some light on this. The word 'Caliph' or Khalifa in Arabic means successor. According to Islamic traditions, the Caliph is a successor of Prophet Mohammad, Islam's founder. Prophet Mohammad had chosen Abu Bakr as the first Caliph, after whom Umar became his successor. When Umar was murdered by a Sunni Muslim, Usman was chosen as the Caliph. He too was murdered four years later, to be succeeded by Ali, Prophet Mohammad's son-in-law. Ali too was murdered while reciting the Qur'an.

Shias do not accept the first three caliphs, believing that they were not appointed by popular consent but in a whimsical manner. They accept only Ali to be the first caliph, which is the original cause of the Shia-Sunni divide and later conflict. Gradually, over the centuries, the post of the Caliph assumed that of a ruler or king among the Muslims. The tradition of the Caliphate continued for 1,400 years. It was finally abolished in 1924 by Turkish President Kemal Ataturk.

Why have the jihadis suddenly decided to revive the Caliphate 90 years after its abolition? Islamic traditions place the Caliph as the head of the world's Muslims. He is both their religious and political head and enjoys a certain authority over even Muslim rulers like sultans and nawabs. Even powerful Islamic rulers throughout history desired an edict from the then caliph to legitimize their rule in the eyes of the ummah (Muslim community), a tradition that continued for a thousand years.

It is keeping this background in view that Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has claimed to be the new Caliph of all Muslims. Baghdadi once belonged to the Al Qaeda terrorist brigade and was even arrested in the US in 2003, serving time in prison. He was released in 2009. The Al Qaeda's own background in Iraq is no less intriguing. It was a Jordanian terrorist leader, Abu Musaf al

Zarqawi, who had taken part in the Mujahideen's jihad against the Russians in Afghanistan in the 80s, who later set up a new jihadi outfit called the Al Tawheed Al Jihad, to redirect the Islamic jihad against America. Zarqawi later made Iraq his base, coming into contact with the Al Qaeda, who made him their Amir or chief. It was in October 2006 that this new organization was given the name of Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), under the leadership of Abu Umar Al Baghdadi and Al Misri. The outfit began its jihad with attacks on American forces occupying Iraq. US forces killed them both in 2019, following which Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi, whose original name is said to be Ibrahim Alwad Al Badri, assumed command of the ISI. A hardcore Sunni, Baghdadi is said to be a resident of Samra in Iraq and has a PhD from Baghdad University. He was successful in drawing Sunnis to his objective of setting up an exclusive Sunni jihadi organization, during his prison term. It is also reported that Saudi Arabia is helping Baghdadi's outfit in every way, as it wants to counter Iraq's Nouri al-Maliki's regime, which is setting up a Shia militant organization with Iran's help.

Baghdadi began preaching his Sunni exclusivist cause in 2010, soon after his release from an American prison, accusing Iraq's Maliki regime of wanting to finish off the country's Sunnis in collusion with the Chinese. He vowed that his organization, the Islamic State of Iraq would fight for Sunni rights against the Nouri al-Maliki regime. Baghdadi's new organization soon grew in reach and influence, soon stepping into the civil war in neighbouring Syria as well. The ISI also gained control over many Iraqi oilfields, forcibly extorting money from producers and businessmen. Syria's president Bashar al Asad, battling rebels at home, possibly might not have paid adequate attention to this new emerging threat. Turkey and Saudi Arabia, two Sunni states who wish to see the Alawite and largely Shia Syrian government toppled, have been quietly but effectively assisting Baghdadi's organization, which expanded its name to include Syria too. The ISI now came to be known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), but soon changed again to be known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi's new jihadi organization enjoyed a stunning series of victory, defeating the Iraqi government army and soon overrunning the towns of Faluja, Mosul and Tikrit. Alarmed at this turn of events, both the US and Russia have been helping the beleaguered Nouri al Maliki regime with weapons.

The New Caliphate believes in the Al Taqfiri ideology of Islam, to which Saudi rulers adhere. According to this ideology, Muslims who do not

follow the principles of their faith are worse than even infidels and have no right to live. This ideology is thoroughly opposed to any dargahs or tombs being built for the deceased. No wonder many ancient historic monuments in the ISIS-controlled areas of Iraq have been razed to the ground by Baghdadi's jihadi marauders. The New Caliphate has declared its intent to implement its ideology everywhere, throwing the regimes of the Middle East into a panic. The new self-styled Caliph has also threatened to unfurl the black flag of his Islamic Tawheed, and consign the "corrupt" systems of democracy, nationalism and every modern idea to the dustbin, to be replaced with "pure" Islamic rule. Baghdadi has repeatedly appealed to the world's Muslims to join his Islamic jihad. Many jihadi outfits over the globe have begun openly supporting the ISIS and its Caliph, prominent among which are Nigeria's Boko Haram, Mali's Insaredinand Al Shabab in the eastern part of Africa.

Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi and his ISIS are not without challenges from within the Islamic world. The Al Qaeda and Muslim Brotherhood remain fiercely opposed to him, and are trying to cut the ground from beneath his feet, as they are not prepared to relinquish their hold over their following. Baghdadi knows that the world's Muslims continue to regard the period of the ancient Caliphate as Islam's golden age. No Muslim ruler can possibly disregard the authority of a Caliph, which is why he is eager to arrogate himself to that position. Also, in recent months, Iraq's government and army have stemmed the ISIS' run of victories and begun hitting back effectively. Bolstered by arms assistance from Russia and the US, including American airstrikes against the ISIS, the Iraqi army and Kurdish fighters have ousted the ISIS from places like Kobane. And the Syrian regime of Bashar al Asad has shown no sign of falling, but has brutally defeated its rebels- which include many ISIS jihadis- at many places. The ISIS has lost substantial numbers. Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi therefore, is eager and anxious to sell his dream of the return of the "glorious Islamic Caliphate" to Muslims all over the world, so that rich and influential Muslims open their moneybags for him. Muslims are being promised the riches of this so-called new Caliphate, whose sole head will be Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi.

The new Caliph is also making extensive use of the Internet, social media and all modern means of communication to spread the message of jihad and the new Caliphate. He has included 73 countries of the globe in his proposed new Caliphate, an area that includes India, Sri Lanka, China, Xinjiang, Central Asia's Muslim countries, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan,

Iran, Iraq, the entire Arabian peninsula, Turkey, Spain, southern Europe, Egypt, northern Africa and other areas. This new Caliph's exhortation to Muslims is "Arise, O Muslims! Take up arms to wipe out infidels and unbelievers. If you become a martyr you shall enjoy paradise forever and if victorious, you shall attain the position of a Ghazi (killer of infidels) and enjoy the riches in this very world."

This new Caliphate, which is nothing but an attempt to sell a dream world to the world's Muslims, has met with fierce opposition from Shias and even from some Sunni leaders too. The success of this so-called new Caliphate is highly doubtful, and it too likely to end in failure accompanied by bloodshed. Every Caliphate in Islam's history has been accompanied by warfare and bloodletting on a huge scale, right from the days of the Prophet, his successors and the battlefield of Karbala, with women and innocent children too not being spared by the zealots of Islam and jihad. Muslims have been shedding the blood of fellow-Muslims in the quest of an imaginary perfect Islamic Caliphate. The issue of who is a Muslim and who is a kafir (infidel) has not been settled till date, with sects like Ahmediyas, Bahais and others being dubbed as infidels by the Islamic orthodoxy, and slaughtered in countries like Pakistan. Given Islam's history, the New Caliphate announced by the ISIS' self-styled leader is headed towards a similar fate, accompanied of course, by bloodshed and atrocities against humanity.

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## The Blood-Soaked History of Caliphate

According to Islamic traditions, the Caliph is both a religious as well as political head. The very early Islamic society insisted that Caliph must belong to the Quraysh tribe (Prophet Mohammad's tribe). The Qur'an says that the world's ruler must come from the Quraysh tribe. Islamic traditions also confer the position of Imam on the Caliph, i.e., impressing upon believers that the Caliph is their religious head as well, apart from being their temporal ruler. It was Abbasi Caliph Mansoor who in AD 1775 for the first time claimed that he was Allah's sultan on earth.

The first four caliphs in Islamic history had the title of Khilafat-e-Rashida. This is generally regarded by Muslim historians as the "golden age" of Muslim caliphs. However, a close analysis of the period of the rule of these caliphs certainly belies Muslim historians' claim. Shias claim that before Prophet Mohammad passed away, he had willed his son-in-law Hazrat Ali to be his successor, but despite this it was Abu Bakr who became the Caliph. The very next day after his ascension to Caliphhood, Muslims swore loyalty to him on his hand. The land of Arabia had two empires on its boundaries. One was the Persian Empire, whose ruler was known as the Qisra. The other was the Roman Empire of the East or the Levant, also known as the Byzantine Empire, whose ruler was known as the Kaiser. The caliph sent Hazrat Khalid bin Walid with an Islamic army to attack Persia and was successful in conquering a large part of it. Walid was then sent on another expedition against Syria.

