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Introduction
Islamic State: A Conceptual Discourse

The surprising rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS)\(^1\) and its proclamation as the Caliphate on 29 June 2014, imposed an obvious threat on the nation-states.\(^2\) Whether ISIS is a myth or reality is not integral to this study rather constitutes a separate field of enquiry. However, its mention entails profoundly the significance of the concept of an Islamic State or establishment of the institution of Khilāfah among Muslims, who continue to aspire and struggle for the establishment of an Islamic State. Notwithstanding the novel character of the term ‘Islamic State’ to denote Islamic system of governance in the modern era, yet none has succeeded to deny the existence of this institution in Islamic history. However, to define an Islamic system of governance by using the modern parameters of statecraft is erroneous and often confusing. Wael B. Hallaq (presently Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and a contemporary scholar of Islamic law and Islamic intellectual history) in his book, *The Impossible State*, argues, “the ‘Islamic State’ judged by any standard definition of what the modern state represents, is both an impossibility and a contradiction in terms.”\(^3\) In addition, the term “al-Dawlah” which is used to denote state in modern times has not been used in the Qurʾān and Hadīth as such. However, in Islamic history, for the first time, the Abbasids after deposing the Umayyads, used the term for describing their governance and administration.\(^4\) Again, the term was far from the definitions of modern concept of state. The political scientists define modern state as “an abstract juridical personality comprising the totality of elements such as a people living within a definite territory, a legally constituted government, and a supreme power within the society, and independence from foreign control.”\(^5\) Dr. Manẓūr al-Dīn Aḥmad (1929-2012), after citing the above definition of ‘state’ comes with the same observations as that of Wael B. Hallaq by arguing, “we do not find any such corresponding theory of state in Islam.”\(^6\)

The early Muslim Jurists discussed the Islamic theory of state and government by using the identical terms like “Khilāfah” and “Imāmah”. The institution of Khilāfah was and is regarded as the central platform as well as the only institution responsible for the complete implementation of the divine will/law in the society.\(^7\) Accordingly, keeping the modern assumptions in view, Khilāfah is defined as “a form of government based upon three-fold principles of (1) elective headship, (2) consultative government, and (3) the

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maintenance of the territorial integrity and the preservation and enforcement of the Islamic values within the *Ummah.*\(^8\) For almost thirteen hundred years—from the establishment of city-state of Madinah until the fall of Ottoman Caliphate in 1924—the Muslims were ruling and managing their all affairs without going against the fundamental principles of Islam. Noah Feldman (b. 1970), an American author and Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, maintains, “these [governments], separated in time, space, and size, were so Islamic that they did not need the adjective to describe themselves.”\(^9\)

**Concept of an Islamic State: A Historical Overview**

The origin of *Khilāfah* is usually located with the succession of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr as the *Khalīfah* (vicegerent) of the beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) during 632 C.E. Contrary to this viewpoint, Mawlānā Ḥāmid al-Anṣārī Ghāzī comes with the different calculations and traces its origin to the advent of the first man, Ḥaḍrat Ādam (عَلَيْهِ اﻟﺴﻼم). He argues in his book, *Islām Kā Niẓām-i Ḥukūmat*, that the concept of *Khilāfah* was in its infancy period when its seeds were sown on the earth at the time of Ḥaḍrat Ādam (عَلَيْهِ اﻟﺴﻼم). Afterwards, it went through its evolutionary process and with the help of experiments and observations, this seed had grown into a strong tree during the lifetime of the Last Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).\(^10\) The period of the Last Messenger is considered as a revolution in the World politics, wherein national and tribal systems of governance were replaced with universal system of governance, universal written constitution, universal nation, and above all universal programme of peace and prosperity.\(^11\) Likewise, the concept of state and government is related to the multiple roles of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) as a religious founder, political leader, head of the state and spiritual guide and his unparalleled success in establishing and conceptualizing a world order the humanity has ever had.\(^12\) After the sad demise of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in 632 C.E., the institution of *Khilāfah* was transferred to what is commonly known as *al-Khulafāh al-Rāshidūn* (literary, the Rightly-Guided successors of the Prophet—632-661). According to Muḥammad Ḥamīdollāh (1908-2002), one of the renowned scholars of Islam and specialized in Islamic *Sharī'ah* and International Law, this period, in essence, represented the golden period of Islam and witnessed the only Islamic State, which the Muslims ever had.\(^13\) These successors of Prophet (ﷺ) intended to lead the community and realize the objectives, which Allah has set for the humanity on the very path and methodology as shown by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) himself. As the time elapsed, the
Khilāfah was transferred to Umayyads (661-750), then to Abbasids (750-1258/1517) and lastly to Ottomans (1362-1924). In this transfer of the authority, despite the prevalence of some fundamental changes in the system of government, yet, none of these dynasties could afford to give up the institution of Khilāfah and were Islamic as such. It is pertinent to note that the Islamic scholars recognized the governance under Ḥaḍrat Muʿāwiyyah as just government on Islamic pattern. According to Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), *al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah* was *Khilāfah Nubūwwah*, established by the best and noblest persons of the *Ummah*, where as the later was *Khilāfah Raḥmah* established by the holy companions of second rank and their followers. The rulers were committed to implement *Sharī'ah* in every sector of human existence. The authority of ruler was lawful and legitimate until he fulfilled the duty to command what the (divine) law required and prevent what it prohibited. Consequently, many theories of statecraft developed during the course of the time, which Muhammad Abd al-Muqtadir [Muqtedar] Khan (b. 1966, an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Delaware, USA) has classified into *Islamic Theories of the State* and *Theories of the Islamic State*. The former, according to him, are based on “the discussion of the nature of the state prior to colonial era” while as the later include the “contemporary attempts at imaging the utopian ideal of the Just and dominant Islamic state.” Additionally, he explains that the Islamic theories of the state are from those Islamic scholars who lived in the age when Islamic civilization was dominant. The chief contributors to such theories include the scholars like al-Farābī (870-950), al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111), al-Māwardī (974-1058), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406). The approach of al-Farābī was philosophical, al-Māwardī’s legalistic, Ibn Taymiyyah’s theological and Ibn Khaldun’s sociological, observes Khan. Though, the approaches and theories presented by these scholars and others like them are very important to the study of Islamic system of government; however, in the current study, the discussions of juristic and moralistic theories of the state have been excluded for being beyond its scope.

