

ISIS and its faulty logic

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I want to state that this is not a rant against the 'West' or 'Europeans' or 'Americans' or any such grouping. I am more than aware that we, the ordinary people of every country today, are each equally helpless in the context of influencing our governments to be accountable to us and not to take actions which benefit a few at the expense of the many who voted them to power. This is the raising of a voice in the hope that I will be joined by other voices – not only Muslim voices – but Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Atheist, Anyone voices – of people who believe in compassion, morality, ethical behavior, justice and accountability. People who live by principles that reflect integrity and honesty and a sense of responsibility for our lives and actions. People who are not racist and who don't put a differential value on the lives of other people; who consider murder to be equally heinous no matter who is killed. People who genuinely believe in human rights; not those who like to talk about them while killing innocent people and calling that a 'bug splat'. People who are not hypocrites and who have the courage to take a stand for justice; no matter who that stand offends. People of courage, especially when they stand alone. People who don't do it because they think it will change the world. But who do it because they don't want the world to change them. People who one day will then discover that the world did change. Change for the better to leave behind a legacy of honor. It is to such people that I speak. And it is they who I wish will respond – not to me but by raising their own voices for justice, moral, integrity and compassion. This paper is a bridge. Let us hold hands and cross it. All of us because the issues affect us all as human beings, irrespective of belief.

I live by the motto: I will not allow what is not in my control to prevent me from doing what is in my control. I invite you to do the same. Do what you can. For you will not be asked, "What happened?" You will be asked, "What did you do?" Do something worthwhile. For to live, is not merely to draw breath.

With respect to the piece by Graeme Wood entitled "What ISIS Really Wants," being the eternal positivist and optimist that I am, I choose to see it as another attempt to make sense of the senseless world we live in.

<http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/02/18/3624121/atlantic-gets-dangerously-wrong-isis-islam/>

I didn't respond to it as I didn't think my response was necessary. This piece is more for those who have since asked me personally for my thoughts. It is not a Fatwa, edict, ruling or judgment. It is a sharing of thought and reflections based on my study of Islam, the Seerah (biography) of Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba and the Code of Conduct of the Muslims, especially when it comes to dealing with non-Muslims living in countries ruled by Muslims. In today's increasingly linked and paranoid world, it is essential that we continue to put before anyone who wants to take the trouble to get to the real facts, what those facts are. It is our job to convey. Not to convince. Whether to believe or not is up to the reader.

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Before we go into this discussion I want to share some thoughts on why such a discussion is critical today. To quote Pressenza International Press Agency, *"We can check our bank balances every second on our phones. We can navigate through the streets with real time traffic information. We can look up the market value of every corporation in the world. We can take a photo and send it to a million friends in one second. We can buy and sell everything 24/7, yet none of this gives us any power, none of these advances has directly empowered the population at large. We as human beings have not gained any political power with the advance of technology. Democratic processes, for example, have been almost untouched during the past 50 years, a period of great technological development and astronomical economic expansion. Voting is still one of the most complicated administrative processes, for no logical reason. A secretly-negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) "trade" agreement is being negotiated right now — in secret, even from! the US Congress — between representatives of governments and giant multinational corporations. Most societies in the world have done very little to develop more direct participation in decision-making for the majority of their constituents, in comparison to the business community who can now buy and sell everything all over the planet.*

The notion of voting in general has lost its charge, and the process of selection it represents is old-fashioned and barbaric. These so-called electoral campaigns are now entertainment contests for starlets. They are marketing campaigns, more about selling a specific product than addressing the issues faced by the majority of people: employment, access to health, poverty, education, immigration, internet access, etc.

Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now, spoke in New York on February 17, 2015 about the link between independent media and democracy. "Why is it important to speak about independent media? We need to open up the public space to have a discussion about the critical issues of the day: war and peace, life and death. Less than that is a disservice to the service men and women of this country, who can't have these debates in military bases. They rely on us in civilian society to have these discussions about whether they should live or die, or rather whether they are sent to kill or be killed. Anything less than that is a disservice to a democratic society. And these are the issues that are at stake today, war and peace, the environment, the growing inequality between rich and poor. We have a majority silenced by big corporate media. These media will not bring the discussion about climate change but will spend all day talking about dramatic weather condition. Today we are sitting with Pablo Iglesias of Podemos from a Party-Movement PODEMOS that didn't exist a year ago and count four elected at the European Parliament with over 1.2 million votes and possibly the next Premier Minister of Spain and if you say that is not possible look at Greece. This grassroots media, the Internet are the oxygen of Democracy. We don't achieve democracy but have to fight for it every single day."

I echo, 'We don't achieve democracy but have to fight for it every single day.' The same goes for human dignity, justice, morality and global peace. We have to fight for peace by establishing justice.

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Peace is the effect of justice. Those who like to talk about peace must ensure that justice is established. Until that is done, any apparent peace is only a recess between wars. We. All of us. White or black. Christian, Jew, Hindu or Muslim or of any faith. We who believe in goodness and are against exploitation of all kinds. We the people of the world. We need to take it back from the hands of those who want to exploit it and us for their own ends. We have to stand together.

Political processes and structures change over time. So has the idea of Khilafa which changed from being a selective (vote by leaders) process to monarchy. Then it ended. So there is no history of Khilafa as a democratic process. I mean a real democracy where the opinion of every citizen counts. How this is to be achieved logistically is another matter and so one must question the viability of the very model of one global Khalifa. A modern model needs to be evolved perhaps with regional/country leaders coming together in a federation of mutual cooperation like the European Union – for want of a better example. Independent locally and cooperating globally. In today's context it is not enough simply to quote the model of the Khilaafa Raashida and say that it must be applied.

The Khilaafa Raashida can be relived in terms of its principles but not in terms of its processes both because the scope and complexity of the situation has changed to such an extent that it doesn't resemble Madinah and the Islamic world in the 6th century in anything but name. This is not surprising if you read history especially of the Islamic world and reflect that we are today in the 21st century in a world which is more alien to the world of the 6th century than perhaps would be a planet with life, if and when we find one. Madinah and the Islamic world of the Khilaafa Raashida was quite literally a different world. But it still presents a beautiful example to learn from and to draw on the principles it represented of integrity, morality, Taqwa, accountability of the rulers to the public, justice for one and all, nobody above the law, simplicity of the lifestyle of the ruler, compassion and concern for the other (non-Muslim). These are timeless principles which must be adhered to. But the way they are to be applied today has to change with the times if they are to be applied at all.

The long and short of it is that as we speak we don't have a viable model of the Khilafa. I am saying this because to understand what is going on and to think of alternatives (that is not in the scope of this paper) we need to keep things in perspective.

The key points in this whole discussion about the ISIS appear to be:

1. Legitimacy of the Khalifa – what does it take for a Khalifa to be accepted as legal (so to speak)?
2. Actions of the ISIS in the name of Islam, especially the horrific killings of innocent civilians including Muslims, Christians, Yazidis and others – what is the Islamic position on these actions?
3. The origin and very existence of this group – how did they come to be and frankly why do they still continue to exist and thrive?
4. What must the ordinary Muslim man and woman do when faced with the ISIS's claims to legitimacy of the Khilaafa and the 'duty' of the Muslims to it?

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I have taken the liberty to add a fifth passage addressing our non-Muslim brothers and sisters because they are also participants in the game whether they like it or not and if we are to win this game then we have to stand together and not against each other as the Great Manipulators want us to do. We must open our eyes to our realities and work together to defeat the Manipulators and create a world that is worth leaving behind for our children. I hope I have covered all the points and will proceed to address them below.

Opening

Let me try to address each of these points to the best of my knowledge and ability. I ask Allah for His help to say what is correct and true and to save me and you from mistakes in understanding or interpretation that I may make.

1. Legitimacy of the Khalifa – what does it take for a Khalifa to be accepted and legal (so to speak)?

In one line, simply declaring oneself as the Khalifatul Muslimeen and Ameerul Mu'mineen (Leader of the Believers) is not sufficient for one to be accepted and recognized as the Khalifa. So that declaration means nothing. Let us look at some evidence from our history.

If we evaluate how the four Khulafa Ar-Raashida came to power, we see the following:

1. Abu Bakr Siddiq (R) was selected by the leaders of the Muhajiroon and Ansar. The next day the entire community swore allegiance to him, but there wasn't an election as such. They merely affirmed the choice of their own leaders.
2. Omar ibn Al Khattab (R) was nominated by Abu Bakr (R) after consultation with the leaders of the Sahaba, especially the Asharaum Mubashshara and Badriyeen (The ten who were promised Jannah and those who participated in the Battle of Badr) who all accepted him as did the people.
3. Othman ibn Affan (R) was elected by the leaders of the Muhajiroon and Ansar by Abdur Rahman ibn Awf (R) going to each of them to ask for their opinion. When he had been stabbed and was on his deathbed Omar ibn Al Khattab (R) nominated a group of Sahaba (those of the Ten who were alive) to elect a Khalifa from amongst themselves. Abdur Rahman ibn Awf (R) voted himself out of the leadership but accepted the role of mediator. He then asked each of them and the other leaders of the Muhajiroon and Ansar and finally when he had the name of Othman ibn Affan (R) as the consensus candidate, he went to Sayyida Ayesha (RA) and borrowed Rasoolullah (S)'s turban and wearing it, ascended the Minbar and announced the result.
4. When Othman ibn Affan (R) was assassinated his assassins tried to force Ali bin Abi Talib (R) to accept the role of Khalifa. He refused but was eventually persuaded by many of the other Sahaba who were afraid of more bloodshed if a leader was not appointed forthwith.

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The nature of the Khilaafa changed from the time of Muawiyya ibn Abi Sufyan (R), who selected his son Yazeed to rule after himself, thereby establishing the first hereditary kingship in Islam. One must note that the appointment of Yazeed was accepted by most of the Sahaba who were alive at the time. So though Yazeed ibn Muawiyya was a poor choice and went on to prove exactly how poor by his actions – the most heinous of which was the killing of the grandson of Rasoolullah (S), Husain ibn Ali (R) - the fact remains that kingship was accepted as a legitimate form of Khilaafa. Right up to the end of the Othmani (Ottoman) Khilaafa the ruler who was almost always a hereditary monarch, was called (and called themselves) Khalifa and Ameerul Mu'mineen and was accepted as such – meaning both temporal and religious head for all the Muslims of the world.

The temporal leadership was symbolic and had no real authority outside the immediate borders of their personal territories (for example the Khalifa had no authority over the Muslim Kings in India) but he was still acknowledged as the head of the Ummah. Similarly, the religious authority never became a Papal type of authority but dua for the Khalifa was done in the Juma Khutba, which is a symbolic recognition of his authority.