Abu Bakr's rule lasted only for two-and-a-half years. It was during his reign the Qur'an Majeed was put down in writing, known as Musahaf-e-Siddiqui. Bakr chose Hazrat Umar as his successor, who was his close relative. Umar's period saw Muslims conquer the whole of Persia and Syria. Mesopotamia (Iraq) was then invaded and conquered. Egypt was the next victim of Islam.

Hazrat Umar remained the Caliph for ten and a half years, before being murdered by a Persian. Umar was succeeded by Usman as the third caliph who was the brother-in-law of the Prophet, only to be murdered by other Muslims who were opposed to his Caliphhood. Umar's killing triggered off a civil war amongst Muslims following which Hazrat Ali arose to become their fourth caliph. Ali's reign was met by open opposition by his fellow Muslims; the revolt was led by Prophet Mohammad's wife Ayesha. However all of Ayesha's allies were killed in this internecine war and she herself was taken prisoner. The intra-Muslim conflict raged for another four years, known as the age of Fitna in Islam. After this battle, Hazrat Ali chose Kufa as his capital but Amir Muaviah, the governor of Syria, refused to recognize him, and both sides were soon locked in a bloody conflict. Hazrat Ali himself was cut down by Ibn Malzam while performing his namaz. In keeping with Shia traditions, Ali had not anointed his successor. However, after Ali's murder, his followers in Kufa enthroned his son Hasan as the next caliph. This provoked an armed attack by Amir Muaviah on Iraq, forcing Hasan to flee to Medina. The caliphate was now forcibly taken over by Amir Muaviah, which was the beginning of Malukiat or monarchy in Islam.

Thus began the caliphate of the Umayyid dynasty. The Muslim conquest expanded to Africa during Amir Muavia's reign. The new caliph now made Damascus his capital. Arab armies spread terror and destruction wherever they went, bringing loot and plunder, and the massacre of lakhs of innocent people. The wealth looted from the lands they conquered was used by the new caliph to build palatial and opulent dwellings, whereas the earlier caliphs lived in houses made of mud. Amir Muaviah began living in resplendent style befitting monarchs. Always under the threat of being murdered, Muaviah also recruited armed bodyguards for his own safety. All looted wealth was previously regarded as the property of the millat (the worldwide Muslim community). Amir Muaviah now appropriated all wealth gotten by plunder as his own, and also made the Caliphate hereditary. Throwing all previously-established norms to the winds, Muaviah made his son Yadiid his successor in the face of stiff opposition from his people. The historic Battle of Karbala took place during Muaviah's period and upon his orders, all of Prophet Mohammad's descendants were brutally put to death.

The Umayyad Caliphate lasted from 661 AD to 750 AD, during which 12 caliphs ruled in succession. Ayesha, the tenth wife of Prophet Mohammad,

was murdered on the orders of Amir Muaviah. Everyone who raised his voice against the Umayyad caliphate met a similar fate. Their number was in many thousands. The Muslims had made earlier attempts to conquer Sindh in India, but were beaten back each time. Hajjaj, the governor of Basra in Iraq, sent his 17 year-old son-in-law Mohammad bin Qasim to attack Sindh's capital Brahmad. Unfortunately, some local traitors switched sides to join Qasim, making possible his victory. The consequences for Sindh were devastating as it became a part of the Islamic empire.

Except for a few, most caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty were pleasure-seeking debauches. They indulged in drinking and making merry. Divisions among the Muslims too began deepening rapidly during the Umayyad period, though it was during this period that Islamic rule swept across India, China, Africa and Europe. Because it had the blood of Prophet Mohammad's relatives on its head, Kharjis, Shias, Ismailis, Hashemites and other Muslim sects all strove to destroy the Umayyad dynasty. The Abbasids now took advantage of the mutual conflicts among Muslims to capture the Caliphate. Abdullah bin Mohammad Ali was the first Abbasid caliph. Immediately after becoming the Caliph, he put all male members of the Banni Umayyads to death. He chose Anbar in Iraq as his capital. According to Muslim historians, this particular caliph was instrumental in the massacre of over 600,000 human beings to acquire his throne. The Abbasid armies spared no man, woman or child after they captured Damascus. All citizens of this historic city were massacred or burnt alive after the Abbasids looted it. The graves of Amir Muaviah and all other Umayyad figures were dug up. Even young children were not spared; not even those who begged for their lives. No wonder historians call Abdullah bin Mohammad Ali a 'saffah' or one whose hands are soaked with blood. The Abbasid Caliphate ruled from 750 to 755 AD, producing 21 caliphs, ten of whom came from the Abbasid dynasty.

The Abbasid Caliphate, according to historical records, massacred over 50,000 Muslims in its conquest of Damascus. The Umayyad mosques were converted into stables for the victorious Abbasid armies' horses. When Mosul rose in revolt against this caliphate, the Caliph's Yaiyya promised pardon to those who surrendered, but actually slaughtered over 20,000 rebels who did surrender. Women were put to rape. Noted Shia historian Mohammad Ali Tibata has written that the Abbasid Caliphate was based on deceit and betrayal. Caliph Mansoor imprisoned Islam's renowned

scholar Imam Azam Abu Hanifa, who later died of torture. Abu Muslim Khorasani, to whom the Abbasid caliphate owed its existence was invited to the capital and later murdered. Another caliph, Al Mehdi kept over 7,000 captive women in his harem and freely indulged in wine. He also encouraged music, caring little for Islamic injunctions which forbid music. Arab historians say that he was murdered on the instructions of his mother Khezran. The Muslim historian Haroon Rashid glorifies this particular caliph, but another historian Ibrahim Ibn Mehdi says that Haroon Rashid himself murdered his own brother Al Amin. Yet another writer Ibn Jareri Al Basri says that this caliph had a perverse fondness for eunuchs and had bought hundreds of eunuchs as slaves and kept them in his palace.

Muslim historians consider Caliph Mahmoon Rashid to be Islam's greatest ruler, but when the illustrious Islamic scholar Imam Ahmed bin Juballe opposed him on the question of interpretation of the Qur'an, he was put to death. This particular caliph had a specially made oven laden with sharp nails, to torture his opponents. Any Islamic scholar who stood up to him would be thrown into the oven. Caliph Jafar Motkal dug up the grave of Hazrat Imam Husein and had it ploughed. There were twelve other caliphs in the Abbasid dynasty, the final one being Muqtaki, who was murdered. Later Abbasid caliphs were forced to become mere puppets of Turkish rulers. In all, there were 37 Abbasid caliphs.

British historian Sir Thomas W. Arnold in his book *The Caliphate* stresses the fact that the last caliph of Baghdad was a puppet of the Turkish Ottoman Sultanate. He was murdered in 1928 and his brother Kahir was made his successor. Two years later, Kahir was blinded and thrown into prison, and his brother Radi made the next puppet caliph. Kahir had to wander the mosques of Baghdad, begging for food. The Turkish rulers of Baghdad would appoint or overthrow anyone they pleased as the caliph. Those falling out of favour could also be murdered. Caliph Muqtdir had to flee Baghdad to save his own life. No Muslim ruler was ready to give him refuge. He finally surrendered himself to Turkish commander Tuzun, only to be deposed from the caliphate and then blinded on Tuzun's orders. The authority of later caliphs, if any, remained confined to Baghdad.

Sir Arnold says that though the caliph had no real political power under Turkish rule, he was still regarded as an important religious figure in the Islamic society. Any new sultan in the various Islamic kingdoms would seek a religious edict from the caliph. The Islamic Slave Dynasty was established in India around the year 1200. Sultan Iltutmish of this dynasty

sent a delegation to Baghdad to obtain an edict in his name, as a sort of theocratic approval for his reign, and also paid a handsome sum of money in return. Alauddin Khilji of this dynasty did likewise. The Slave Dynasty sultans of Delhi struck coins which bore the name of caliph Must Hazar. This caliph was killed by the victorious Mongols, but coins struck in his name continued to remain in vogue for the next hundred years.

Mohammad bin Tuglaq, the sultan of Delhi sought and obtained a Baghdad caliphate edict for himself in 1340 AD, imprinting Caliph Mushtaqafi's name on his sultanate's coins. Though this caliph expired afterwards, the coins struck in his name continued till the fall of the Tuglaq Dynasty. It is thus clear that Muslim rulers used the Islamic Caliphate's name and religious authority to cement their reign. Arnold also says that various Muslim rulers also tried themselves to become the caliph to further strengthen their hold over the *ummah* or Muslim community. Al Balqani, an Islamic propagandist also announced – under the pressure of such rulers – that it was not mandatory for the caliph of the Muslims to belong to the Quraysh tribe, which was a pre-condition for Islam's earliest politico-religious rulers. Khalil Sultan, grandson of the Turkish invader Taymoor (Timur), usurped the Caliphate and called himself Amir al Musalmeen. This became a practice with later Turkish rulers who captured Baghdad. Their rule however, was ended in 1417 AD by Huzoon Husein.

