

Islamic Crusades Episode 6: India's Millennial Burden

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Well, the subscribers have been clamoring for a new Islamic Crusades video for months now, and I must admit that it feels good to get back to the meat and potatoes of this site. In researching this video I came across more horrific information than for any previous episode. I was going to cover the entire history from the first incursions of Islamic forces into the subcontinent to the present day, but there was simply too much information. This video gives you a general overview from approximately the 8th century to the 18th century. In Episode 7 I will cover the period following the Mughal Era to the present day, including the post-colonial partition and modern acts of terrorism. Enjoy.

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Islamic Crusades 6: India's Millennial Burden

"...the Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilization is a precious good, whose delicate complex order and freedom can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without and multiplying from within." -Historian Will Durant (1885 -1981)

For three days in November 2008, all eyes were transfixed on the Jihadist bloodbath in Mumbai. These scenes of the burning Taj Mahal Hotel were on live feed to cable and satellite networks around the world. Many Westerners had heard of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, and may have been aware of the tensions centering on the disputed territory of Kashmir, but the sheer brutality and brazenness of the Mumbai Massacre brought the Jihad in India to global consciousness as never before. Unfortunately for India, the Mumbai attacks were only unique in terms of the high-profile media coverage accorded to them. The casualty figures, while appalling, were rather standard in the context of the series of Islamic terror attacks in India in the 21st century. And they are dwarfed by the massacres of tens and hundreds of thousands, sometimes in a single day, that pepper the 1300 year history of Islamic conquest on the Indian subcontinent.

Before the Islamic juggernaut burst in from the west, the native religions of these lands were Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. The Jihad against India was extraordinarily brutal even by Islamic standards. This is because unlike the so-called people of the book, Christians and Jews, who enjoyed some basic rights as subjected Dhimmis... Hindus and Buddhists were considered idolaters; the lowest of the low, worthy only of death.

Only 25 years after Muhammad's death Islamic forces had crushed the Sassanid Persian Empire, and thus brought the spearhead of Islam to the borderlands of India. The first permanent Muslim foothold on the subcontinent was achieved with Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest of Sindh in 711 A.D. He demolished temples, shattered sculptures, plundered palaces, killed all able-bodied men and carried their women and children into slavery. For example, it took his army three days to slaughter all the inhabitants of the port city of Debal. But the Arab Muslim conquest would stall here in the northwestern frontier.

By the end of the tenth century however, newly Islamized Turkic tribes began to expand the Ummah into what is now Northwest India proper. Mahmud of Ghazni (971-1030), who was also known as the "Sword of Islam," mounted seventeen plundering expeditions between 997 and 1027 into North India.

Each winter Mahmud descended into India, filled his treasure chest with spoils, and amused his men with full freedom to pillage and kill; each spring he returned to his capital richer than before. At Mathura he took from the temple its statues of gold encrusted with precious stones, and emptied its coffers of a vast quantity of gold, silver and jewelry; he expressed his admiration for the architecture of the great shrine, judged that its duplication would cost one hundred million dinars and the labor of two hundred years, and then ordered it to be soaked with naphtha and burnt to the ground. Six years later he sacked another opulent city of northern India, Somnath, killed all its fifty thousand inhabitants, and dragged its wealth to Ghazni. In the end he became, perhaps, the richest king that history has ever known.

- Historian Will Durant, from "The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage" 1935. pp. 459-463

A subsequent conqueror, Muhammad Khilji had the distinction of single-handedly wiping out Buddhist culture on the subcontinent by the end of the 12th century. He conquered their stronghold in Bihar and burned their famous library to the ground, slaughtering thousands of Buddhist monks and destroying dozens of ancient temples in the process. Muslims have done their best to erase any trace of this culture, even as recently as March 2001 when the Taliban destroyed four giant statues of Buddha in Bamiyan, Afghanistan.

Khiliji's brutality also incited the first case of Jauhar in India. Jauhar is a desperate act of mass self-immolation. When Khiliji besieged the city of Chittor the Hindu inhabitants realized their cause was hopeless. As the men rode off to certain death in battle, the women and children burned themselves alive rather than suffer the dishonor of being killed or enslaved by the conquerors.