What this goes to show is two things:

1. There are many ways in which a Khalifa may come to power.
2. But all those are subject to the universal approval of the Muslim Ummah.

Universal approval doesn't necessarily mean a formal referendum but a general acceptance by the people, even if tacit. Going by that Standard I need hardly point out that even if one were to accept the unilateral declaration of the leader of the ISIS that he is the new Khalifa, he has the approval of perhaps less than 30,000 out of 1.5 billion Muslims. That is not a majority by any stretch of the imagination. So his Khilaafa is an illusion that he and his followers are laboring under and has no meaning for anyone else.

2. Actions of the ISIS in the name of Islam, especially the horrific killings of innocent civilians including Muslims, Christians, Yazidis and others – what is the Islamic position on these actions?

I want to make three points before I go any further and submit that the reader keeps them in mind when reading what I have written as they are its basis.

1. The Standard must define and justify the action of the one who claims to follow it. Not vice versa. If someone claims to follow Islam then his or her actions must be judged against the Standard of Islam rather than attempting to define Islam by the actions of the individual who claims to be doing them in the name of Islam.
2. The Standard of Islam has always been the actions of Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba (Companions); especially the Khulafa Ar-Raashida (Rightly Guided Khulafa). All the scholars

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of Islam have always used this Standard, even in something like understanding the meaning of words and Ayaat of the Qur'an. Whenever a doubt arose about what the specific meaning of a word was, the scholars always asked, "How did the Sahaba understand that word?" That definition is taken as the correct way to understand that word or Ayah.

3. Any action carried out in the name of Islam but which is not in accordance with the Standard of Islam must be seen as the isolated action of that individual which is against Islam and his claim that it is Islamic must be dismissed.

It is important to define the Standard because today there is an attempt by some people to say that the actions of ISIS are actually representative of Islam simply because they say so. When you ask them that since the ISIS are 30,000 out of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, how can their actions be taken as representative of Islam instead of the goodness of the other 1.4999 billion; they have no answer except to keep repeating their lie. That logic doesn't seem to be interesting enough and raucous cawing takes the place of reasoned argument. Haykal's statement that 'there's no such thing as Islam' is certainly surprising, to put it politely. How a religion which has a complete theology based on Divine Revelation, recording of the teachings of the Prophet (S) preserved in a feat of historical accuracy that has no parallel and a comprehensive legal system can be called, 'no such thing' is beyond me. How the fact that despite the many different sects of Muslims, all agree on the basic fundamentals bearing testimony both to the coherence of the message as well as the diversity of understanding and interpretation that there is room for can be called, 'no such thing', is something that I fail to understand. Haykal apparently wants us to trash 1400 years of scholarship simply on the basis of his statement that there's no such thing as Islam.

However perhaps he means the position of Sunni Islam that as long as someone accepts the Declaration of Faith (There is nobody worthy of worship other than Allah and Muhammad (S) is His Prophet) then he is considered to be a Muslim no matter what else he believes in or does. Not to say that everything that is done is accepted as correct but it is accepted that it doesn't negate his Islam and his actions don't constitute apostasy. This is and has always been the position of the major scholars of Islam based on which people with some very questionable practices are permitted to come for Haj and are not turned away claiming that they have left Islam by their actions. This remains the situation to this day even with the much maligned hardline Saudi regime, which doesn't stop anyone from making Haj, though many of their scholars have some hard things to say about the Shia and others.

That is why I am saying that one must first decide whose actions constitute a definition of Islam and then use that definition to examine the actions of the ISIS to see if they represent or contradict Islam. Some call the actions of the ISIS a 'literal interpretation' of the Qur'an. We will also examine this claim to see if it is indeed true in the same light i.e. the actions of the Prophet (S) who is the only one whose interpretation of the Qur'an is a Standard to judge every other. Nobody can claim to

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understand the Qur'an or to interpret it more accurately than the one to whom it was revealed. So let us see how he interpreted it and acted upon it and see if the actions of the ISIS match that Standard or not. ISIS may be a state but is it an Islamic State? Is it a Khilafa Islamiya – Islamic Khilafa? Is it something that represents what the Islamic State under Rasoolullah (S) and his Khulafa Raashida was? Or is it a distortion of it; a parody of the real thing; a bad joke? We can decide that only by looking at the standard that Rasoolullah (S) set. A Gold Standard that's good for all time.

What does Islam offer to the world today? Islam is not the name of only a theory or a theology or a philosophy. Islam is the name of a practice. A practice that has withstood the test of time and has seen circumstances far worse than what we are seeing today and emerged stronger and more resilient. Islam is the name of a practice that works and produces measurable results for those who use it – but like all practices, it only produces results when and if they use it.

Islam gives two essential things to the world – both of which are critically absent today and which the world is crying out for. Allah said about these in the famous Ayah that you hear in every Juma Khutba and on which I have done a series of four to five lectures.

Nahl 16: 90. *Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Adl (justice) and Al-Ihsan [perfection – more than justice] and giving (help) to kith and kin and forbids Al-Fahsha (shameful acts), and Al-Munkar (sins), and Al-Baghy (oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed.*

The Ayah mentions five things: Justice, Ihsaan (mercy), helping your family, forbidding all sins and oppression. But out of these five the first two are the key out of which the others are derived. So the gift of Islam to the world is Justice and Mercy.

Allah told us categorically about these two; He said about justice:

Nisa 4: 135. *O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it is against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector of both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts) so that you may not be unjust and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do.*

Harvard Law School, thought highly enough of this Ayah and posted it at the entrance of its faculty library, describing it as 'one of the greatest expressions of justice in history.'

Not only that, but Harvard quotes the Qur'an as one of the greatest expressions of justice in the world. <https://www.cair.com/press-center/american-muslim-news/12359-harvard-recognizes-quranic-verse-as-one-of-the-greatest-expressions-of-justice.html>

Stand out for justice even if it is against yourself? What can be stronger than that? So let us see what those who understood this, did. Then compare the actions of ISIS against this Standard and see if they are the same. The actions of Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba, especially the Khulafa Raashida are

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the Standard which represents Islam. Not the actions of anyone who comes after them. So no matter how much people with a vested interest in creating an imaginary 'Global Enemy' by demonizing Islam and Muslims may wish to do – we can't accept that the actions of ISIS or anyone else are representative of Islam unless Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba also did such things. So let us see what they did, especially in the context of treatment of non-Muslims who lived under their governance.

The first and most famous evidence of Islam's position with respect to the treatment of non-Muslims living under Muslim rule is the famous 'Constitution of Madinah' which Rasoolullah (S) promulgated when he became the Ruler of the city state of Yathrib which was renamed Madinatun Nabawi (City of the Prophet). The Constitution reads:

The **Treaty** between Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and Jews of Madinah was put in writing and ratified by all parties. The document referred Muhammad (S) as the Prophet and Messenger of God but it was understood that the Jews did not have to recognize him as such for their own religious reasons.

Ibn Ishaq: Contract between the Muhajiroon and Al Ansar

In the name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad the Unlettered Prophet between the Believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib and their followers, allies and supporters establishing that they are one nation apart from all others.

The immigrants from Quraysh will maintain their current practice and will honor blood money contracts between themselves and will treat their weaker members with kindness and justice. The Banu Awf shall maintain their current practice and honor their former blood money contracts each party treating their weaker members with kindness and justice among all believers. (He mentioned all the clans of the Ansar and all the families from them).

The believers shall not leave anyone among them burdened by debts without giving to him in kindness and paying for him any ransom money or blood money he owes.

A believer shall not ally with any freed man of a second believer against that man. Pious believers act against any of their own who practice evil, or seek to bring harm, sin, aggression or corruption among believers. Believers will unite against anyone doing this even if he be one of their own sons.

No believer shall kill any believer for any non-believer nor shall he help any non-believer against a believer. Allah's protection is all one, the least of them can offer protection to others. Believers are allies to one another excluding others.

Whoever from among the Jews follows us shall receive help and equality. They shall not be maltreated nor shall help be afforded to others against them. No peace shall be accepted for any one believer to the exclusion of others when the battle is for Allah's cause. Among them equality and

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justice must prevail. In any expedition we engage in, riders will take turns on their mounts. Believers shall avenge one another for blood, shed in Allah's cause. Believers who are pious are well guided on the straightest of paths.

No polytheist shall be allowed to offer protection for the property or persons of Quraysh. Nor try to interfere with any believer. Anyone who has clearly aggressed and caused the death of any believer shall be subject to retaliation unless the dead person's executor can be satisfied. Believers as a whole shall take action against him and no excuse for their not doing so shall be acceptable. It shall not be permissible for any believer who accepts what is in this document and who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment to give help or shelter to any wrong doer. Any believer who does so will be the object of Allah's curse and anger on Judgment Day and neither compensation nor excuse will be accepted from him. Any matter in which you disagree must be referred to Allah and to Muhammad (S).

*The Jews shall pay expenses along with the Muslims so long as they are allied in warfare. **The Jews of Bani Awf are one nation with the Believers. The Jews shall have their religion, the Muslims their own.** This applies to their freedmen and to themselves except to those who commit sins and are unjust. Such people only harm themselves and their families.*

What applies to Bani Awf shall also apply to the Jews of Banu Najjar, Banu Harith, Banu Sa'ada, Banu Jushan, Banu Aws, Banu Thalaba, Jufna and Banu Shutaiba. The close associates of the Jews shall be viewed as themselves. None of them shall go to war without Muhammad (S)'s permission. However he is not thereby constrained from taking revenge for injury.

*Whoever attacks another shall do so to protect himself and his family and act not unjustly. For Allah condemns such acts. The Jews shall bear their own expenses, the Muslims theirs. **Each must help one another against those who fight those who adopt this document. They must give one another advice and consultation and do good and avoid evil.** A man is not held blameworthy on behalf of his ally. Help must be given to those wronged.*

*The center of Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for those who agree to this document. **One's neighbor shall be treated as oneself without being harmed on sinned against.***

No property shall be entered upon without the permission of its owner. In the case of any dispute or incident occurring between those agreeing to this document and involving consequences likely to be harmful, the matter must be referred to Allah and to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (S). Allah acknowledges what is very good and very pious in this document.

Quraysh and those who help them shall receive no protection. Those accepting this document must help one another against anyone attacking Yathrib. If they are called upon to make peace and do so

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and keep to it, they will be making peace. If they make a similar demand it is up to the Muslims to agree except if the warfare is over faith.

Each participant shall receive whatever portion is due to him from his own side's winnings.

This document will not provide protection for anyone sinful or unjust. Whoever goes to war will be safe and whoever stays in the town will be safe except those who have sinned or been unjust. Allah provides protection for those who are good and pious.