The Abbasid Caliphate can be called the period of the rise of Muslim rule and way of life, though it was less widespread than the banni Umayyids. Spain and Morocco still remained outside its reach. Yet, the Abbasid Caliphate straddled an area of 5,000 miles from the Indus in India to the Atlantic Ocean (north Africa). This vast sultanate had Turks, Pathans, the people of Sindh, Persians, Kurds, Arabs, Egyptians and Spaniards living in it. The confluence of these diverse peoples gave rise to a new culture and way of life which was considered refined in that period. It was by no means purely an Arab caliphate. While Persians dominated the administration of this empire, it were the Turks who held sway over its army. Indians too held positions of importance in this Islamic empire. Historians are of the view that this caliphate would engineer clashes of the Arabs with non-Arabs to safeguard its own position. It wasn't long before internecine conflict and bloodshed visited this caliphate. There were significant material achievements in agriculture and architecture - for which the Abbasid Caliphate sought the services of Hindus and Russians - and also the import of over four hundred scholars from India to Baghdad, to teach

the Caliphate the sciences of astrology, astronomy, Ayurveda, mathematics and other subjects. It is said that the Abbasid Caliphate also built a hospital in Baghdad that could treat over a thousand patients. A Hindu physician Bharatraj was appointed the head of this hospital.

The Abbasid Caliphate gradually grew weaker. Mutavakkil Abbasi was its last strong ruler in its golden period, after which the caliphate began falling into decline, with regional Muslim rulers asserting their independence. Imad-ud-Daula was the chief Abbasid ruler, after which his brother Rukn-ud-Daula became the caliph. Muazz-ad-Daula captured this caliphate in 945 AD, after which the Abbasids were rulers only in name. Azud-ud-Daula of this dynasty was instrumental in the development of Baghdad and Persia, but the Abbasids' era was nearing its end. The Abbasid Caliphate was taken down by the Seljuks when they captured Baghdad in 1055 AD. This also began an era of Shia-Sunni conflict and bloodshed, particularly in Baghdad. The city gradually began losing its grandeur. Musiyam Khalifa, the then caliph, was a mere puppet of the Turkish rulers. He appointed a Shia, Moin-ul-uddeen Al Khami, as his minister, who made common cause with Mongol ruler Halaqu Khan and prompted him to attack Baghdad. Halaqu attacked Baghdad with a huge Mongol army and massacred the inhabitants of Baghdad after promising them safety if they surrendered. Muslim historian Maulana Akbar Shah Najibabadi puts the number of Muslim victims of the Mongol invasion at 1 crore 6 lakhs. The Mongols looted the Caliphate's treasure, which was worth millions. Halaqu also ordered the Caliph to be tied to a pole and beaten to death. The Muslim ummah worldwide remained without a caliph for the next three-and-a-half years as a result of this devastating Mongol invasion.

Malik Muzaffar of the Mamluk Dynasty of Egypt then assumed power and defeated the invading Tartars and Mongols. Thousands of Tartars were slaughtered. Rukn-ud-Deen Beyburus succeeded him and called himself Malik Al Tahar. He summoned the 37th Abbasid Caliph to Cairo and swore loyalty to the latter. Historians record a total of twelve Abbasid caliphs in Cairo, though their actual authority in Egypt was only in name. They were limited to issuing religious edicts in favour of whichever ruler succeeded the previous one. Egypt was attacked and conquered in 1516 AD by one Salim who imprisoned the country's last Abbasid sultan Tamin Beg. Syria too fell to these invaders. Salim took 55 caliphs of the Abbasid regime to Turkey, where they had to serve as puppets of the Ottoman sultans. Turkish sultan Salim deposed of the Caliph Mohammad and himself

became the next Caliph of the *ummah*. This caliphate had a total of 18 caliphs.

British historian Sir Edwin Pears says that the process of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire had begun by 1887. Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro had become independent of Turkish rule. Russia attacked Turkey in 1877 and Russian armies surrounded Istanbul. Turkey had to cede Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austrian Empire as an outcome of the Treaty of Berlin that year; Romania, Serbia and Montenegro had already broken away as independent entities. Thus, the Ottoman Empire's European constituents were now lost. Caliph Abdul Hamid now decided to strengthen his empire in Asia and sent emissaries to Egypt, Tunis, Afghanistan, India, Java and China. But Muslims generally ignored his appeal. The old stipulation of any caliph of Muslims having to belong to Prophet Mohammad's Quraysh tribe came to the fore, which the Turkish rulers were not. Asian Muslims, particularly Sunnis, had no regard for the Turkish sultans.

Abdul Hamid II was the last caliph, after which Turkey's president abolished the institution of Caliphate in 1923. Turkey's National Assembly passed a resolution in March 1924, ending the Caliphate forever. The last Caliph Abdul Hamid had to flee to France to seek refuge.

The Nizam of the Muslim princely state in India's Hyderabad was Mir Usman Ali, who claimed relation to the Ottoman Sultanate. He married off his son to Darashirwa, daughter of the last caliph, in order to himself become the Caliph of Muslims. However, the British put paid to any such plans. A few other Muslims rulers or chieftains too tried to assume the post, but were limited to Africa. Sunni Muslims refused to recognize them as caliphs. The Fatimid Empire, founded in 909 AD in northern Africa was a Shia sultanate. It had refused to recognize the authority of the Abbasid caliphs and tried to set up a Fatimid Caliphate. It conquered Egypt in 968 AD and also established the Al Azhar Mosque, which later grew into the Al Azhar University. The Fatimids ruled for about 300 years before being defeated and overthrown by Syrian ruler Nooruddin. The Fatimid Dynasty had 17 caliphs and lasted up till 1171 AD, Azid being its last caliph.

Hasan bin Ali of the Sharif dynasty claimed Caliphhood in 1924, but the very next year in 1925, another Muslim dynasty, the House of Saud, captured Arabia, forcing Hasan bin Ali to flee Saudi Arabia, though he

continue to claim that he was the Caliph of Muslims. After his passing, his successors ceased making such claims. The historian Arnold says that after the end of the Turkish Caliphate, many Sunni rulers continue to propagate their claims of caliphhood, with the princely states of Malaya (present-day Malaysia) being among them. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Sialkot (pre-Partition India) claimed to be the caliph, mainly upon British instigation. He was based at Gurdaspur in Punjab, but had to flee to Pakistan after Partition. His community, the Ahmediyas, are not even recognized as Muslims by today's Pakistan. Bloody anti-Ahmediya riots broke out in Pakistan in 1958 in which over a lakh of Ahmediyas were killed. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed had to flee to London. His claims of caliphhood were never taken seriously by Sunni Muslims anywhere.

Most notable, the Mughal Empire had never recognized the Ottoman Caliphate. Possibly, the Mughal rulers in India refused to accord a status higher than themselves to the Ottoman rulers. In fact, after Mughal emperor Akbar, his successors called their capital Dar-ul Khilafat (Headquarters of the Caliphate). Shahjahan refused to accord any importance to Turkish ambassador Al Salman Aga, whom Turkish sultan Ibrahim had sent to India. Even Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, whose rule from 1759 to 1806 was limited only to Delhi claimed himself to be the Caliph of all Muslims.

Turkey, which sided with Germany in the First World War, saw the dissolution of its Ottoman Empire following its defeat in the war. Turkey's appeal for assistance from other Muslim states fell on deaf ears. It had already lost Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Shia Muslims never recognized the Turkish sultanate, while Sunnis showed no interest in its caliphate. When Kemal Ataturk announced the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, there was no reaction from the worldwide Muslim community. It was only in India where the supposedly progressive Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress tried to revive this medieval and obscurantist Islamic institution. Former (late) Indian Prime Minister Charan Singh had to admit that it was the Khilafat Movement in India that fanned the flames of Muslim separatism, which tragically resulted in the partition of the country and the creation of a Muslim state called Pakistan.

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## **Divisions in the Islamic World**

Divisions in the Islamic world are by no means new. They only mirror the history of the faith, which its adherents do not want to forget or shed. The fissures within the New Caliphate, therefore, are a continuation of the long tradition of mutual hostility between various denominations of Islam.

The Al Qaeda has in recent years, tried to propagate the idea that the world's Muslims are at the receiving end of everything because there is now Caliphate-like structure to protect them and their interests. The Caliphate is both a political as well as ideological construct. The Caliphate, in essence, means the rule of the successors of Prophet Mohammad, the founder of Islam. It was the Caliph's sword that dispensed the rule of Islam, but the magnitude of Muslim blood that has been shed in the name of the Caliphate is unimaginable. Brothers have murdered brothers, sons have killed their fathers and relatives have slaughtered their blood relatives in order to grab the seat of the Islamic Caliphate. More than half of all Muslim Caliphs met a violent death, dished out by zealous adherents of the faith and not by others.