The present study is an attempt to analyze comparatively the concept of Islamic state in perspective of *Theories of the Islamic State* based on, as mentioned above, the colonial and post-colonial period. The major contributors of this discourse include: Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877-1938), Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), Mawlānā Mawdūdī (1903-1979), Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989), Shaykh Ḥasan al-Banna

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(1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). These scholars presented their theories in order to shape the Muslim World’s post-colonial reality.¹⁸ These theories were also a response to the colonization challenge seeking to revive or reconstruct the religious, social, political, and economic institutions of the modern Muslim world.¹⁹ Many of such scholars while focusing on the internal Muslim decadence, sought to revive Islamic practices in light of a strict adherence to Islamic law and theology. Some others were committed to ambitious programs such as the reform of Islamic education or the control of political authority in preparation for implementing the Sharī‘ah in the larger Islamic society.

Until the second decade of the twentieth century, the Muslim intellectuals were in a position to defend the Ottoman Khilāfah and preserve the Islamic Culture against the conspiracies of the colonial West. The imperialist powers were unable to overcome the Muslim civilization until they engineered the fragmentation of the Caliphate²⁰ into nation-states, which were directly or indirectly controlled and guided by them. The fact is maintained by Dr. Kalim Siddique (1931-1996)—a leading intellectual of the Islamic movement, political thinker, the Director of the Muslim Institute, London, and founder of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain—in the following words:

The western civilization has taken care to destroy all the traditional pillars of strength of the Islamic civilization. The political, military, social, economic, cultural and educational structures and institutions that were the supports of the civilization of Islam have been either destroyed entirely or removed from the mainstream of life. In their place institutions developed in the west have been planted.²¹

Consequently, after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, the geo-political representation of the Muslim world changed altogether and most of its parts were under the domination of either France or England.²² Sensing Western conspiracies against Islam, the agitations arose from Indian sub-continent, during 1919-1924, against British government to preserve the temporal and spiritual authority of Muslims—the Caliphate or Khilāfah. Gail Minault—Professor in the Department of History, University of Texas at Austin and specialized in Indian politics of 19th and 20th Centuries—maintains, that both traditional and modern scholars who supported Khilāfah Movement, “viewed the European attack on the authority of the Caliph as an attack on Islam and thus as a threat to the religious freedom of Muslims under British rule.”²³ When the question of the Caliphate was still under consideration, in Egypt, Rashīd Riḍā raised the issues of
restitution of the Islamic political order in the name of Caliphate by writing the book, *Al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah al-‘Uzma*. In the same line, some analogous political organizations in the form of a number of Muslim Congresses that were convened between 1924 and 1931 came to surface to discuss and determine a solution to the predicament of Muslim leadership.  

Hasan al-Banna took Riḍā’s arguments further with primary aim at educational reforms. Reaffirming the all-embracing vision of Islam covering political, social and economic aspects of life, al-Banna maintained, “Islam is a faith and a ritual, a nation (*Waṭan*) and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirituality and action, *Qur‘ān* and sword.” He laid the foundation of *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (The Muslim Brotherhood) in 1928, initially an educational and cultural organization, which later on turned into a religio-political movement and by the late 1940s was the largest mass political and social organization in Egypt spreading to other Arab countries. Similarly, Sayyid Abū’l A‘lā Mawdūdī, from the Indian-subcontinent emphasized on the need of political power to establish and implement the laws of Allah (ﷻ) in the world. In order to actualize the cause, he founded *Jamāʿat-e-Islāmī* and wrote profusely on the need and importance of an Islamic State in the contemporary times. Likewise, Sayyid Qūṭb, who has been termed as the most influential and original religio-political thinker of the Muslim World, presented Islam as having a unique political system with such principles that are absent in other systems known to world. In his book *Social Justice in Islam*, he maintains:

> Islam proposes independent solutions to human problems … [with] a comprehensive philosophy and a homogeneous unity, and to introduce into it any foreign element would mean ruining it. It is like a delicate piece of machinery which may be completely ruined by the presence of a foreign body.