This is the first written constitution of a State ever promulgated by a sovereign in human history and it emanated from the Prophet of Islam. It was enacted from the first year of Hijra (622 CE). The treaty stipulated a city state in Madinah, allowing wide autonomy to communities. Private justice (revenge) was to be banished. The head of the State had the prerogative to decide who should participate in any military expedition. Social insurance was to be instituted. It is perfectly clear that non-Muslims (Jews in this case) were not forced to convert but were treated as equal citizens, given the same rights and promised justice. The Jewish and Muslim citizens of Madinah specifically covenanted to support one another against enemies. It is a sad fact that the Jews reneged on this covenant and committed treason and consequently were punished for that reason. They were not punished for being Jewish but for committing treason. More on this later.

Let us see how those who learnt Islam from the Prophet (S) behaved. A famous story is that of a Coptic Christian man and Amr Ibn Al-'Aas (R) the Governor of Egypt. The Governor's son got into an argument with the Coptic Christian and being arrogant about his parentage hit the Copt with a whip. The Copt complained to the Khalifa Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (R) who then summoned Amr Ibn Al-'Aas (R) and his son to Madinah. Umar (R) gave a whip to the Copt and said, "Now whip this son of noble parents." After he had done so, Umar (R) said, "Now whip the bald head of Amr, because his son beat you on account of his father's authority." The Copt replied, "I have already whipped the person who whipped me." Then Umar ibn Al-Khattab (R) turned to Amr (R) and said his famous words, "O Amr, since when do you treat as slaves those who were born as free men?" This is how the Sahaba treated non-Muslims. Justice came first and justice meant equal treatment for everyone.

Umar Ibn El-Khattab (R) was stabbed by a Christian called Abu Lulua and was on his death bed. Even there he admonished people around him with respect to the rights of non-Muslims in the following words: "Admonish whoever becomes Khalifa after me concerning the fair treatment of non-Muslims. He must fulfill his pledge of protection towards them, and should fight for their rights and should not take work from them beyond their capacity." History is witness that not a single Christian was killed in retaliation for the man who killed the Ruler of the Muslims.

Allah said about killing innocent people:

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Ma'idah 5: 32. *Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.*

Please notice that Allah didn't say – if a person kills a Muslim. He said, 'If a person kills another person it is as if he killed all of humanity.' There isn't another religious book in the world which defines the murder of one innocent person as the murder of all humanity. This is Islam's official position on the murder of anyone, Muslim or not. Official position as defined by Allah Himself. Islam doesn't distinguish in sanctity of life between Muslim and non-Muslim. All life is sacred. Death sentences can be handed down only by a court of law after due process and carried out by the state. Islam doesn't give any individual the right to kill another person except in self-defense. Murder is murder no matter who does it and who is killed. It is Haraam and punishable in Islamic law and in the court of Allah. That is the whole meaning of Rule of Law which is to be contrasted against Rule of the Individual, the essence of feudalism. In Rule of Law nobody is above the law. Rasoolullah (S) demonstrated that in his own life though he was the Law Giver – who brought the law from the Law Maker, Allah. In many cases Allah also gave him complete authority to make the law. Allah ordered:

Hashr 59:7 *And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it) and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.*

Yet he never misused that privilege nor did he take advantages for himself or his family. There are several other Ayaat with similar injunctions. Yet there is no record of Rasoolullah (S) ever abrogating to himself and his family, special privileges over his followers. On the contrary he gave others more than he gave his own family. There is the famous story of Sayyida Fatima (RA) who came to him to ask for a servant from the prisoners of war to help her in her household duties. Rasoolullah (S) said to her, 'How can I give you when the people of Suffah are hungry and I need to ransom these prisoners to feed them?' Then he taught her the Tasbeeh which we know as Tasbeeh Al Fatimi which is the Sunnah to read after every Fardh Salah and at night before going to bed, as the means of relieving hardship. Rasoolullah (S) never murdered anyone nor did he order the murder of any innocent person. Today ISIS does it in the name of Islam and ignorant self-proclaimed 'scholars on Islam' claim that this is indeed Islam. Truly none as blind as those who refuse to see.

Allah said about killing of Muslims:

Nisa 4: 93. *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him.*

What do you say about someone who is cursed by Allah and is promised the Hellfire forever – is he a Muslim or not? For a Muslim to kill another Muslim is to leave Islam and enter the Hellfire. Ask what the religion of humanitarian worker Abdur Rahman Peter Kassig was? Ask what the religion of Iraqi cameraman Raad Al-Azzawi was? Why were they killed? They were not soldiers. They were not

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fighting anybody. Yet they were publicly beheaded. Islam doesn't even allow prisoners of war – soldiers – to be treated like this. But they did it to non-combatants in the name of Islam. Also with them was another German who had reverted to Islam who was also murdered. Their Islam didn't save their lives but gave them Shahada and sent their killers to Jahannam. Once again an example of gross injustice which is inexcusable and Haraam. Yet thanks to the reactions that such actions instigate, Islam and Muslims are maligned and innocent Muslims pay the price.

When Hajjaj bin Yusuf hanged Abdullah bin Zubair (R) for raising a rebellion against his oppression, he was not content with his evil deed. He called for the mother of Abdullah bin Zubair, Asma bint Abi Bakr (RA) who was in her nineties and almost blind. He showed her the body of her son hanging from the Ka'aba and said, 'See what I did to your son.' The daughter of Abu Bakr (R) was no softie. She didn't shed a single tear and replied, 'You sent him to Jannah and he sent you to Jahannam.' There have been people like ISIS in our history and our Salaf showed us how to deal with them. All these are actions of the Prophet (S) and those who learnt Islam from him. These are our Standard. Anyone who compares with integrity, the actions of ISIS with the actions of the Prophet and his Companions the Sahaba, will see that there is no resemblance. ISIS is not Islamic at all.

During the reign of Sayyidina Ali Ibn Abi Talib (R) he lost his shield in a battle and was told that a Jewish man had taken it. Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Talib (R) called the man and asked him to return his shield. The Jew refused and insisted that the shield belonged to him and not to Ali (R). Ali (R) was the Khalifa (ruler) and could have simply taken the shield if he wanted to but he didn't. Instead he took the case to court.

As the Jew and Ali (R) stood before Qadhy Shuraih ibn al-Hârith ibn Qays one of the most famous judges in Islamic history; the judge said, "Please state your case Ya Abal-Hassan (the Kunya of Sayyidina Ali – it's a mark of respect and friendship to be called by it)". Ali (R) said to him, 'Don't call me by my Kunya; just call me by my name because I am an ordinary man before you seeking justice. My position and personal friendship with you has no relevance here.'

After each one finished stating his case, the judge asked for evidence. Since Ali (R) was the accuser the burden of proof was on him. He produced his son Al-Hasan ibn Ali (R) and his servant as his witnesses. The judge refused to take their testimony as he said that one was related to him and the other was in his pay. Ali (R) had no other proof to show that he owned the shield so the judge ruled in favor of the Jew.

The Jewish man couldn't believe what he was hearing – that he had won the case against the Khalifa on the Muslims in a Muslim court with a Muslim judge who ruled against the Ruler of the State. He stood up and declared, 'Wallahi this is the character of the Prophets and Messengers. I declare that there is nobody worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad (S) is his Messenger.' He then said to Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Talib (R), 'Here is your shield Ya Ameerul Mu'mineen. I picked it up when it fell off your camel.'

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Ali (R) returned the shield to him and said, 'This is my gift to you as you are now my Muslim brother.' The man became Muslim and always stayed close to Sayyidina Ali (R) and was martyred in the Battle of Siffeen. He accepted Islam not because of anything that Sayyidina Ali (R) had said to him. He became Muslim because he saw the justice of Islam and that nobody was above it – not even the Ruler himself. People don't care what you say until they see what you do. Compare the actions of ISIS to this.

Another example is Imam Al-Awzai's attitude toward an Abbasid ruler who had exiled one of the non-Muslim tribes from Mount Lebanon after some of them had refused to cooperate with the agricultural tax collector. The ruler, Salih ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas, was a relative of the caliph. Al-Awza'i wrote him a detailed letter in which he stated, "*How can all of these people be punished and driven from their lands and properties because of some individual transgressors when Allah states:*

Najm 53: 38. *That no burdened person (with sins) shall bear the burden (sins) of another*

This is the true ordinance to be followed. There's no collective punishment in Islam. (Al-Awza'i further stated) ...They (that is, the dhimmis – non-Muslims living under an Islamic government) are not slaves to be transferred from place to place, but they are free men and ahl adh-dhimma."

There is no killing or hurting innocent civilians for whatever their rulers may have done. There is no punishing one for the crimes of another. This is justice in Islam.

I can cite many other instances of justice and the treatment of non-Muslims in Islam under the rule of Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba but let this suffice for the present. Anyone researching objectively using authentic sources can find all the proof he needs about the justice and mercy of Islam and see for himself how far removed ISIS is from that Standard. And how much at fault are those who claim that the actions of ISIS represent Islam. Propaganda is not fact. We must recognize those who seek to malign Islam for their own reasons and expose their falsehood and lies clearly so that innocent people are not misled. We must read and inform ourselves for only knowledge can set us free.

Rasoolullah (S) gave the following advice, which is well worth remembering: *If any man oppresses a non-Muslim or tries him beyond his strength, I will be the advocate for the oppressed before Allah.*

So how do these people (ISIS) who are a curse upon this Ummah justify not just killing innocent people but publicly beheading them on camera? Barbarism unparalleled. The actions of the ISIS are not a 'literal interpretation' of the Qur'an but its gross misinterpretation. The ISIS has caused more damage to Muslims and the image of Islam worldwide than anyone else in our modern times. So one must question if they are really wolves in sheep's clothing, created by those whose agenda is to cast Islam in the role of 'Global Enemy' so that their war machine can continue to be funded. Rasoolullah (S) warned of the coming of a people like ISIS and described their rigidity, rudeness and lack of mercy as signs of their distance from Islam and its true teaching and understanding.

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There's no 'expert opinion' that can supersede the opinion of the Prophet (S) himself, who said:

Jabir b. Abdullah reported that a person came to Rasoolullah (S) at Ja'rana when the Prophet (S) was on his way back from Hunain, and there was some silver with Bilal. Rasoolullah (S) took a handful out of that and bestowed it upon the people. A man said to him, "Ya Muhammad, do justice." He (Rasoolullah) said, "Woe to you, who would do justice if I do not do justice and you would be very unfortunate and a loser if I do not do justice." Upon this Umar b. Khattab (R) said, "Permit me to kill this hypocrite."