The same scenario is being repeated now, with the Islamic countries of Iran, Lebanon, Syria- all Shia states- coming together to destroy the newly emerged Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or the ISIS. The heads of these Islamic countries have vowed to wipe out the ISIS. They are of the opinion that the formation of the New Caliphate by the ISIS does not have the sanction of the world's Muslims. Muslim Brotherhood scholar Yusuf al Qazawi has declared that the long lost Ottoman Sultanate of Turkey was the last true Islamic Caliphate. No sundry faction has the right to declare itself a Caliphate, nor can anyone bestow Caliphhood on anyone else, Islamic scholars say, as this violates Islamic principles and the tenets of the Sharia.

This division among various shades of Islam has found resonance in India too, with Maulana Mahmood Madani, a prominent Sunni Muslim leader of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind has opposed the proposed move by a Shia outfit Anjuman Hyderi, to dispatch Shia youngsters to war-torn Iraq. Lucknow's Dar-ul-Uloom Nadwa chief Salman Nadwi, meanwhile has written to the self-styled Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, expressing solidarity and support with the ISIS boss, a move that has drawn the ire of other Muslim leaders who've been quick to dub Baghdadi a terrorist. These Muslim leaders have declared that anyone supporting Baghdadi is a supporter of terrorism, and that Islam does not condone such acts. The pro-ISIS demonstrations by some people in the Kashmir Valley have also come in for condemnation by Muslim leaders elsewhere in the country.

A Turkish religious leader Mohammad Gour Mir, head of the country's religious affairs has declared the Caliphate announced by the ISIS to be against the Sharia and has asked Muslims everywhere to reject it. All claims to Caliphhood after the fall of the Ottoman Sultanate are fraud, according to Mir. The threats being made by the ISIS Caliphate to exterminate Christians are against Islam's tenets. Mir has further said that Muslims living in various countries cannot be governed by a single Caliphate, bemoaning the fact that every day, hundreds of Muslims are being killed by their co-religionists all over the world.

An Urdu newspaper published from Delhi voiced the apprehension that armed conflict may soon break out between the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. The new Caliph has ordered all Muslim rulers to obey him as the Caliph is supposedly the supreme authority in the Islamic *ummah* (worldwide community of Muslims). In other words, Muslim rulers and states must not oppose the ISIS' jihadi militants. The new Caliphate has declared both democracy and monarchy to be anti-Islamic.

There is every possibility of an internecine civil war between the adherents of Al Qaeda and those of the ISIS. The latter is undoubtedly attracting thousands of Muslim youth from all over the world to its cause. Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has emerged as a serious challenger to Al Qaeda's influence on Muslims worldwide, which has declined perceptibly after the elimination of Osama bin Laden. Al Qaeda faces erosion in its ranks, which are defecting to Baghdadi, the new self-declared Caliph of all Muslims. Al Qaeda, which had declared war against the US, now has the ISIS too as its enemy.

Rashid Ansari writing in the *Urdu Times* of Mumbai has openly supported the new Caliphate and has accused Western nations of spreading falsehood against the Islamic State. Ansari has appealed to all Indian Muslims to lend their support to this new Caliphate, though most Urdu newspapers published from India have not accorded much importance to it. Their overall view is that it is the US and Israel which have floated the New caliphate in order to sow division among Muslims. Christians and Jews wish to destroy Muslims, the Urdu press alleges. It is also alleged that both the US and Israel wish to engineer a three-way division of Iraq, under the control of Shias, Sunnis and Kurds. The reason for the emergence of the ISIS is said to be the slaughter of Sunnis in Syria and their persecution by Iraq's current regime, which is predominantly Shia.

The Shias' historical religious sites are being targeted for destruction and captured Shias are being tortured in a most barbaric way by the ISIS. This has raised the spectre of a civil war between the world's Shias and Sunnis. Turkey's position in this whole scenario is most piquant. While its president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has publicly denounced the new Caliphate, Turkey also is assisting the ISIS with weapons. The ruling house of Saudi Arabia, who are Salafists, are not only openly supportive of the new caliphate but are also helping it in every manner possible. The Saudi stance has caused consternation among the smaller Gulf Islamic states, who fear that under the guise of support to the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate, Saudi Arabia actually wished to topple their regimes. It is for this reason that Oman, Yemen, Qatar, the UAE and other Sunni states are opposed to the new Caliphate and have solicited arms assistance from the United States. The new Caliphate has also included 80 per cent of Russian territory in its proposed Islamic empire, prompting Russia to supply the Noori al Mulki regime of Iraq with Sukhoi ground attack aircraft for airstrikes against the ISIS.

The self-appointed Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has proclaimed that his Caliphate will stretch from Spain to Indonesia, and that Islam does not recognize national boundaries. The entire Muslim *ummah* (community) is one, he has said. This has lerted countries like India, China and the countries of Central Asia. Abu Bakr al Baghdadi has also set up a new organization called Al Hayat, to handle th ISIS media affairs, even as the organization claims that Muslim youngsters from the US, Europe, India, Pakistan, Central Asia and elsewhere are flocking to Iraq and Syria. These happenings have alerted the intelligence agencies of these countries. The number of Indian jihadists joining the ISIS is yet to be ascertained.

The truth is that the Shia-Sunni conflict that has been raging over the last 1,300 years has only assumed a different hue with the advent of the ISIS. This conflict began right after Prophet Mohammad's death in 632 AD. The word 'Shia' in Arabic means companion, i.e., a companion of the Prophet. The Shia-Sunni conflict began when in complete disregard of Prophet Mohammad's wishes, Abu Bakr was made the first Caliph. The Caliphate then passed to Hazrat Umar, a close relative of the Prophet. After Umar's murder, another relative of the Prophet, Usman became the Caliph, only to be murdered soon by Ali's supporters. Sunnis do not recognize these first three Caliphs, while Shias believe that Hazrat Ali and his descendants alone are the 'true' Caliphs. Ali's murder sharpened the discord between Shias and Sunnis. Sarwat Soulat, an Islamic scholar has written in his work *Millat-e-Islamia* that Amir Muavia, who then became Islam's Caliph, took over the seat forcibly. Ali's relatives were brutally slaughtered in the battlefield of Karbala. The Shias recognize 12 imams, of which 9 were murdered by the Sunnis, according to the Oxford University Dictionary. All this has only exacerbated the Shia-Sunni conflict, which has raged since the last 1,400 years and has shown no sign of abating. A Sunni scholar Sheikh Suleman al Kalduzhi does mention in his work *Yanabi-e-al-Mutaba* that Prophet Mohammad had said that Ali and his sons Hasan and Husein and nine other imams would succeed him.

Shia religious texts mention Ali al Mustafa as the first imam. He was born at the Kaaba (the holy site at Mecca). Ali was murdered while reciting the Qur'an during the month of Ramzan at Kufa. Hasan, the second imam was born in Medina in the month of Ramzan. He too was murdered and his tomb lies at Karbala. This was followed by a succession of imams, none of whom died naturally. All were murdered in various ways. Shias believe that Mohammad al Mehdi, their 12th imam will again rise one day from his tomb to deliver justice to them.

Shias are fewer in number in the world compared to Sunnis, though the world's prime oil-producing regions in the Islamic countries fall in Shia-dominated regions. Long ago, Shias and Sunnis used to offer namaz in the same mosque and also entered into matrimonial ties with each other. Gradually however, distance between them grew and later turned into enmity. The History of Islamic Peoples mentions that Shias established their rule in Iran, expanding till Europe. They came into conflict with the Sunni Abbasids. The most significant and powerful Shia kingdom was the Fatimid Sultanate in Egypt. The Bijapur Sultanate in Karnataka in south

India was a prominent Shia ruling domain in India, referred to as the Bahmani Sultanate by historians. Golconda in Karnataka, Berar, Bidar and Ahmednagar in Maharashtra and Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh were other prominent Shia kingdoms in medieval India.

Iran is home to the maximum number of Shias, nearly 70 million. Pakistan has around 30 million Shias, while they number around 15 to 25 million in India. Sunnis heavily outnumber Shias in the world.

Sunnis are numerically the predominant sect among the world's Muslims. The word Sunni comes from Sunna, which means one who strictly adheres to the teachings of the Prophet. There are about 73 sects in Islam, according to most Islamic scholars. Muslims are present in 58 countries in Asia and 59 in Africa, and in 44 countries of the American continent. There are 71 countries of the world in which Muslims are in a majority. With 200 million, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world followed by Pakistan and India. Sunnis are the ruling power in 47 countries in the world.

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6

## Who are these Yazidis?

The atrocities being committed on the hapless Yazidi community in Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or ISIL), to force them to convert to Islam, have horrified the civilized world. Till date, the Islamic jihadi barbarians have slaughtered more than ten thousand innocent Yazidis. Women are being raped before their hapless menfolk, with their horrified family members being forced to watch at gunpoint. Yazidi males are then shot, and the raped, tortured and mutilated Yazidi women, adolescent children and infants included, are sold off in bazaars like cattle, as was the practice in the medieval age. Many Yazidi women have been forcibly married off. Protesting women are often hacked to pieces.