Another Turkic Muslim warlord, Timur, known as Tamerlane in the West, crossed the Indus River in 1398 and eventually captured the capital of Delhi. Timur explains the motivation for his conquest in his personal memoirs:

About this time there arose in my heart the desire to lead an expedition against the infidels, and to become a ghazi; for it had reached my ears that the slayer of infidels is a ghazi, and if he is slain he becomes a martyr. It was on this account that I formed this resolution, but I was undetermined in my mind whether I should direct my expedition against the infidels of China or against the infidels and polytheists of India. In this matter I sought an omen from the Kuran, and the verse I opened upon was this, "O Prophet, make war upon infidels and unbelievers and treat them with severity" [Quran 66:9]. My great officers told me that the inhabitants of Hindustan were infidels and unbelievers. In obedience to the order of Almighty Allah I determined on an expedition against them.

- From the Malfuzat-i Timuri, an autobiographical memoir of the Emperor Timur (1336-1405)

Later he describes the sack of Delhi in his own words:

In a short space of time all the people in the fort were put to the sword, and in the course of one hour the heads of 10,000 infidels were cut off. The sword of Islam was washed in the blood of the infidels, and all the goods and effects, the treasure and the grain which for many a long year had been stored in the fort became the spoil of my soldiers. They set fire to the houses and reduced them to ashes, and they razed the buildings and the fort to the ground....All these infidel Hindus were slain, their women and children, and their property and goods became the spoil of the victors. I proclaimed throughout the camp that every man who had infidel prisoners should put them to death, and whoever neglected to do so should himself be executed and his property given to the informer. When this order became known to the ghazis of Islam, they drew their swords and put their prisoners to death.

One hundred thousand infidels, impious idolaters, were on that day slain...on the great day of battle these 100,000 prisoners could not be left with the baggage, and it would be entirely opposed to the rules of war to set these idolaters and enemies of Islam at liberty...no other course remained but that of making them all food for the sword.

- From the Malfuzat-i Timuri, an autobiographical memoir of the Emperor Timur (1336-1405)

By the early 1500's the mantle of Islamic power in India had passed to the first Mughal Emperor, Babar. Over the next centuries the Mughal Empire would expand to occupy nearly the entire Indian subcontinent. During the Mughal period outright slaughters and enslavements were less common, but the regime provided many incentives to convert to Islam by means of degrading Dhimmi laws and burdensome Jizya taxes.

So far as the Hindus were concerned, there was no improvement either in their material and moral conditions or in their relations with the Muslims. With the sole

exception of Akbar, who sought to conciliate the Hindus by removing some of the glaring evils to which they were subjected, almost all other Mughal Emperors were notorious for their religious bigotry. The Muslim law which imposed many disabilities and indignities upon the Hindus...and thereby definitely gave them an inferior social and political status, as compared to the Muslims, was followed by these Mughal Emperors with as much zeal as was displayed by their predecessors,. The climax was reached during the reign of Aurangzeb, who deliberately pursued the policy of destroying and desecrating Hindu temples and idols with a thoroughness unknown before or since.

-R.C. Majumdar (editor) The Mughul Empire, Bombay, 1974

Based on Muslim chronicles and demographic calculations Indian historian K.S. Lal has estimated that the Hindu population of India decreased by 80 million during the millennium of Islamic rule.

Yet despite a deliberate policy of genocide and conversion over the 1,000 years of partial or complete Muslim rule, the majority of the population miraculously retained their Hindu religion as modernity dawned on the subcontinent. In the next episode we will explore the continuing Islamic efforts to reconquer India in the modern era.

"These massacres perpetrated by Moslems in India are unparalleled in history. In sheer numbers, they are bigger than the Jewish Holocaust, the Soviet Terror, the Japanese massacres of the Chinese during WWII, Mao's devastations of the Chinese peasantry, the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks, or any of the other famous crimes against humanity of the 20th Century. But sadly, they are almost unknown outside India."

- Serge Trifkovic

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