Upon this he (Rasoolullah) said, "May Allah protect us! People would say that I kill my companions. This man and his companions would recite the Qur'an but it would not go beyond their throat, and they swerve from it (Islam) just as the arrow goes through the prey. [Sahih Muslim: Book 005, Number 2316]

That man then returned to his people. Khalid b. Walid (R) then said, "Ya Rasoolullah (S) should I not strike his neck? Upon this he (Rasoolullah) said, "Perhaps he prays." Khalid said, "How many of those who pray profess with their tongue what is not in their heart?" Upon this Rasoolullah (S) said, "I have not been commanded to pierce through the hearts of people, or to split their bellies (insides) (Meaning that he had not been commanded to ascertain a man's sincerity if he was praying). He looked at the man as he was going back to his people. And then he (Rasoolullah) said, "There would arise a people from the progeny of this (man) who would recite the Qur'an glibly, but it would not go below their throats; they would (hurriedly) pass through (the teachings of their) Deen just as the arrow passes through the prey." [Sahih Muslim: Book 005, Number 2319]

Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr bin Yasar (R): That they visited Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (R) and asked him about Al-Harauriyya, a special unorthodox religious sect, "Did you hear the Prophet (S) saying anything about them?" Abu Sa`id (R) said, "I do not know what Al-Harauriyya is, but I heard the Prophet (S) saying, "There will appear in this nation ---- he did not say: from this nation ---- a group of people so pious apparently that you will consider your prayers inferior to their prayers, but they will recite the Qur'an, the teachings of which will not go below their throats and will go out of their religion as an arrow darts through the game, whereupon the archer may look at his arrow, its Nasl at its Risaf and its Fuqa to see whether it is blood-stained or not (i.e. they will have not even a trace of Islam in them) [Sahih al-Bukhari 6931]

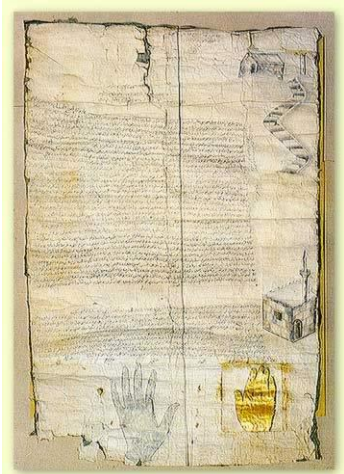
Ali bin Abi Talib (R) said, "I heard Rasoolullah (S) saying: There would arise at the end of the age a people who would be young in age and immature in thought, but they would talk (in such a manner) as if their words are the best among the creatures. They would recite the Qur'an, but it would not go below their throats, and they would pass through the Deen as an arrow goes through the prey. [Sahih Muslim: Book 005, Number 2328]

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One of the signs of such people that Rasoolullah (S) described is that their hearts will be (as if) made of iron; without any mercy. The ISIS has amply demonstrated its lack of mercy. There is nothing in Islam which permits what they do. Their actions are an abomination against Islam.

Another famous example of the Islamic tradition of dealing with non-Muslims is the letter of Rasoolullah (S)'s Charter of Privileges in 628 C.E to the monks of St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai.

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far; We are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all



that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants violated. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

English translation from 'Muslim History: 570 – 1950 C.E.' by Dr. A. Zahoor and Dr. Z. Haq, ZMD Corporation. P.O. Box 8231 – Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8231 – Copyright Akram Zahoor 2000. P.

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The original letter was taken away in 1517 by the Turkish Sultan Selim I and is now in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, but the sultan gave the monks a copy of it and sanctioned its terms.

For more information <http://www.cyberistan.org/islamic/quote2.html>

An image of the original letter on the official website of the monastery

<http://st-katherine.net/en/?s=covenant+of+muhammad+the+prophet&submit=Go>

The official website of St. Katherine Monastery is below:

http://st-katherine.net/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=65

I quote from one of the most important books on the subject of Muslim history: **Lost Islamic History** by Firas al-Khateeb *an Islamic History teacher at Universal School in Bridgeview, Illinois.*
<http://lostislamichistory.com/jerusalem-and-umar-ibn-al-khattab/>

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By 637, Muslim armies began to appear in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In charge of Jerusalem was Patriarch Sophronius, a representative of the Byzantine government, as well as a leader in the Christian Church. Although numerous Muslim armies under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid (R) and Amr ibn al-'As (R) began to surround the city, Sophronius refused to surrender the city unless Umar (R) came to accept the surrender himself.

Having heard of such a condition, Umar ibn al-Khattab (R) left Madinah, travelling alone with one mount and one servant. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he was greeted by Sophronius, who undoubtedly must have been amazed that the caliph of the Muslims, one of the most powerful people in the world at that time, was dressed in no more than simple robes and was indistinguishable from his servant.

Umar (R) was given a tour of the city, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. When the time for prayer came, Sophronius invited Umar (R) to pray inside the Church, but Umar (R) refused. He told Patriarch Sophronius that if he prayed there, later Muslims may use it as an excuse to convert it into a mosque – thereby depriving Christendom of one of its holiest sites. Instead, Umar (R) prayed outside the Church, where a mosque (called Masjid Umar – the Mosque of Umar) was later built.

The Treaty of Umar

As they did with all other cities they conquered, the Muslims wrote a treaty detailing the rights and privileges regarding the conquered people and the Muslims in Jerusalem. This treaty was signed by Umar and Patriarch Sophronius, along with some of the generals of the Muslim armies. The text of the treaty read:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the assurance of safety which the servant of God, Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, has given to the people of Jerusalem. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves, for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and healthy of the city and for all the rituals which belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited by Muslims and will not be destroyed. Neither they, nor the land on which they stand, nor their cross, nor their property will be damaged. They will not be forcibly converted.

The people of Jerusalem must pay the taxes like the people of other cities and must expel the Byzantines and the robbers. Those of the people of Jerusalem who want to leave with the Byzantines, take their property and abandon their churches and crosses will be safe until they reach their place of refuge. The villagers may remain in the city if they wish but must pay taxes like the citizens. Those who wish may go with the Byzantines and those who wish may return to their families. Nothing is to be taken from them before their harvest is reaped.

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If they pay their taxes according to their obligations, then the conditions laid out in this letter are under the covenant of God, are the responsibility of His Prophet, of the caliphs and of the faithful. ~ Quoted in The Great Arab Conquests, from Tarikh Tabari

This is by far one of the most progressive treaties in history. For comparison, just 23 years earlier when Jerusalem was conquered by the Persians from the Byzantines, a general massacre was ordered. Another massacre ensued when Jerusalem was conquered by the Crusaders from the Muslims in 1099 and every non-Christian was put to the sword, including women and children.

The Treaty of Umar allowed the Christians of Jerusalem religious freedom, as is dictated in the Quran and the sayings of Muhammad (S). This was one of the most significant guarantees of religious freedom in history. Umar (R) further allowed Jews to worship on the Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall, while the Byzantines (Catholic Church) had banned these activities. The treaty became the Standard for Muslim-Christian relations throughout the former Byzantine Empire, with rights of conquered people being protected in all situations, and forced conversions never being a sanctioned act. In the conquest of Jerusalem no Christian or Jew was killed, enslaved or oppressed. In the entire history of Rasoolullah (S) and the Khulafa Ar-Raashida, there is not a single incident of a non-Muslim being killed, beaten, tortured or imprisoned because of his faith. To do so is not Islam.

Criminal Law and the Criminal Code

Beheadings or amputations of the hand or stoning to death of adulterers are all punishments for different crimes according to the Criminal Code of Islamic Law. There is death penalty for murder one way of implementing which is beheading. Punishing criminals including the death penalty continue to be the law in many countries including Western countries to this day. The reason why Islamic punishments are more severe is because Islam places more importance on the rights of the victim which have been violated than on the rights of the criminal who violated the rights of an innocent person. Ask a woman who has been gang raped what she thinks about the death penalty for rapists. The purpose of harsh punishment is also to be a deterrent for aspiring criminals. See what's happened to violent crime in South Africa after the abolishing of death penalty post-independence. Today civil society which is paying the price in blood is clamoring for it to be restored.

Certainly crime in South Africa is not only the result of the abolition of the death penalty and there are many economic and other issues that contribute to it and must be dealt with. But it can't be denied that the fact that lack of exemplary punishment appears to have taken away the fear of the consequences of violence from the hearts of criminals. India is another 'good' example, where in 2013 alone, 18000 men were charged and arrested for rape and let off. Then we are surprised at the number of rapes happening in our society. Islamic punishments can only be decreed by a court of law after due process and can be forgiven by the victim or his/her dependents. This promotes not only justice but also more importantly, compassion.

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The point I want to make is that we must differentiate between punishing criminals and killing non-Muslims because they are not Muslim. **Islam doesn't permit killing non-Muslims and treats any such killing as murder with the murderer liable for the death penalty.** To say that beheading and amputation is in the Qur'an and claim that therefore the actions of ISIS criminals are actually Islamic is nonsense. Beheading and amputations are specific punishments for specific crimes and not blanket permission to visit them upon the heads of all and sundry. ISIS actions are criminal and attract punishment according to the Shari'ah. They are not Islamic but against Islamic Law. How can a literal interpretation be the opposite of what the Qur'an orders? Anyone who claims that the actions of ISIS represent a literal interpretation of the Qur'an, either doesn't understand the Qur'an at all or is deliberately lying to create mischief.

I have narrated for you incidents from the life of Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba who lived and acted according to the Qur'an. People whose lives are the Standard by which we will be judged when we stand before Allah. People whose lives we use as the Standard to judge for ourselves how well or poorly we conform to the Gold Standard of Islam. Compared to this Standard of justice and mercy; when we see the injustice, cruelty and barbarism of ISIS, who but a complete ignoramus or someone whose aim is to deliberately malign Islam would call their actions representative of Islam?

A word about the so-called Ayaat of violence (as critics of Islam like to call them). I am not going into a detailed explanation of each of them because that is not in the scope of this article but will state the basic principle behind these Ayaat that has been recognized and accepted throughout history. That principle is that these are Battle Orders for soldiers in a state of war and relate to what is permissible – harass and kill the enemy – when you are at war. Their jurisdiction is not restricted to the time but is restricted to the situation – any time you are at war it is permissible to harass and kill the enemy without committing excesses.

Find me one Battle Order of any country that tells the soldiers the opposite – when you meet the enemy, don't harass them and don't kill them. (Maybe kiss them to death?) We need to get real. If you take battle orders and claim that they apply to all people all the time then you have to support that claim with the actions of those who received those Divine Orders first and see what they did. Since there is not a single instance of Rasoolullah (S) or any of the Khulafa Raashida and even other Sahaba killing any non-Muslim just because he was not a Muslim, then are we to conclude that the Prophet (S) himself didn't follow the Qur'an?

There's a famous instance in the Seerah (biography of the Prophet) where Khalid bin Waleed (R) accidentally ordered the killing of some prisoners of war. When Rasoolullah (S) was informed he raised his hands to the heavens and said, 'O Allah! I am innocent of Khalid's action. O Allah! Do not be angry for this reason.' Khalid bin Waleed (R) was mortified at this. Rasoolullah (S) then ordered that all the prisoners should be freed and blood money of one hundred camels was to be paid for every person who had been killed. Compare ISIS actions with this and see if they match.