It is important to note that these jihadi barbarians justify their inhuman atrocity on the Yazidi community, citing the Qur'an and Hadees. They say that according to the Qur'an, womenfolk of all unbelievers (non-Muslims) are jihadis' property and they have the right to enslave and sell them. According to these believers, rape of even 6 or 7 year-old girls is sanctioned by the Qur'an and the Hadees. Their religious book gives a slave-owner the absolute right to rape as well as punish a woman, and also kill her.

Who are the Yazidis? Why are the barbarians of Islam committing such inhuman atrocities on them? And why are the self-appointed guardians of human rights silent over the sufferings of the Yazidis?

The cruel reality is that the Yazidis, a very ancient community of our planet, have been at the receiving end of atrocities against them for the last 1,400 years. Literature on the Yazidis isn't readily available in English, but French and German scholars have done a great deal of research on this community. Dozens of books on the Yazidis are available in both languages. Many of these books have said that the Yazidis are originally Hindus, whose ancestral land was India, a long time ago. Foreign invaders forced them to



A mass keeling of Yazidis by ISIS terrorists. The Shia Post, August 10, 2014

flee their motherland, after which they had to seek refuge in West Asia and Europe, and are even today a wandering race with no country they can call their own. Even today, the countries of West Asia and Europe where the Yazidis are residents, are not ready to grant them even the basic rights of human citizens, despite their oft-repeated rhetoric of human rights.

Another fact that bears iteration here is that a sustained campaign of hate against the Yazidis has been in vogue for centuries in the Muslim world. They are deliberately conflated with the Caliph Yadidi, under whose orders Prophet Mohammad's grandsons Hasan, Hussain and Abbas were martyred in the Battle of Karbala, by being deprived of even a drop of water. As a result, Muslims have hatred for this community. But the Yazidis have nothing to do at all with the Muslim Caliph Yadidi. That apart, jihadi Muslims have for centuries spread the falsehood about the Yazidi community being "worshippers of Satan". Though this is a complete lie, jihadis have repeated this throughout history, so that no Muslim raises his voice against the atrocities being heaped on the Yazidis.

The plight of the Yazidis in Europe is no different from that of the Roma gypsy community. Shyam Singh and other Indian scholars have through their research on this topic, proven that the ancestors of these few million people who are today forced to live the life of homeless wanderers were indeed Hindus. Those Hindus were forcibly abducted by victorious Islamic invaders from Punjab, Rajasthan and other parts of northern India and sold off as slaves in the bazaars of Ghazni, Heart, Samarqand, Kashgar, Bukhara and other faraway places in West and Central Asia. Arab traders who bought these slaves would further sell those Hindu women after

satiating their lust. The gypsies of Europe are none other than the offspring of those ill-fated Hindus of northern India, victims of Islamic invasion and barbarism. The European nations, who have the temerity to lecture the world about human rights, are not prepared to accord even basic human rights and citizenship to the Roma gypsies, who are truly an unfortunate community without a country of their own. More shocking is the fact that the killing of a gypsy is not even considered a crime in the 'civilized' European countries.

Yazidis are reported to number somewhere between 2 to 2.5 million throughout the world today. They are spread across Iraq, Syria, Germany, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, the Netherlands and Sweden. They have their own dialect called Kumaranji, which is actually a conglomeration of many languages, and is written in many scripts. The Yazidi language contains many words from Sanskrit, Prakrut, Pali, Arabic, Russian, Persian and others. The community the world calls Yazidis actually call themselves Ijiditi.

The Yazidi community is an idol-worshipping one, with the chief deity being the Sun, whom the Yazidis call Mitra, which is one of the Sanskrit names of Sun. They have seven deities that are worshipped in temples. Malik Taous is another main deity whose vehicle is the peacock, similar to Kartikeya, worshipped by Hindus, who rides a peacock. Muslims dub this particular deity as the devil, although Yazidis are at pains to explain that Malik Taous has nothing to do with the devil, but a benign deity who inspires humans to worship God.

Yazidis believe in a single Supreme One who according to them has created the world and handed it over to seven deities. There can be no denying that the present Yazidi faith bears the deep influence of ancient Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam, apart from their ancient faith. Yazidis believe that the Kitabik Kilba and Misfa Rish are among the holy books of these three religions.

The Yazidis' places of worship bear a striking resemblance to Hindu temples. This community believes in rebirth and reincarnation. They believe that the soul obtains a new body after the shedding of the previous one, in accordance with one's karmas or actions. In the Yazidi language Kumaranji, rebirth is referred to as Kal Kifarish or Guhorin. This belief holds that just as the body discards old clothes and dons new ones, so too the soul sheds an old, worn out body and enters a new one. The soul is

eternal, without birth and death. Rebirth is not a belief of either Christianity or Islam. The adherents of both these faiths believe that the soul rests in the grave till the "Day of Judgement" as claimed by their respective holy books the Bible and the Qur'an. They are then transported by angels to reside in heaven or hell for eternity on the basis of their deeds.

Another very striking feature of Yazidi social life is their conformity to a caste system, much like the Hindus, with inter-caste marriage generally being avoided. Same-gotra marriage too is shunned, just as in Hindu society. Yazidis worship five times every day in a temple and if this is not possible, face eastwards towards the sun to say their prayers. Attire of black or deep blue colour is shunned as Yazidis consider these to be inauspicious. Just as among the Hindus, a certain sect of the Yazidis is vegetarian and shuns meat. This Yazidi sect happens to be their priestly class. Their ruling class is called Mir, while the priestly class called Baba Sheikh also has many sub-sects or castes like Fakir, Kyuwail and Kochak. The Yazidi caste that practices traditional medicine and healing is called the Pir, who are considered highly knowledgeable in the science of treatment of ailments.

Yazidis also consider the five elements, viz, earth, air, fire, water and the sky to be sacred and the act of polluting them to be a crime. The community also has their children consecrated by their priest in a special ceremony. Yazidis do not believe in polygamy and adhere to a single life partner. They do not believe in conversions and believe that a Yazidi can only be born and not made. Their beliefs are very similar to those of Hindus. Red is an auspicious colour for the community, while the dead, though not cremated are buried with their heads towards the east, which is an auspicious direction, as in Hinduism. A Yazidi who violates the tenets of the religion faces the punishment of being outcast. Excommunication among the Yazidis is considered a condemnation that has no liberation.

Filli Canas, a German member of his country's parliament who is Yazidi by descent, says that his community's place of origin is indeed India. The Yazidis were forced to quit India over 5,000 years ago and were scattered over Iran, Iraq, Syria, Europe and Russia. Canas also says that his people have suffered persecution and atrocities for over 3,000 years, with many rulers and the followers of other religions targeting them for conversion. The Yazidis have suffered 72 genocides throughout their long and tortuous history, with millions of their community being slaughtered at the hands of Semitic zealots over the centuries. Iraq's Saddam Hussein, so long as he was in power, had unleashed a drive to forcibly convert Yazidis living in Iraq to

Islam, poison-gassing over 20,000 of them. 50,000 Yazidis had to flee to Syria to escape this murderous onslaught.

The global media, which has made much of the Iraqi campaign against the Kurdish people, has not lost much sleep over the sufferings of the hapless Yazidis. The prime reason is that like the Muslims, the world's Christians too hate them and considers them 'Devil worshippers'. Both these Semitic religions hate the Yazidis and want to see them converted to Islam or Christianity.

Yazidi scholars too, have maintained that both Muslims and Christians have been viscerally opposed to their faith right from the outset. Both these Semitic cousins have been striving their utmost for thousands of years to destroy the Yazidis' faith and culture and forcibly make them accept their respective faiths. Genocides by these two religions have been par the course. About 500 years ago, the Muslim caliphs had unleashed a drive to convert 5 lakh Yazidis living in the Ottoman Sultanate to Islam. Under this drive, Turkey alone massacred over 2 lakh Yazidis. Islam's jihadists forced captured Yazidis to consume beef, which is forbidden in their faith as it is in Hinduism. Those who resisted were simply beheaded. Yazidi women and girls would be abducted on the caliph's orders, to be raped and then sold off into slavery. Innumerable Yazidis had to put on the pretence of becoming Sufis simply to escape the atrocities of various Muslim caliphs, and also proclaim their sacred place to be Lalish, near the Iraqi city of Mosul (currently under the occupation of the ISIS).

French scholars are of the view that the Yazidis were forced to relocate to Mount Sinjar in Iraq after having to endure atrocities of successive Muslim rulers over 500 years ago. They also had to flee to Armenia and Georgia in Europe to escape Islam's persecution. The descendants of Yazidis who sought refuge in Russia still practice their ancient traditions. There are temples dedicated to the Sun; many Yazidi places of worship still survive in pockets of Russia, East and Central Europe, especially in Baku where many Yazidi temples dedicated to the worship of fire are even today a testimony to their steadfastness to their religion and culture despite very hostile circumstances. Yazidis later became the targets of the Russian communist dictator Stalin's forced Russification programme, being forced to adopt Russian culture. Later generations of Yazidis were forced to adopt Russian names and discontinue open sun-worship in order to escape persecution by the Soviet communist rulers, but continued to observe their ancient traditions in secrecy. According to Yazidi sources, there are over 400,000

people of the Yazidi faith still surviving in Russia. A dargah of Sheikh Adi Ibn Musafir, one of their important religious figures still exists in Russia, considered a sacred place of pilgrimage by Yazidis, who converge there once every two years.

