



# **Impious Violence in the Name of Jihad: An Unprecedented Experience of Muslims**

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When Father Kuruvilla said, “Indifference to God need not be juxtaposed to violence in His name” or something to that effect, as the conversation occurred six months back in July, 18 in the Papal Seminary in Pune, it appeared it appeared he was referring to West's secularism and the allegedly violent religiosity of the Muslim Ummah. At that moment, I knew I had a valuable truth to communicate. As a Muslim and insider, I can vouch that the quintessential Muslim, who up to now is the most numerous too, ascribes his/her woes to ‘Actions’. “Our actions have become bad” (*Hamare āmaal kharab ho gae hain*) is the refrain when two Muslims ruminate over their problems. They unreservedly hold their own lack of piety to be the real reason for their problems. The ‘Other’, the ‘Enemies of Islam’ come a distant second. The greater the link with orthodoxy and tradition (in juxta-

position to the contemporary/the modern/the western) the greater is this distance, and vice versa too.

When it comes to ‘Enemies of Islam’, I must admit, there is a misjudgment-begetting laziness of thought in distinguishing between true enemies and those who are merely indifferent or those who *could* be non-violently disappreciating simply by the force of the implicit negative pole of their positive beliefs. This indiscrimination has the biggest harm of making one averse to those not deserving it and in not recognizing and exploring potential areas of true though partial friendships. But this laziness of vision never translates to hostile *action*. The quintessential Muslim, both the commoner and social leader, will never condone hostile acts against those not actively anti-Muslim. Further, the quintessential Muslim would also never condone immoral acts (e.g. burning, mutilation, harming of women, children, elderly, religious figures, etc.) even against actual enemies. It may be surprising that an apparently peripheral issue, namely, the canonical ‘Laws of War’ is a very vivid and central part of the consciousness of both an ordinary or religiously-learned person. Likely resting as much on the moral outlook shaped by the Qura’nic injunction: as on a surprising inclusion of this peripheral issue of ‘Laws of War’ in the basic catechism commonly repeated in religious lectures, it usually does not allow the commission of such barbaric and shameful acts.

The Islamic teachings to take up arms for *what can be truly shown to be* a ‘War for the sake of God’ or *Jihad /Qital fi sabil Allah*, has always spiritually enthused the Muslim Ummah. To my knowledge, the Muslim judgment of the impiety of ISIL’s violence is a first in their history to doubt and condemn a battle in the name of Islam as impious and infernal. There is consensus in Muslim mind (this author included) about

Israel and (Political) America being the architect and puppeteer behind ISIL. But what the author points out - while not being so sure of the concurrence of substantial numbers of his co-religionists - is that the fact of thousands of Muslim youth joining ISIL makes us responsible for recognizing the rot and striving to stamp it out.

However, it is for the non-Muslim sector of humanity to also recognize and confront the 300-year-old colonialist marauding in Muslim lands, epical both in intensity and wickedness, and also to note that the great majority of Muslim resistance being in the face of most inhuman colonialism, deserves acceptance and even support. Yet, given the enormity of the evil of ISIL Muslims and all religious persons have not only to disavow and confront them but to do much brain-storming to discover the reasons for this unprecedented development in the history of Muslims and also to work out the ways to eradicate the very bases of this monstrosity. In these other religious communities too should help the Muslims, as Muslims should help them in their unprecedented problems such as child abuse in the Christian Church and feralization of Hindu youth. Religions are not only rivals but allies as well. Particularly in these last murky times (*Qurb e Qayamat*/Proximity to Doomsday) or *Kaliyuga* when Eternity is most hid the ally-aspect of religions needs to be accentuated. Instead of gloating over each other's unprecedented and challenging failures, they must put such failures in perspectivae before the genral humanity being instigated by secularism in the name of challenging these failures to rebel against religion as such, and help each other in tackling these failures to keep greatest possible number of men and women in access to eternal felicity and its worldly concomitants. Conversion should not be attempted by subversion of other religions but as an exercise in their fulfillment. This would mitigate the strain placed on the inter-religious fraternity by this greatest of divider too.