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Take the Ayah where Allah ordered:

Tawba 9:73. *O Prophet (Muhammad)! Fight against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them, their abode is Hell and worst indeed is that destination.*

Here the Prophet (S) is being ordered to fight not only non-Muslims but also those Muslims in Madinah who worked clandestinely against the Prophet (S) who came to be known as the Munafiqoon (Hypocrites). Yet we have no case at all of the Prophet (S) ever having fought the Hypocrites. Instead we see him leading the funeral prayer of Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool who was known to be the leader of the Munafiqoon and giving his own robe for him to be buried in and praying for his forgiveness. You can't put this down to political posturing because every action of the Prophet (S) is guided by Allah and is an example of the Law in practice and so worthy of emulation and the Standard against which we have to judge the actions of everyone else. So going by that are we to say that the Prophet (S) didn't obey Allah? Or must we understand these Ayaat as the scholars of Islam have always understood them as guidance and permission if there is a need for it. Not an order to immediately execute or to be executed by all Muslims for all time. This is the literal interpretation of the Qur'an done by the one to whom it was revealed and as taught by him to those who learnt directly from him. What ISIS is doing is not literal interpretation but literal misinterpretation and literal distortion.

Take just one other set of Ayaat in Sura Al Baqara as an example of the general principles:

Baqara 2: 190. *And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors. 191. And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And Al-Fitnah is worse than killing. And fight not with them at Al-Masjid-al-Haram (the sanctuary at Makkah), unless they (first) fight you there. But if they attack you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. 192. But if they cease, then Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

Clearly these words talk about retaliation for aggression and defending yourself against someone trying to kill you. And even in that situation they mention the benefit of forgiveness. If anyone takes these Ayaat to mean that Islam promotes killing non-Muslims indiscriminately in all places then that is their own deliberate misunderstanding. And if that were to be the case then you have to ask why Rasoolullah (S) and his Sahaba didn't obey that edict and not only did they not kill any non-Muslims but they actively protected all civilian populations under their control. So did centuries of Muslim rulers across the world to such an extent that countries which were under Muslim rule for centuries have minority Muslim populations to this day.

There are two cases that are cited by critics of Islam – the banishment of Banu Nadhir and the execution of Banu Quraydha men and enslavement of women and children – as being examples of

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cruelty against non-Muslims. The fact is that these were both cases of treason against the state with attempts to overthrow the government and kill the head of state – Muhammad the Prophet (S). One only needs to reflect on what the punishment for treason and attempting to overthrow the government and kill the head of state is in our countries today, to realize that in the case of Banu Nadhir Rasoolullah (S) was particularly lenient in that he permitted them to leave with all their belongings and go safely to Khaybar. It is reported that Banu Nadhir even dismantled the door frames and panels of their houses and took them with all their wealth in a huge caravan. But they were allowed to go unhindered and unmolested. This was completely out of character with the times as well as even today where as I mentioned earlier, treason is a capital crime in all countries.

In the case of Banu Quraydha who were caught red handed aiding the enemy during the Battle of Ahzab (Khandaq – Trench) Rasoolullah (S) gave them the liberty to choose their own judge to decide their case. He was prepared to allow them also to go away to Khaybar. But the judge they chose – Saad bin Muadh (R) the head of Banu Aws – sentenced them according to their own Hebrew Law (which they lived under even during the rule of Muhammad) to death for the men and enslavement for women and children and this sentence was carried out.

In both these cases, they were punished for the crime of treason against the state of which they were citizens and in the case of Banu Nadhir it was a very lenient punishment. In our world today people are arrested, imprisoned and tortured and in many cases even executed purely on suspicion, without any proof. So we can hardly criticize the Prophet (S) for punishing his subjects for treason.

The second gift of Islam to mankind and all creatures is Mercy – Rahma – which is the finest demonstration of Al-Ihsaan. Ihsaan is perfection. To do more than what is required. To do more than what is just. To do it out of love of Allah and to please only Him. Allah has infinite beautiful names and attributes. Of these countless names, He chose two, both associated with mercy and compassion, to be the beginning of every Sura – Ar-Rahman & Ar-Raheem. He used the same to introduce Himself in the opening of the Qur'an – Sura Al-Fatiha. And He chose Mercy to introduce Himself and that is the name of one of the most beautiful Suras in the Qur'an, Sura Ar-Rahman.

So important is Mercy in Islam that the name of the most sacred mountain, the mount of Arafat, was changed to 'the mount of Mercy' (Jabal ur Rahma); the auspicious month, the month of Ramadan is known as 'the month of Mercy'; the most notable door to the Haram is known as 'the door of Mercy' (Baab ur Rahma), Allah is known as 'the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate', the Prophet of Islam is known as 'Mercy to the Worlds' and the religion itself is known as the 'Religion of Mercy'. Even in war and when slaughtering animals, Muslims are ordered to be merciful and compassionate. Our greeting is a greeting of mercy and it is responded to with even more mercy.

As the maxim goes: 'Mercy must be the basis of law! For mere cold justice, may become a source of injustice and evil, if unaccompanied by mercy, tolerance and compassion!'

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So what is Mercy? Allah said about His Mercy:

Zumar 39: 53. Say: "O Ibadī (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (R) that Rasoolullah (S) said, "When Allah created the Creation, He wrote in His Book about Himself and it is placed with Him on the Throne; 'Verily My Mercy overcomes My Anger.' Sahih Bukhari: Volume 9, Book 93, Number 501

An'am 6: 12. Say (O Muhammad) "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allah. He has prescribed Mercy for Himself. Indeed He will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. Those who destroy themselves will not believe [in Islam]."

Rasoolullah (S) also said, "Those who show mercy to their fellow beings will be shown mercy by the Merciful Rabb. So, show mercy to those on the earth and He Who is in the heavens will show mercy to you." (At-Tirmidhi)

Rasoolullah (S) also said, 'The one who doesn't show mercy to the people, Allah will not show mercy to him.' (Tirmidhi)

Allah said about His Messenger (S)

Anbiya 21: 107. And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a mercy for the A'alameen (worlds)

Mercy is what you show even though you have every justification not to show it. Mercy is not return for good behavior. It is good behavior despite bad behavior. It is to show kindness where punishment would be justified. It is not to extract revenge and retribution even though you would have the right to do so but instead, not even to sit quietly or ignore what happened but to retaliate with goodness. It is tough but its effect is miraculous. The one who benefits most from mercy is the one who shows it.

Allah said:

Fussilat 41: 34. The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah ordered believers to be patient when angry, and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily! he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend. **35.** But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient, and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (Jannah in the Aakhirah and high moral character and respect in this life).

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Allah said that His Mercy overcomes His Anger. The Anger of Allah is just. It is deserved in full measure by those who deliberately disobey Him and rebel against Him using the strength that they derive from Him and after enjoying His bounty. Yet He says that His Mercy overcomes His Anger. Rasoolullah (S) advised us to do the same and demonstrated this in his own life.

Let me share with you some well-known examples from his Seerah of how he treated his worst enemies. It is essential to study the Seerah because this is the way we learn to love Rasoolullah (S) and to emulate him which is the key to success in this life and Jannah in the Aakhirah. Love for Rasoolullah (S) is a part of our Imaan without which we are not Muslim. The Seerah is the Tafsir (explanation) of the Qur'an in action. So let us see what he did.

The finest and most visible example of Rasoolullah (S)'s treatment of enemies is in Fatah (conquest or opening) of Makkah. He and his had companions spent thirteen years suffering all kinds of torture, physical and mental in Makkah before being driven out altogether and their wealth confiscated. Some of them had been killed. His own daughter who was pregnant at the time was injured and lost her baby and died soon after from that injury. Then Allah granted him victory over his enemies and persecutors who had left no stone unturned in their efforts to harm him physically and mentally and tried to kill him and destroy his reputation and credibility. But when he entered Makkah, he didn't enter it like an avenging nemesis; he entered with humility reciting Sura Al Fath, his head bowed so far down that his beard was almost touching the saddle of the camel.

He made Tawaf of Al Ka'aba and then called on Othman bin Talha (R) to bring the key of the Ka'aba. Othman bin Talha's family Banu Abdid Da'ar were the keepers of the key to the Ka'aba and are, to this day. He brought it to Rasoolullah (S) who opened the Ka'aba and had it cleaned. Then he came out and stood in the doorway which is high up and called the people. This time they all came respectfully to listen to him – a far cry from their arrogance when he'd called them the first time from As-Safa after receiving Wahi.

Rasoolullah (S) spoke to the people and said: 'Alhamdulillah, Sadaqa W'ada, Nasara Abdah, Wahazamal Ahzaaba wahdah (All praise and thanks be to Allah. Who was true to His promise. He helped His slave and defeated the confederates alone – without anyone's help). Families of anyone killed accidentally will be paid blood money of hundred camels each. All privilege of ancestry and pride that existed in Jahiliyya are finished. All these privileges are beneath my feet.' He recited the Ayah of Sura Al Hujuraat:

Hujuraat 49: 13. *O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*

Rasoolullah (S) was establishing a New World Order based on compassion, virtue and piety. That is why he ruled that compensation would be paid to anyone who had been killed in the conquest.

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Where have you heard of a conqueror paying compensation for the deaths of his enemies? He was changing the definition of High Net Worth from money to Taqwa (fear of displeasing Allah). The definition of High Net Worth Individual (HNI) from Abu Lahb to Abu Bakr (R).

The world is witness that as long as this order remained, the world knew justice, peace and harmony. When this order was overthrown and the Old World Order of oppression and rule of money was resumed once again, the world descended into the pit of living hell where the background music to the story telling is the weeping of bereaved mothers and the groaning of heartbroken fathers. A world without pity, without mercy. A world inhabited by human beings whose existence is a burden on the earth. It is the role of Islam and the Muslims to reverse this and to bring back the rule of justice, compassion, peace and harmony. Of mutual respect and concern for the weak. That is why Allah sent us. That is what we came to give. That is what the world is waiting for; something it needs the most – justice and mercy. And that is what we will be held accountable for.

Rasoolullah (S) had the key of the Ka'aba in his hand. Ali bin Abi Talib (R) said, 'Ya Rasoolullah (S) combine for us the honors of feeding the Hujjaj and the key of the Ka'aba.' Rasoolullah (S) called Othman bin Talha (R) and said, 'Take it and keep it forever and nobody will take it from you except a tyrant.' Think about this. Who was more entitled to keep the key of the Ka'aba – the Messenger of Allah (S) and his family or a family who were the traditional keepers of the key **but which at the time were mostly non-Muslim?** Yet Rasoolullah (S) treated them justly and didn't take the honor for his own family even though he was entitled and had the power to do so.