German scholars say that the DNA of the Yazidis is entirely different from that of Arabs. Their facial and physical features too resemble the ancient Aryan communities and the Yazidis are closely related to Aryans.

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## **Arab World and the New Caliphate**

It is highly imperative for us to consider what effect the rise of the new Islamic Caliphate will have on the Arab world and the world at large. There can be no denying the fact that the US, Britain and other Western powers have been drawn to West Asia and the Arab world in particular because of its immense oil wealth. After the First World War, Britain handed over the reins of Saudi Arabia to Sultan Saud. Control over Jordan and Yemen too was handed to the Hashemite Dynasty, which was loyal to Western colonial powers. The US is simply continuing the same old game. The earlier colonial power Britain was forced to wind up its presence in Iraq after 1930, while America began to expand its footprint.

The then ruler of Iraq Abdul Karim Qasim was a Russian sympathizer. He was murdered at America's behest and in his place was put Abdul Salim Arif, a US supporter. But within a few years, Iraq's Ba'ath Party removed Arif from power, a move instigated by Russia. The US meanwhile, repeated its success in Persia (now Iran), toppling a Russia-supported Prime Minister Mossadegh and installed a monarch, Shah Reza Pehalvi to rule over Iran. The US also began clandestine military assistance to Iran in a major way. Saddam Hussein, after capturing power in Iraq established diplomatic relations with Iran. However, the US began courting Iraq as a counterweight, when it discovered that the Soviet Union was beginning to make inroads in Iran.

Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, following which the US intervened militarily in a massive way, routing the Iraqi armed forces in the First Gulf War of 1991, though Saddam continued to remain in power. Between 1992 and 1995, the US tried its best to eliminate Saddam Hussein and install a puppet Iraqi regime. It instigated Iraq's majority Shias against the country's ruling Sunni minority. The US also began arming Iraq's Kurdish minority, who faced persecution during Saddam's reign. And

finally in 2003, the US invaded Iraq for a second time, overthrew Saddam from power and had him hanged after a show of a trial for his alleged war crimes. The invasion of Iraq and Saddam's overthrow is regarded as Bush (II) administration initiative.

There is little doubt that the US has been eyeing Iraq's oil wealth. It was successful in installing its own stooge as prime minister in Iraq. The Sunnis of Iraq were incensed at what they saw American and Iranian machinations in the form of encouragement to the country's Shias, who had been long suppressed under Saddam's long period of rule. As a reaction, a multitude of terrorist groups and actors sprung up in Iraq, prominent among which was the Al Qaeda. Soon thereafter, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, a leader of a breakaway faction of the Al Qaeda, announced the setting up of a new Islamic Caliphate.

President Barack Obama, after assuming office as President, began implementing his pre-poll commitment of withdrawing US troops from Iraq, though he took care to maintain a US presence in the country to ensure control over its security apparatus. The US had to later remove its stooge Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (a Shia) in order to pacify the Iraq's Sunnis. The Al Qaeda under its leader Al Zaraqawi let loose a campaign of terror against the country's Shia community in which many Shias were killed.

Military analysts have revealed that the Islamic Caliphate is armed with US-made weapons, possibly snatched from Iraq's military and police, or obtained through sympathetic Shias in the country's security forces. The new Caliphate or the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) - later known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or simply the Islamic State (IS) - was also successful in capturing a substantial part of the armoury left behind by the US forces withdrawing from Iraq. Circumstances in Syria are similar to Iraq, where the US has been trying to topple Syrian ruler Bashar Assad from power and is aiding the Syrian rebels in their civil war against the Syrian government. The ISIS or the New Islamic Caliphate, taking advantage of Syria's ongoing civil war, has captured some areas there.

In the 2012 US Presidential elections, Senator Hillary Clinton, then a Presidential candidate had alleged that the ISIS was gaining in strength because of the Obama administration's soft and indecisive approach. The New Islamic Caliphate is now exhorting the world's Muslims to plunge wholeheartedly into jihad. It is also futile to deny that many Muslims in Europe and the US are overtly or covertly supporting the New Caliphate's

Islamic cause. This aid is being channeled through bogus NGOs and dubious charity institutions. More intriguing is the fact that Western nations themselves are a big help to the ISIS terrorist activities, as they purchase the oil and gas it sells from areas under its control in the global oil black market, earning billions of dollars. According to European media, the ISIS pumps its oil into Europe through Turkey, Kurdistan and Iran. The New Caliphate pumps nearly 80,000 barrels of oil each day into Europe, earning approximately \$3.2 million every day in the process. This revenue is then spent on acquiring more arms and expanding its military strength.

There are also analysts who say that even US companies are secretly buying oil from the ISIS. A recent suit filed by Iraq's oil ministry in a US court has demanded that the court pass orders to prevent a million barrels of illicit ISIS oil from entering the US markets. Meanwhile, a British oil company has announced the doubling of its output at its oil fields in northern Iraq at Romaila. It appears that Abu Bakr al Baghdadi's announcement of his New Caliphate is part of a carefully considered plan. On the one hand, he seeks to enlist the support of the world's Muslims for global jihad, while on the other, he wishes to sharpen the Shia-Sunni divide and emerge as the exclusive leader of the world's Sunni Muslims. Iran and Iraq are the two Muslim countries with substantial Shia majority. Iran has already swung into action after the arrival of Baghdadi on the scene. It has already dispatched its Revolutionary Guards into Iraq, where they have begun engaging the New Caliphate's jihadis in combat.

The history of Shia-Sunni conflict dates back to the 7th century, right after the death of Islam's founder Prophet Mohammad. The Prophet's son-in-law Hazrat Ali was eyeing his position, but it was the Prophet's father-in-law Abu Bakr who captured the Caliphate. His daughter Ayesha, the Prophet's daughter played an important role in making her father the Caliph after Mohammad's death, even taking part in armed conflict. It is another matter that she met with a severe defeat in this war of succession.

It is for this historical reason that Shias have refused to recognize the New Islamic Caliphate announced by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. A few Christians residing in Arab countries too support this Shia stand. Interestingly, the Sunnis have not opposed the ISIS Caliphate. The civil war currently on in Iraq in fact, mirrors the ancient Shia-Sunni conflict. Also, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain, the UAE and other Middle Eastern allies of the US are opposed to the ISIS. But it is equally true that along with the Muslims of Europe, the Sunni population of the West Asian Islamic countries has

begun openly voicing its support for the New Islamic Caliphate. It is perhaps for this reason that Saudi Arabia too, under the fig-leaf of anti-terror operations, has begun its drive against the New Caliphate. Around five to seven thousand supporters of the ISIS Caliphate have been imprisoned by Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries. Anti-government demonstrations have been banned. These Islamic countries have also clamped down on the media in order to deny any publicity to the New Caliphate.

In order to break the economic backbone of the ISIS, the US has been instrumental in pushing down global oil prices, as part of a strategy. Presently, world oil prices have fallen to a record \$42 a barrel, the lowest in a decade. The moot question is whether the US and its allies will be successful in arresting the growing popularity of the ISIS in the Islamic world. The increasing appeal of the Islamic State among the Muslims of Europe and America is something no one can deny. It is only a matter of time before it increases its popularity among the residents of the Arab countries. Little wonder the US sees this New Islamic Caliphate as a threat to itself and has imposed a regime of sanctions against it, apart from intensifying its military action against the Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria.

The US is also anxious not to let the ISIS fill the void in Afghanistan after American troops exit the country. Part of the US strategy is to get Islamic outfits like the Al Qaeda and Al Nusra take on the ISIS. Clearly, the spread of the Islamic State's influence over the last decade cannot be ignored any longer.

The New Islamic Caliphate meanwhile, is busy selling the propaganda that Islam's new 'golden age' is about to begin. The Caliphate clearly wants to exterminate all non-Muslims and bring about the rule of Islam over the entire world. It has already begun spreading its influence over large parts of Africa, and is a growing menace in Europe, Asia and America. The US is reworking its strategies to increase its influence in Saudi Arabia after the demise of its ruler King Abdullah. It remains to be seen how far the US is successful in checking the growth of the Islamic State's influence.

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## **Al Qaeda's Creeping Shadow in India**

The Al Qaeda is beginning to cast its shadows over India. The Islamic outfit's chief, Ayman Al Zawahiri in a recent video tape announced the setting up of a new front, the Al Jihad, in order to intensify Islamic jihad in the Indian subcontinent. This new front is to be headed by Sheikh Asim Naseer. Not only that, the Al Qaeda head honcho also announced the intensifying of jihad to 'liberate' the lands of Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Assam and Myanmar from 'infidel control', and "finally free India's Muslims from the slavery of infidels". Al Zawahiri's proclamations have further heightened the threat of Islamic jihad against India. The full name of Zawahiri's new jihadi outfit is "Jamiat Qiyadat Al Jihadi Fi Sibi Al Qiyadat Al Hindiya, whose spokesperson is Osama Mohammad.

The Al Qaeda chief also claimed that his outfit has been trying to gather all jihadis active against India together on one platform under the leadership of one Mulla Mohammad Umar Mujahid. The CIA had warned India a couple of years back that the Taliban had opened its front in Jammu and Kashmir, in which youngsters were being trained to carry out jihadi activities. Indian security agencies efforts to garner clues to any likely activity by Osama bin Laden in the Kashmir Valley (reportedly at the behest of the US) didn't yield much result. It was much later that US commandos found out Laden's hideout at Abbotabad in Pakistan and gunned him down in an operation.

It was after Osama bin Laden's death that the command of Al Qaeda passed into the hands of the Yemen-based Al Zawahiri. One Asim Umar was made the chief of the Qiyadat al Taliba, about which India's security agencies don't have much information, though the National Investigation Agency is trying its best to gather the maximum information about this outfit. It was last year that the notorious terrorist Mohammad Ahmad Zarar Kidappa

alias Yasin Bhatkal was nabbed, who is alleged to have masterminded the murders of over five hundred innocent people.

The Al Qaeda is trying its best to incite Indian Muslims by propogating that they are slaves today in a country "they had ruled for a thousand years", and should therefore, take to the path of armed jihad to "restore their rule". Muslims from all over the world will assist them in every way in this endeavour, according says the Al Qaeda.

The Islamic terrorist organization named Al Qaeda was established in 1988 by Osama bin Laden. It is also said that the CIA of the US had a prime but secret role in the setting up of the Al Qaeda. The US has helped founding this outfit to help the Afghan Mujahideen fight the Russian forces who were then occupying Afganistan. Al Qaeda's dreams, however, went much beyond ousting the Soviets from Afghanistan. They wanted to set up a global Islamic empire, for which it has endeavoured to establish ties with other Islamic organizations and fronts.

In 1998, the Al Qaeda called for a global jihad by Muslims against "Jews and other infidels". Muslims all over the world were exhorted to kill Americans wherever they found them, as "a religious duty". The Al Qaeda also began to distance itself from the US as its popularity in the Islamic world began to increase. In 2001, Egypt's Islamic organization Al Jihad, whose head was Ayman Al Zawahiri, merged with Al Qaeda. The same Zawahiri then took over the reins of Al Qaeda after Osama bin Laden was finished off by US commandos in his Abbotabad hideout.

It was Al Qaeda that masterminded the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, in which two airplanes crashed into the towers, killing thousands of Americans and people of other nationalities. Al Qaeda also announced a jihad against the US, provoking a massive American response in the form of an invasion of Afghanistan and the wiping out of the Taliban strongholds from Afgan territory.

Qaeda chief Zawahiri wishes to "establish the rule of Allah over the globe", and calls for martyrdom in the cause of Allah. Al Qaeda uses every violent means at its disposal, i.e., bomb attacks, hostage-taking, and suicide attacks to carry out its objectives. It targets the US and its allies worldwide too. Its lethal network is spread over Europe, Yemen, Pakistan, Lebanon, Afghanistan, North Africa, Central Asia and India. It has been banned in

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysian and many other countries, but this hardly seems to have any effect on the Islamic organization, as it has thousands of supporters in each of these countries.

A look at the Islamic outfits worldwide, with whom Al Qaeda has ties will be instructive. These are (1) Armed Islamic Group (2) Salafist Jihad and Jung armed Islamic group (3) Egyptian Islamic Jihad (4) Al Jama Al Islamiya (5) Jamat-e-Islamiya (6) Islamic Jihadi Group of Libya (7) Bait-al-Islam (Jordan) (8) Lashkar-e-Taiyaba, Kashmir, (9) Asbat Al Inshar (11) Hezbollah (Lebanon) (12) al Badr (13) Harkat-ul-Ansar (14) Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (15) Ahl-e-Hadees (India and Pakistan) (16) Harkat-ul-Jihad (India and Bangladesh) (17) Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (18) Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan (19) Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines) (20) Abu Siyaf (Malaysia) (21) Al Itihad Al Islamiya (22) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (23) Islamic Movement of Freedom (China) (24) Islamic Army of Yemen and (26) AlShabab.

Interestingly, all these Islamic terrorist outfits are Sunni. The Al Qaeda also wishes to spread its tentacles across Iran, Pakistan, India (Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh), Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The Taliban is already hyper-active in Pakistan. It used to receive assistance from America's CIA not too far back in the past. It was set up by the Pakistani army in cahoots with the US to fight the Soviet Union which was then occupying Afghanistan. The Taliban soon occupied Afghanistan once the Soviets quit that country. Reports say that more than ten thousand fighters from Islamic countries are currently in Afghanistan, targeting the US and NATO forces currently occupying that country.

The Taliban has made at least four attempts to bomb the Indian embassy in Kabul. Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was forced to act against the Taliban under American pressure. The Pakistani army's operation against Taliban militants at the Lal Masjid in 2007 saw more than 200 militants being killed.

There can be no denying the cold fact that a substantial part of Pakistan's armed forces now sympathizes with the Taliban. Latest reports say that US-trained Pakistani jihadis are now looking to sneak into Kashmir and are housed in 38 camps across the LOC. Pakistan is very much an active player

in this sinister plot.

The Al Qaeda has changed its tactics and is now looking to recruit youths from India's Muslim-majority areas for jihad. These youngsters are to be trained in guerilla tactics and bomb-making. The Qaeda is also looking to draw well educated Muslim youth into its fold, who are also receiving behind-the-scenes help from outfits like Ahl-e-Hadis, SIMI, Ummah, Popular Front, Jihadi Council, etc. the police have recently apprehended some video tapes from Shamli, Baghpat and Muzaffarnagar in western Uttar Pradesh, which exhort Muslim youth to take revenge for communal riots. Apart from this, intelligence agencies have also come to know of activities of al Qaeda supporters in the Mithila region in Bihar, Mewat in Haryana, Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

A Bangladeshi national recently perished in a bomb blast in West Bengal's Khairagarh. The police also discovered a video tape from the spot in which the Al Qaeda chief is inciting Indian Muslims for jihad against India. Papers relating to bomb-making and also a machine to make rocket-launchers were recovered. Police claim that the two dead persons belonged to a terrorist outfit in Bangladesh. There are reports of Muslim youth being lured into terror camps set up by Al Qaeda in Assam, West Bengal and Manipur, as the terror front is looking to spark off violence in India's Northeast. Close links between Naga rebels in the Northeast and Islamic organizations are no longer a secret. ULFA separatists and Naga rebels, through their Islamic contacts, had made Bangladesh their base and also established contact with jihadi outfits in Pakistan.

In a raid on a Thai ship at Chatgaon port in Bangladesh in 2004, Bangladesh intelligence recovered 1,100 AK-47 rifles, rocket launchers, 200 pistols and a large quantity of explosives. It is reported that these arms and ammunition were meant for terrorists in India to cause large-scale violence. About two dozen people in Bangladesh have been awarded life-terms by courts there, among whom are four officers of the Bangladesh Border Organization. Reportedly, these arms were sent by Pakistan's ISI through Chinese sources. The West Bengal state government has tried to hush up this matter, with the local police publishing a story claiming the bomb blast to be nothing more than a case of a gas cylinder explosion. However, the truth couldn't be concealed from an alert media. The wide publicity the incident received prompted the Central government to order a probe by the National Investigation Agency. West Bengal's chief minister Mamata Banerjee's affection for the minorities is well known. It is the pro-minority

policy of her state government that has allowed Islamic extremists to spread in the state. These outfits have close ties to Pakistani elements active in Bangladesh. The National Investigative Agency has also made the revelation that Islamic madrasas spread in almost every village in West Bengal have become jihadi-producing factories. The National Investigation Agency has also made arrests of jihadi elements, among which are some women too. More revealing is the fact that the material used in making bombs in some of West Bengal's madarsas are used only by armies and are not available openly. Intelligence agencies are certain that these have been smuggled from Bangladesh and have been supplied by Pakistan's ISI.

Analysts are of the opinion that the Taliban and Al Qaeda have set up these new terrorist organizations because the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has sprung up in Iraq and Syria. The ISIS has also spread its tentacles in the West. Global media reports have revealed that Muslim young men and women in Canada, France, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and the US have joined the ISIS' jihad in Iraq and Syria. It is to offset the spread and influence of the ISIS that Al Qaeda has set up its fronts in India and Pakistan.