Then he asked the Quraysh, 'What do you think I will do with you?' They said, 'You are our honored brother; son of our honored brother.' So he said, 'Idh-habu fa antum-ut tulaqaa.' (Go for you are the Released Ones.) They were the captives of Rasoolullah (S) who though he could have executed them all, released them without taking any ransom. So the people who became Muslim after the conquest of Makkah are called At-Tulaqa (freed slaves). The only exceptions were seven who were sentenced to death for their crimes but some of them also were later pardoned.

Abdullah bin Abi Sarh was one of those who had been given the death sentence. He took refuge with Othman ibn Affan (R) who was his brother because of breast feeding. Othman (R) secretly took him to Rasoolullah (S). Abdullah bin Abi Sarh said, 'I came to give you Bayah (swear allegiance and accept Islam).' Rasoolullah (S) did not respond. Abdullah bin Abi Sarh repeated this twice. Rasoolullah (S) still remained silent. Then when he said this for the third time Rasoolullah (S) accepted his Bayah and he became Muslim with all his previous sins automatically forgiven.

Sayeed bin Musayyib (R) said, 'The night of the conquest was not a night of celebration in the normal sense. The Sahaba were making Tawaf around the Ka'aba, and making Takbeer and Tahleel all night. Abu Sufyan went to his wife Hind and asked her, 'Do you think this is from Allah?' She replied, 'Yes, this is from Allah.' Later Abu Sufyan met Rasoolullah (S) who said to him, 'You asked Hind if this was from Allah and she told you that it was.' Abu Sufyan (R) said, 'Ash haduallaailaha illAllahu wa Ash

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hadunna Muhammadar Rasoolullah.' (I bear witness that there's nobody worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)

People were shocked, astonished, astounded. They could not believe their eyes and ears. They hid in their homes at first, fully expecting victorious Muslim soldiers to break into their homes to loot and rampage as victorious forces are wont to do. But nothing happened. Eventually, Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, a woman who was a bitter enemy of Rasoolullah (S) and who was responsible for the mutilation of the body of his uncle, Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib (R) in the battle of Uhud, an incident that caused untold suffering to Rasoolullah (S), left her home to see what was happening. And what did she see? She saw Mohammadur Rasoolullah (S) and his companions praying in the Haram and asking for Allah's mercy and help.

It is true that as a victor Rasoolullah (S) could have taken revenge. But that would have opened new wounds which would have set off a new series of conflicts all resulting in delay or defeat of his real mission, the spreading of his Message. By forgiving those who had wronged him, he sent a powerful message that the mission was above all personal considerations and put those who had wronged him in his debt. Instead of fighting or hating him they were now grateful to him and wanted to please him. At one stroke, he laid to rest all future potential conflicts and vendettas among his followers without which his mission would have failed.

The key thing to understand is that to end violence we have to break the cycle. And the only one who can do that is the one who is suffering. No matter how difficult it may seem – and Allah knows, it is very tough – the one suffering has to forgive. Only then does the help of Allah come and the heart of the oppressor changes. Rasoolullah (S) didn't forgive the Quraysh because he was afraid of them. He forgave them when he was in a position of power even though he could have legally and justifiably taken revenge. But he didn't. He forgave them and took the wind out of their sails.

He defeated his enemies not by killing them. But by killing enmity

This was and is the message of Muhammad (S) - a message of mercy even for enemies.

Those who learned from him, learned this message very well.

Ata ibn Yasar (R) reported that Ibn Abbas (R) said: "It happened that Ali ibn Abi Talib (R) hired himself one night to water some date palm trees in exchange for some barley. The following morning, he collected his barley and ground a third of it out of which they made something to eat, called al-Khazirah. When it was cooked, a poor man came begging and they gave him the food they had prepared. They then prepared a second portion of the remaining barley and when it was cooked, an orphan came begging and they gave him the food. They then prepared what was left of that barley, but when the food was cooked, a prisoner from among the non-Muslims came to them and asked for food and they fed him and spent the day without eating anything.

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But their Rabb (Allah) knew what they had done and revealed:

Insaan 76: 8. *And they give food, despite their love for it, to Miskeen (poor), the orphan, and the captive, 9. (Saying): "We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance (pleasure) only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you.*

William Muir was an Orientalist and a high official in the Government of British India. He was well known as a scholar of Islam (not a Muslim Scholar) and was a critic of Muhammad (S) and Islam. I mention him only because the testimony of the critic is most credible. His book 'Life of Mahomet' is criticized as being Christian propaganda. But he wrote about this period:

"In pursuance of Mahomet's commands the citizens of Medina and such of the refugees as possessed houses received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. ' Blessings be on the men of Medina', said one of these prisoners in later days, 'they made us ride while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates."

During his rule, Omar ibn Al Khattab (R) made it illegal to separate related prisoners of war from each other, after a captive complained to him about being separated from her daughter.

These principles were also honored during the Crusades, as exemplified by sultans such as Salahuddin Ayyubi and his nephew Al-Kamil (Al-Malik Al-Kamil Naser ad-Din Abu al-Ma'ali Muhammad) the fourth Ayyubi Ruler of Egypt who during his tenure as sultan, defeated two crusades. After al-Kamil defeated the Franks during the Crusades, Oliverus Scholasticus praised the Islamic laws of war, commenting on how al-Kamil supplied the defeated Frankish army with food.

"Who could doubt that such goodness, friendship and charity come from God? Men whose parents, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, had died in agony at our hands, whose lands we took, whom we drove naked from their homes, revived us with their own food when we were dying of hunger and showered us with kindness even when we were in their power." ~ Oliverus Scholasticus

What is more credible than the testimony of the enemy? Those who want to accuse Muslims of cruelty need to answer this testimony of history. Lies can't hide the truth.

Please show me where it is permitted under Islamic Law to execute prisoners by slaughtering them like sheep and beheading them in public. Please show me where it is permitted to burn prisoners of war (or anyone for that matter) alive. Please show me one Ayah of the Qur'an or one Hadith where the Muslim has been ordered to kill a non-Muslim **because he is not Muslim**. Show me one order of Allah or His Messenger (S) where Muslims have been permitted to torture prisoners.

The scholars of Islam are united upon the opinion that there is no permission to execute a prisoner of war irrespective of his religion and that he must be housed and fed with dignity and must not be put to hardship or tortured. Today those who claim to be the bastions of civilization need to explain their

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progressive laws which permit torture where the laws of Islam banned it 14 centuries earlier. There is no law as just and merciful as the law of Allah and that is what Islamic Law is.

3. The origin and very existence of this group – ISIS – how did they come to be and frankly why do they still continue to exist and thrive?

This is a point on which I really don't think there is any need to speak because all that anyone with a modicum of intelligence needs to derive correct conclusions is clearly before us. All we need to do is to read a little bit of recent history and connect the dots. But since I have taken on this job of writing this piece let me share my understanding.

There are two forces at work in the world. The force of Imperialism and the force of reaction which uses the rich resources that Imperialism creates to recruit people to their reactionary movement. The goal of both is the same – global domination. Imperialism takes on a new garb from time to time but has the same objective of global domination through military force. Sometimes it wears the garb of 'Civilizing the world', or 'Saving heathens from the fire by bringing Christianity to them', or 'The White man's burden (as Rudyard Kipling called what the British did in India and elsewhere) or 'Winning land for the King' (the most honest of all of them to date) and most recently, 'Democracy'. Inside each of these is the same monster – Imperialism. If we go back in history as far back as recorded Western history is concerned we have those we honor today by calling them conquerors – Alexander, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, the Spanish Conquistadors – we have one story in common. Rape, plunder, burning and destruction of countries, decimation and wiping out of civilizations and enslavement of populations. All in the name of conquest. And since history is written by the victors, they are applauded and deified while the vanquished die; and dead men tell no tales. If you want to know the real meaning of all the garbs of Imperialism ask the Aztecs, Incas, Native Americans, Hottentots and Bushmen of Africa and the Aboriginal people of Australia. If they could talk, they would tell a very different tale from what we read in history books. However one which is very similar to the tale that the mothers in Gaza or the families obliterated by adolescents playing computer games with drones will tell you today. Imperialism by another name. The name doesn't cover the smell of burning bodies or the screams of dying men, women and children. It also doesn't put salve on the wounds in the hearts of the living. Wounds that will fester, generate hatred and light the fire of revenge to fuel the never ending cycle of violence. But since this cycle doesn't affect directly those who benefit from it, they don't care and it continues. It is the poor of one country that kill the poor of another for the benefit of the billionaires who run those countries. As long as there is oppression there will be those who will rise up to fight it. Nobody can wipe the earth clean of opposition to oppression. Only justice can bring peace because peace is a result of justice. Until justice is established, all apparent peace is only a recess between wars.

Muslims were also imperialists. The conquests of the Banu Umayyah didn't happen only to spread goodness in the land. So also other Muslim conquests. However, what distinguished them from those

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I mentioned earlier and modern Imperialism is the way they went about it. It is true they invaded other countries. In those times that was more the norm than the exception. But what was exceptional was the dignity that conquered populations were treated with and the freedom that they were given. Compare the historical records of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Franks (Crusaders) and later by the Muslims and you will see the marked difference.

*The **Siege of Jerusalem** took place from June 7 to July 15, 1099 during the First Crusade. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_%281099%29*

Many Muslims sought shelter in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and the Temple Mount area generally. According to the Gesta Francorum, speaking only of the Temple Mount area, "...[our men] were killing and slaying even to the Temple of Solomon, where the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles..."

Contrast this with the account of Salahuddin Ayyubi's conduct when he conquered Jerusalem.

Capture of Jerusalem

Saladin had captured almost every Crusader city. Jerusalem capitulated to his forces on Friday, 2 October 1187, after a siege. When the siege had started, Saladin was unwilling to promise terms of quarter to the Frankish inhabitants of Jerusalem. Balian of Ibelin threatened to kill every Muslim hostage, estimated at 5,000, and to destroy Islam's holy shrines of the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque if such quarter were not provided. Saladin consulted his council and the terms were accepted. The agreement was read out through the streets of Jerusalem so that everyone might within forty days provide for himself and pay to Saladin the agreed tribute for his freedom. An unusually low ransom for the times (around \$50 today) was to be paid for each Frank in the city, whether man, woman, or child, but Saladin, against the wishes of his treasurers, allowed many families who could not afford the ransom to leave. Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem organised and contributed to a collection that paid the ransoms for about 18,000 of the poorer citizens, leaving another 15,000 to be enslaved. Saladin's brother al-Adil, "asked Saladin for a thousand of them for his own use and then released them on the spot." Most of the foot soldiers were sold into slavery. Upon the capture of Jerusalem, Saladin summoned the Jews and permitted them to resettle in the city. In particular, the residents of Ashkelon, a large Jewish settlement, responded to his request.