The Afghanistan-based Mulla Omar has been given the command of this new front. Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir has claimed that the head of the new front established by Al Qaeda is an Indian Muslim called Asim Umar. He has been educated at the Dar-ul-Uloom Islamic seminary at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh. Mir also claims to have met this Umar twice at Ghazni in Afghanistan. Amir Umar had sent word to Hamid Mir through an emissary, asking to meet the Pakistani journalist, promising him that the Taliban wouldn't harm him. Umar wanted Hamid Mir to give ample coverage to an attack the Taliban would make on the Indian embassy at Kabul in Afghanistan. But Mir rejected the proposal. Asim Umar then presented some books in Urdu on the Taliban to Hamid Mir, and also revealed that he was originally from India and had received his Islamic education at Dar-ul-Uloom. Asim Umar also said that he had to leave the Taliban owing to differences with some of its leaders, who suspected him of being an Indian agent, making him flee to Pakistan. His books in English and Urdu are available throughout Pakistan. These books highlight the importance of jihad and exhort Muslim youth to rise and wipe out infidels. Umar's books also assure Muslim youngsters of a place in jannat (heaven) if they are slain in the cause of jihad, as Allah would open the doors of jannat

for them.

It is also noteworthy that the Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir has close links with Taliban leaders. Mir is the first journalist to whom (the late) Osama bin Laden gave a lengthy interview, which was telecast by Pakistan's Geo TV network. Mir has reported on how the Taliban are regrouping after the death of Laden. Hamid Mir also had claimed earlier that Asim Umar originally comes from Gujarat and was later educated at Deoband's Dar-ul-Uloom Islamic seminary, following which he left for Dubai. After that, he landed in Pakistan and reached Afghanistan to take part in jihad. Mir also claimed that Asim Umar is married and is known as "Ustad Asim" among jihadis.

The publication of this news caused a huge uproar at Deoband. The seminary's head Mufti Abu Qasim flatly denied that his institution had any student by this name. But no one can deny that the Dar-ul-Uloom and the Jamiat Ulema, a leading front of Muslims in India, have always had close links with Pakistan's Taliban leaders. Pakistan's leading Talibani religious figure Fazl-ur-Rahman is a regular visitor to Deoband's Dar-ul-Uloom and is treated royally on his visits. On occasions, the Jamiat's Maulana Arshad Madani had housed the Taliban maulana in five-star hospitality in Delhi. The Dar-ul-Uloom and the Jamiat Ulema of course, keep claiming that they "have no links whatsoever" to any extremist organization.

Indian intelligence agencies are however, certain that Umar, who is now an important figure in the Indian and Pakistani wings of the Al Qaeda, belongs to somewhere in west UP. After completing his education at Dar-ul-Uloom, Umar joined the (now banned) Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Soon thereafter, he left for Dubai and then landed in Pakistan. In 1990, he was found teaching students in Pakistan on various aspects of Islam, at a madarsa Jamia-Uloom-e-Islamia. Umar was appointed to the post of Sheikh-ul-Hadees at this madarsa. It was here he met Maulana Azhar Masood, a notorious terrorist and the head of the terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammad. He also came into contact with Harkat-ul-Ansar head Qari Saifullah Akhtar and Fazl-ur-Rahman Khalil. Asim Umar also spent some time in the Pakistani town of Gujranwala where he met another Talibani figure Nizamuddin Shams. He then took to terrorism and joined the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, acquiring training in making bombs and guerilla warfare from the Pakistani army. Umar then moved to Peshawar where it is said he was appointed the head of the Haqania madarsa. Here, he wrote a few inflammatory books on so-called atrocities

on Muslims being committed throughout the world in Urdu and Pashto. Here, he came into contact with the Islamabad-based Maulana Rashid Ghazi of the Lal Masjid. Mohammad Ilyas Kashmiri introduced him to the Al Qaeda. Asim Umar also served as the deputy chief of the Taliban in Afghanistan for a few months, but fled to Saudi Arabia when the US invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban regime. His present whereabouts are unknown, though intelligence sources indicate that he may be holed up in Pak-occupied Kashmir and is said to change his hideout every week in order to escape any military strike against him. One of his mentors, the notorious terrorist Ilyas Kashmiri was killed in an American airstrike.

More disturbing is the fact that the inflammatory literature penned by this product of the Dar-ul-Uloom is being freely distributed among the Muslims of western UP. These books, in both English and Urdu, do not mention the name of the press where they have been printed. The books exhort Muslims to rise to their "religious duties" and pick up the sword to confront the "injustice" being meted to them. Muslims are being asked to reestablish the rule of Islam over the land their forefathers had ruled for a thousand years. One of Umar's books titled "The Third World War and Satan" dubs India's present government as a regime of infidels. His other books spew venom against Israel, Jews and other infidels.

Owing to differences between the Al Qaeda and the New Caliphate, the Al Qaeda has opened a front against the latter. Al Qaeda has questioned the happenings in Iraq and Syria and asked whether Islam permits its followers to be slaughtered like sheep in this manner? Does their religion permit atrocities against women and children? It has questioned the ISIS which claims to be acting in the name of Islam in its campaign in Iraq and Syria. The entire Islamic world howls in protest when Palestinians in Gaza are killed by Israel, but has chosen to remain silent over the slaughter of Muslims by other fellow-Muslims. The Al Qaeda has called for the uprooting of the New Caliphate the ISIS claims to have set up, calling it a fraud against Muslims.

It is also noteworthy that when Hazrat Ali was the Caliph of Muslims in the 7th century AD, there were many who opposed him. These were those who wanted a harsh implementation of Islamic tenets. They considered all others apart from themselves as enemies of Islam, and believed that killing them was justified. The ultra-zealots were called Kharjis, who had to fight a

battle with the followers of Ali, known as Junge-e-Safin in Islamic history. Muslims were pitted against each other, divided into two camps. One camp was led by Hazrat Ali while the other was commanded by Amir Mavia. The conflict ended in a truce between the two.

Hazrat Ali's forces suffered a split while on his return to Kufa; one faction still regarded him as Islam's caliph and his decisions to be valid, while the other opposed him, saying Islam had no caliph. This faction came to be known as Kharjis later on. The Kharjis dubbed many Muslims as kafirs or infidels and slaughtered them. Hazrat Ali, Amir Mavia and Umru bin Ilyas, the governor of Egypt were the first three Islamic figures against whom the Kharjis passed the sentence of death. Hazrat Ali was murdered while performing namaz, and Amir Mavia was wounded. Egyptian governor bin Ilyas managed to escape alive as he had not joined their namaz.

The Al Qaeda is opposed to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi declaring himself the latest Caliph and has said that he is not a Muslim at all. It has called upon Muslims worldwide to kill Baghdadi wherever they are able to find him. This fatwa of the Al Qaeda has raised the possibility of an armed conflict between its supporters and those of the ISIS. If such an armed conflict does break out, it will prove fatal for Islam itself. More than Islam, these groups are eager to push their own hegemony. Both have the blood of innumerable innocents on their hands. The ISIS macabre acts of beheading Western journalists and unspeakable atrocities on women and children have woken up the US and the rest of world to their barbaric nature, and these Islamic zealots are now being regarded as the enemies of humanity itself. The US has built a coalition of 20 countries to combat the ISIS.

These Islamic organizations, meanwhile, continue to thrive in Pakistan. Slogans and flags eulogizing the ISIS and exhorting its self-styled Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi to send his Islamic armies to "free Muslims" from "India's slavery" are now commonplace. Pakistani terrorist organizations, needless to say, sympathize with the ISIS. The Tehreek-e-Taliban, Jundallah and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi are among these outfits.

The Hindustan Times (30th October 2014) had said in a headline story that Al Qaeda had issued a pamphlet announcing the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. The pamphlet also included Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Jharkahnd in this caliphate. It also threatened to provoke armed conflict in India's seven northeastern states. India's intelligence agencies have sent this pamphlet to the Central government. The pamphlet

also claims that branches of the terrorist organization Jamait-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh have been set up in Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam, Bengal, Tripura and Manipur. Al Qaeda has recently launched an English weekly called Resurgence. Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi also met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to warn him that the Al Qaeda had set up cells in Assam. The Hindustan Times in a separate report has said that the Muslim organization All India Democratic Front was encouraging jihadi activities in India's northeast. This organization sends Muslim youth from the region to Bangladesh to acquire training in terrorist activities in the Islamic terror camps there. Another Muslim outfit, the Jamiat-e-Ulema, is supporting these activities. The Bharatiya Janata Party and Bajrang Dal have demanded a high-level intense probe into the activities of youths in Assam travelling to Bangladesh.

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Reports emanating from the USA, its government feels that it might take three years to destroy the ISIS. The basis for this certitude remains unknown. Whether such statements would provide further encouragement to the Pan Islamic forces committed to world domination and destruction of the 'other', or provide much needed confidence to the victims is not very clear at this stage. Certainly, such developments have triggered serious apprehensions. President Barrack Hussain Obama's statement that the US would "degrade and destroy" them, appears to be of an uncertain value in light of USA's overall policy regarding the Islamic terror ideology and its machine. Irrespective of the dismissal of Chuck Hagel as the US Secretary of Defence, one of its alleged reasons being his failure to prevent the rise of the ISIS, the world remains skeptical of the US attitude towards it. The days of visionaries and idealists in the domain of world affairs are unfortunately over!



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