Then we have the conduct of Richard, King of England also called Richard the Lion Hearted. Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem prompted the Third Crusade (1189–1192), financed in England by a special "Saladin tithe". Richard the Lion Heart, King of England led Guy's siege of Acre, conquered the city and executed 3,000 Muslim prisoners, including women and children. Bahā' ad-Dīn wrote: 'The motives of this massacre are differently told; according to some, the captives were slain by way of reprisal for the death of those Christians whom the Musulmans had slain. Others again say that the

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king of England, on deciding to attempt the conquest of Ascalon, thought it unwise to leave so many prisoners in the town after his departure. God alone knows what the real reason was.'

Eventually Richard lost to Salahuddin who let him go with dignity. A writer of the time has this to say about Salahuddin Ayyubi:

It is equally true that his generosity, his piety, devoid of fanaticism, that flower of liberality and courtesy which had been the model of our old chroniclers, won him no less popularity in Frankish Syria than in the lands of Islam. ~ René Grousset

As I have said earlier, nothing is more credible than the testimony of the enemy.

Muslim conquests were characterized by pragmatic mercy. I say pragmatic because for the one conquering the land to add to his wealth disruption is detrimental. He wants the country to go back to normalcy and for normal economic activity to start as soon as possible so that taxes may be collected. The same logic is for low taxation – which is proven in modern day India for instance where when the rate of income tax was reduced from 66% to 33% the actual revenue collection hugely increased. That is because it was no longer worth the trouble to hide income and much more beneficial to pay tax and enjoy your wealth openly. That is what happened in Muslim lands.

Existing leadership was replaced by Muslim government but nothing else was disturbed. Religious freedom was particularly given, the biggest proof of which is that countries that were ruled by Muslims for centuries have Muslims as a very small minority. Contrast this with what Christian armies did in North and South America and Australia. They completely wiped out local populations and those countries became Christian and remain Christian with the Europeans who colonized them calling themselves nationals. The surviving real nationals are relegated to the fringes of society without any role in the running of their country even today despite all the fluff about democracy and sanctity of human rights.

The Muslim way made sense in terms of Islamic theology and the laws of warfare – treat people justly, don't harm non-combatants, priests, places of worship, people's homes, women and children, standing crops, places of learning. No torturing or execution of prisoners of war. Where slaves are taken from soldiers they must be treated on par with the owners, not abused or debased and if they are released then there is huge reward with Allah. As mentioned earlier all this also makes eminent sense in economic terms where when you conquer a country you don't want to lay waste to a land that you hope to benefit from later or to leave open sores of resistance to deal with constantly. On the contrary you want to have as little disruption of law and order to normal economic activity – agriculture, industry and markets – so that taxes can now flow into your coffers as easily and early as possible. That is the reason why there were no rebellions against Muslim rule in all the lands that Muslims ruled for centuries. Pragmatism or Islam – call it what you want but the fact remains that Muslim rulers didn't decimate populations, rape and plunder or kill non-Muslim non-combatants or

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enslave them. There were no slave markets selling Hindu slaves for the pleasure of Muslim buyers in 600+ years of Muslim rule in India. Or slave markets selling Christian or Jewish slaves in 700 years of Muslim rule in Spain.

Egypt and Central Asia were among the first lands to come under Muslim rule. Egypt was Coptic Christian with the Eastern Orthodox Church in power. When it was conquered in the Khilaafa of Omar ibn Al Khattab (R) there was no destruction of churches. No disruption of church hierarchy. No looting of church wealth. Churches and synagogues continued to exist unharmed and do to this day. The temples of Luxor stood undamaged through the centuries and provide considerable tourism income today. So did the Bamian Buddhas until the Taliban decided that they were more pious than everyone else. Thinking like the ISIS. The thousands of temples of India many of them with grants from the treasury of Muslim kings are testimony to the way Muslims treated their non-Muslim subjects.

It is true that kings like Mahmood Ghazni, Nadir Shah, Alauddin Khilji and Qutubuddin Aibak destroyed temples – but that was to loot the riches of offerings of gold in specific temples like Somnath of Gujarat. I don't condone their actions but would like to point out that their actions were the exception rather than the rule. Also these actions contradict Islam and are not representative of Islam. One of the most heinous actions of Muslim rulers is the assassination of the grandson of Rasoolullah (S), Husain ibn Ali bin Abi Talib (R) who was killed with all his male relatives except one because he refused to accept Yazid bin Muawiyya as the Khalifa. What can be more horrific than the murder without cause not only of a righteous person but the grandson of the Prophet (S) himself? But nobody in his right senses will say that this represents Islam. There is not a Muslim worth the name who doesn't condemn this action of Yazid. So how can we take the actions of ISIS and say that they represent Islam?

Rulers like the Great Mughals, Nizams of Hyderabad and the Sultans of Bijapur and Sultan Tipu of Mysore had Hindu Prime Ministers and Ministers and gave grants to temples which exist to this day. Even the much maligned Aurangzeb had the largest number of Hindu Mansabdars in his army and his Commander in Chief was a Kachawa Rajput Hindu, the ruler of Jaipur. Rulers were pragmatic. Not religious. Their concern was their kingdom. Not Islam. So also the actions of the ISIS. Their actions represent them as individuals. Not Islam. They are not the spokespeople of Islam and the Muslims of the world don't accept them as their representatives.

The long and short of this entire section is to underline four main points.

1. ISIS barbarism is not Islam and has nothing to do with Islam.
2. ISIS's genesis is not an isolated incident without a cause. It is the result of Imperialistic policies of the West (read America and its allies) and the deliberate creation of the 'Other' the 'Global Enemy', named the 'Axis of Evil' (by implication the West is supposed to be the Axis of Good) and

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so the struggle is reduced to a primeval struggle between Good and Evil; between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. No surprise that this is exactly the imagery of the ISISs of the world with a simple juxtaposition of names. *President George W. Bush, in an address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001 said, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."* Interestingly the head of ISIS would agree entirely with him.

People have conveniently forgotten how Colin Powell stood before the United Nations and lied through his teeth about alleged WMD's that Iraq was supposed to have. How he sleeps today I don't know. Or the looting of Iraq's national treasures from its museums, libraries and treasure houses that took place, all in the name of establishing democracy and liberating the Iraqis from Saddam's tyranny. The Iraqis were liberated no doubt, but not from tyranny. In the resultant bloodbath over a million Iraqis lost their lives and the seeds for the establishment of ISIS were planted. Why then is the world surprised when what they planted has started bearing fruit?

3. Imperialism needs an enemy because without an enemy perpetual war makes no sense and people can't be forced to accept more and more totalitarian regimes nor can Senates/Parliaments be compelled to sanction huge funds for military purposes. The Soviet Union played the role of Global Enemy for many decades but since it was a member of the UN Security Council and a state with a clear definition and presence it was difficult to deal with. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union the search for a new 'Global Enemy' produced Islam and Muslims. Erstwhile allies against the Soviet Union, the Taliban, were the first casualty. They were the US catspaw in the war against Russia being waged in Afghanistan. They were supplied and trained by the US and fought and died achieving American aims without American casualties. 'No boots on the ground' has long been a successful policy which creates the need for proxy fighters. That is what created the Taliban. When they broke up, the ISIS was created, once again with the same aim and the same disastrous results. I don't believe this is because foreign policy makers are stupid. I will leave you to come to your own conclusions about why it still continues despite mountains of evidence to show that when you support injustice, it begets more injustice. That when you support killers, you force people to hate you. If anyone thinks that killing of women and children in Iraq or the shooting of babies by the IDF is going to win friends then they need their heads examined. It is not only white lives which are valuable. Every life is valuable and the taking of every life is murder even if it is done by a man in a uniform. After all the ISIS barbarians beheading people are also in uniform.
4. Which brings us to the final line of the litany: there is huge anger against Western policies of discrimination, racism and injustice. Irrespective of what Westerners may like to think, there are millions of people who think that Western leaders and those who support them are unjust, oppressive and corrupt. These people are living under brutal dictators and know that their rulers exist only because of and with the full cooperation of Western powers that trumpet freedom and

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democracy but find nothing contradictory about giving billions of dollars, arms and ammunition to dictators who are the antithesis of both freedom and democracy. Actions speak far more loudly than words. The real price of Israeli policies in Palestine, support for dictators like Abdul Fattah Sisi of Egypt (ISIS written backwards), so-called cartoons insulting the Prophet (S) and other such completely insane actions is paid in hatred, death and entirely avoidable bloodshed. Subsequent failure of Western leadership to stop or condemn these things but instead Western support for them in the name of this or that 'freedom' adds insult to injury. Muslims have nothing against anyone else's freedom. But they want the same freedoms for themselves. Muslims have nothing against people laughing and having fun but like anyone else, they are not amused when insulting their holiest icons is done in the name of laughing, fun and freedom of expression. To them, it is not funny and freedom to insult is not freedom of expression. Movies like American Sniper and similar themes will beget their own miserable results. All this adds fuel to the fire. All fire burns and the result is always ash.

I would like to say that though I have used terms like 'European' and 'Westerner' it is not to club all into one basket. I have enough dear friends who are European, American, Australian and British, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Atheist to know that there are good people everywhere. Many of these friends of mine and many of the people in their countries are people who are more ethical, moral and principled than people in many Muslim societies. I don't feel happy saying this but the truth must be stated. I am also more than aware that despite the many thousands who marched for Gaza, Iraq and so on and despite all that they do to try to influence their governments to be fair and just, they are as powerless as their counterparts in the dictatorships and monarchies which their governments support in Muslim lands. This underlines for me the farce of 'democracy' that exists. To paraphrase Gandhiji, if someone were to ask me what I thought of European/American democracy, I would say, 'That would be a very good idea.' Sadly what we have in the West are oligarchies – rule of billionaires for the benefit of billionaires. Not of the people, for the people, by the people.

What is clear is that the road ahead is long, hard and dark. But we have to stand together – Muslim and non-Muslim but people who are dedicated to justice and who still have compassion in their hearts. Stand together against all forces of evil of which ISIS is only one. We must condemn injustice wherever it happens and stand for justice. We must condemn exploitation whoever does it and fight for the removal of the exploiters instead of giving them awards. We all – the vast majority of human beings – need to take charge of our world and ensure that we do whatever it takes to hand over to our children a world that will be a credit to our role as its trustees.

4. What must the ordinary Muslim man and woman do when faced with the ISIS's claims to legitimacy of the Khilaafa and the 'duty' of the Muslims to it?

Ali ibn Abi Talib (R) narrated from Rasoolullah (S): When you see the black flags, remain where you are and do not move your hands or your feet. Thereafter there shall appear a feeble insignificant folk.

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Their hearts will be like fragments of iron (no mercy). They will have the state. They will fulfil neither covenant nor agreement. They will call to the truth, but they will not be people of the truth. Their names will be parental attributions, and their aliases will be derived from towns. Their hair will be free-flowing like that of women. This situation will remain until they differ among themselves. Thereafter, Allah will bring forth the Truth through whomever He wills.

A word of advice to the rulers of the world - Justice is the biggest enemy of the ISIS's of the world. Injustice gives them recruits. Give justice to the people and take the wind out of their sails. The lives of innocents are not of differing value. Murder is murder no matter who kills or is killed. Drone killings are murder. Israeli killings are murder. Justice will not be established until those in power decide to establish it.

See the statistics: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/23/obama-drone-program-anniversary_n_4654825.html?ir=India

And another one which shows the complete disregard and contempt of human life by those who like to claim that their society champions the cause of human rights.

<http://www.countercurrents.org/swanson260215.htm>

When you create a society where you not only allow killing of innocent people but dismiss it contemptuously as a 'bug splat', then wait for the day when the killers turn on you.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/09/world/asia/pakistan-drones-not-a-bug-splat/>

Reading this I am tempted to ask them to define the word 'human'. Bug splat? I thought humans were not insects. But maybe I am wrong. Some humans are insects and others have the right to splat them. Let me state loudly and clearly that until we accept that murder is wrong and stop glorifying psychopathic killers, innocent people will continue to die and we will all pay the price. Make no mistake. Every action has a reaction which is equal and opposite. Allah made the law. Newton discovered it. It is a law of physics, not theology. It is a fundamental law that we can ignore only at our peril.

We much speak out against all oppression no matter who is involved. Because oppression of one is oppression of all. Journalists must stick to the truth. Not sensational reporting only to sell papers and get TRP ratings. Be fair and just. Don't involve innocent people by association. Don't cast aspersions. Don't use innuendo. Be truthful. That will defeat the recruiters more successfully than any material means. This is a war of ideology and ideology can't be killed with guns. Guns strengthen ideology of the defeated. Don't give ISIS recruiters proof to show that the West hates Islam and is out to destroy it. Political speeches have no value. People listen with their eyes. They don't care what you say until they see what you do. Don't drive people into the arms of the ISIS by your own injustice. Insulting the Prophet (S) is injustice. Killing innocents calling them 'suspects' is injustice. Racism is injustice.

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<http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/commonwordcommonlord/2014/08/think-muslims-havent-condemned-isis-think-again.html>

Above is the link to an article on a blog which gives a list of global protests by Muslims against the ISIS. Muslims protest but nobody listens or registers. Please read it and spread the word. Tell journalists to publish this news. Pay to have it published if you need to. Let us spread good news.

Muslims:

1. Stay out of it. Understand that the ISIS is an agent of the enemies of Islam and humanity. ISIS actions damage Islam and help to boost the myth of the 'Global Enemy' which helps the Imperialists. If you join them you are also committing to harm the name of Islam. ISIS is not about Islam.
2. The Khalifa is an imposter. ISIS is a bunch of psychopaths, criminals and deluded innocents who don't represent Islam and who have found a convenient way to live their corrupt fantasies.
3. Speak out against them. Don't support them in any way and make dua against them and their corruption in the land. Ask Allah to relieve us all from their oppression and the oppression of all those who support them knowingly.
4. Ask the right questions:
 - a. Ask how it is that in a world where you can't transfer \$5000 without being questioned, billions of dollars are floating around to finance the ISIS?
 - b. Ask who is buying the stolen crude oil that they are selling?
 - c. Ask where are they getting a ready supply of arms and ammunition from to continue to fight when the whole world says that it is against them?
 - d. Ask why it is that there's not a single instance of a drone killing an ISIS beheading party but daily instances of obliterating entire families calling them 'suspects' ?
 - e. Ask why this self-proclaimed Khalifa is silent about Israel and Israeli war crimes and human rights violations in Palestine?

I am sure you will come to the same conclusions that I came to based on which I say that the ISIS has nothing to do with Islam and everything to do with those who are trying to malign Islam. Read history and current events. Analyze what you read. Ask, 'Who benefits?' Don't act thoughtlessly purely from passion. That is a good way to die a pointless death and give Islam a bad name.

Non-Muslims:

1. Don't become the PR wing of the ISIS inadvertently.
2. Don't become unpaid recruiters for the ISIS.
3. Don't drive people into their arms by your own injustice; done by your governments in your name. Speak out against it. Pressure your so-called democratic governments to change their policies of perpetual war. Remember those who terrorize others are condemned to live in fear.

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4. Don't indulge in random violence against innocent Muslims because you are angry with what the ISIS is doing. Remember that your Muslim neighbors are even angrier because what the ISIS is doing is being done in the name of Islam.
5. An incident like the murder of three good innocent people in Chapel Hill does more good for the ISIS recruiters than a million dollars' worth of funding.
6. A movie like American Sniper is worth a billion dollars to the ISIS because it only 'proves' their recruiting spiel – that the West and all Westerners are the enemies of Islam and Muslims.
7. Help those who are trying to convince Muslim youth not to join ISIS. You can't do their job. Muslims believe their own more than they believe you. So support good Muslims who are sincere about this. Those puppets you do support actually harm your cause because they have no credibility with Muslims. Remember it is their hearts you have to reach and your puppets can do it. Be sincere and you'll see results.
8. Don't imagine however that such people who speak out against ISIS support Western oppression. They don't. But at the same time they don't think that ISIS is the answer to it. They see the danger of divisive, regressive ideologies like the ISIS and know that it has nothing to do with Islam. They know how to address their audience in a way that will convince them. So take their help because you have the same goal.
9. Don't let anyone convince you that Islam and the Muslims are the 'Global Enemy' which you must fight. Muslims are your neighbors, friends and for many of you, family. Love them, support them and be kind to them and they will do the same for you. We all, ordinary people, must support one another against the global manipulators who are the real enemy who think nothing of helping us to lose our lives for their benefit.
10. Finally ask all the questions that I have suggested that Muslims should ask. You also ask the same questions so that you can see who your real enemy is.
11. Understand that justice is when right and wrong are decided on the basis of principles; not on the basis of who does what. See Tom Engelhardt's Letter to the American Patriot. He makes some very valid points: Read, for only knowledge can set you free. Read, because those who use you don't want you to. Your ignorance helps them to create policies which oppress you first.
<http://www.countercurrents.org/engelhardt020315.htm>

In conclusion I would like to say that I hope this thought-share will help to put things in perspective and enable us to do what it takes to hold those in power accountable for their actions which affect us all. The success of a democracy is not dependent on the integrity of its leaders but on the activism of the public. It is the public which needs to remind leaders that they hold their positions at the pleasure of their electorate. It is when the electorate forgets its power and becomes subservient to leaders that democracies metamorphose into dictatorships in all but name. The alternative to justice is injustice, pain and suffering. In our interconnected world, the much touted Global Village, nobody is safe from its effects. If you light a fire inside your home, it will burn you. The world is our home.

ISIS and its faulty logic

In the words of Alan Hart in his article **How, Really, To Contain And Defeat Perverted And Violent Islamic Fundamentalism**: "If perverted and violent Islamic fundamentalism (PVIF) in all of its manifestations is to be contained and defeated there's one thing above all others that must happen - **Western leaders, starting with President Obama, must open their minds to the fact that consequences have causes and then address the causes.**"

<http://www.countercurrents.org/hart210215.htm>

I have great hope in the world – both the Western world which exemplifies many of the principles that we Muslims hold dear – and in the Muslim world where people who are struggling under burdens that most Westerners can't even imagine in their worst nightmares, still have the resilience to wake up each morning and face each day with hope.

I know that when all is said and done and when we stand before our Creator – all of us without exception – we will not be asked, 'What happened?' We will be asked, 'What did you do?' At that time I want to be able to say, 'I didn't let what I couldn't do prevent me from doing what I could.'

I wish the same for you all.

I want to end with an excerpt from an excellent article that I read a couple of days ago.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/02/what-muslims-really-want-isis-atlantic/386156/>

This last paragraph beautifully sums up the issue: *"All of this puts Muslims in a double bind: If they just go about their lives, they stand condemned by those who demand that Muslims "speak out." But if they do speak out, they can expect to be told that short of declaring their sacred texts invalid, they are fooling themselves or deceiving the rest of us. Muslims are presented with a brutal logic in which the only way to truly disassociate from ISIS and escape suspicion is to renounce Islam altogether."*

Allah said: ***Qur'an 2:120*** *And the Jews will not be pleased with you, or the Christians until you follow their religion. Say: Surely Allah's guidance is the (true) guidance. And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian from Allah, nor any helper.*

Interesting that's exactly what seems to be the demand today.

Well, the short answer to that is that it's not going to happen.

Glossary of Terms

1. Rasoolullah (S)	Messenger of Allah (S = Peace be on him – Arabic)
2. Khulafa Ar-Raashida	Rightly Guided Khulafa – First 5 in history
3. Khalifa	Vicegerent – Title of the Islamic ruler
4. Khilaafa	Vicegerency – Title of Islamic rule
5. Ameerul Mu'mineen	Commander of the Believers (Title of the Khalifa)
6. Muhajiroon	Immigrants – migrated from Makkah to Madinah
7. Ansar	Helpers – Madinans who supported the migrants
8. Badriyeen	Those who fought in the Battle of Badr
9. Ayah	Sign – so-called 'verse' of the Qur'an
10. Ayaat	Plural of Ayah
11. Juma	Friday – also the Friday prayer
12. Khutba	Lecture
13. Ihsaan	Excellence
14. Madinatun Nabawi	City of the Prophet – Name of Madinah
15. Qadhy	Judge
16. Kunya	Nickname of respect
17. Wallahi	By Allah
18. Seerah	Biography of the Prophet
19. Jannah	Heaven
20. Aakhira	Hereafter – eternal life after death
21. Tafsir	Explanation
22. Imaan	Faith
23. Fatah	Open – refers to conquest
24. Ka'aba	The black square building in the Haram
25. Taqwa	Concern not to displease Allah
26. Hujjaj	Plural of Haaji – pilgrim who goes for Hajj
27. Takbeer	Glorifying Allah
28. Tahleel	Thanking Allah
29. Sahaba	Companions of the Prophet
30. Tawaf	Circumambulation of the Ka'aba
31. Haram	Masjid Al Haraam – The Sacred Sanctuary
32. Haraam	Prohibited – anything that is prohibited
33. Halaal	Permitted – anything that is permitted
34. al-Khazirah	A food made from barley