The mass-oriented social and religious movements like *Muḥammadiyyah, Nahhdatu ul-Ulama, Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* and *Jamāʿat-e-Islāmī* and their corresponding leaders and associates were committed to ambitious programs, including the control of political authority in preparation for implementing the *Sharī‘ah* in the larger Islamic society. The Muslim aspirations of establishing an Islamic State reached the pinnacle with the establishment of Iran as an Islamic State in 1979 under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini who, according to Esposito, represented “the living symbol of evolutionary Islam.” However, due to internal and external challenges, this zeal was short lived and Iran could no longer prove as a viable model for Muslim world.
Similarly, a short-lived Islamic State can be seen in case of Afghanistan when the Taliban—emerging as an organized group in 1994—declared in 1997 the territory as “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”. In October 2001, within weeks of an American assault in reprisal for the alleged September 11, 2001 attacks on United States, the government fell swiftly from power. Similarly, another developed Muslim country was raised to ground in the name of War on Terror in 2003. It is pertinent to note that the post 9/11 events, in the guise of so-called war on terror, it seems, to many scholars that the West has unleashed another crusade against Islam, Muslims and their intellectual, cultural and material assets. Further it is being argued that many groups have been sponsored and maintained which seemingly uphold the aspirations of Muslims like establishment of Khilāfah and rule of Sharī‘ah, yet operate in a way which reinforces West’s unending war on Islam. These events together with other developments (especially various armed attacks) in the name of Islam changed the intellectual tune of Islamic historians. For many, the notion of an Islamic State was no longer considered as a desired political system. Thus, accordingly, the process of democratization of the Muslim states increased to show the compatibility of Islam with the contemporary republican form of governments. Meanwhile, in the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, another aspect of democratization surfaced in the name of Arab-Uprisings/Arab Spring dismantling the administration of various Muslim countries without a logical appraisal. On the other hand, the events that broke-out in the wake of the century ignited the aspirations of the Islamic State among Islamic organizations—like Ansār al-Sharī‘ah, Hizbullah, Ahrār al-Shām, Jabhat al-Nuṣrā and al-Shabāb—that identified so-called ‘war on terrorism’ as an attack on Muslim states. The aftermath, finally, was the emergence of ISIS claiming that Allah (ﷻ)’s promise have come true because Khilāfah is established under Khalīfah Ibrāhīm (Abu Bakr al-Baghdādī, b. 1971) who fulfills all the essential conditions mentioned by the Islamic scholars for the post. Despite this claim, none of the mainstream Islamic organizations or any Muslim country extended their hand in support of ISIS.

Since the emergence of Islamic State debate, Islamic scholars and organizations are busy in presenting the comprehensiveness of Islam with a purpose to shape the world according to the divine pattern through establishing and spreading an Islamic order. In this conceptual discourse of an Islamic State comes the name of two important personalities—Muhammad Asad (1900-1992) and Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī (1909-1977)—
who have been either forgotten or revered in a limited circle. Being genuine contributors to the discourse of “theories of Islamic State”, these scholars looked for an “Ideal Islamic State” that would promote and maintain such social conditions enabling the greatest possible number of human beings to live in harmony, freedom, and dignity. Hailing from different backgrounds, both the scholars occupy a special place in the “Islamic State” discourse. With their deep understanding of religious texts and contemporary geopolitical scenario, both Asad and al-Nabhānī have criticized the secular forms of government and have proposed a system of government based on the teachings of Islam. The writings, speeches, and political activities of the duo are important to understand their concern about Muslim renaissance and the betterment of the whole humanity. Moreover, they have discussed the concept of an Islamic State, its nature, structure, principles, and objectives at length. Such a dimension, therefore, enthralled the researcher to study, examine, and understand the concept of an Islamic State especially by comparing the political thoughts/theories of Muhammad Asad and Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī.

**Literature Review**

The diverse approaches to the study of an Islamic state and its related issues have been the subject of several scholarly and popular publications. In the classical times, the nature of the discourse was confined to juristic and moralistic theories of state. However, with the surprising invasion of the European imperialists the concept was put into the debate differently. Some of the writings reflected the biased and defaming approach, as is the case with Sir William Muir (1819-1905) and T. W. Arnold (1864-1930) while others took the concept as the central theme of their writings to argue the contrary, such as Mawdūdī. As it is difficult to present all the publications on the subject here, however, some are briefly reviewed as follows:

*The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, from Original Sources and Annals of The Early Caliphate (1891)*

Muir, a Scottish Orientalist in his book, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, from Original Sources* (1891), provided a historical treatment to the Institution of Khilāfah. This book is essentially an abridgment and continuation of his early writings on the subject titled, *Annals of The Early Caliphate*, which brings the record down to the fall
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of the Caliphate on the onset of the Mongols in thirteenth century. Like other orientalists, Muir also misrepresented and misquoted the events of Islamic history to disgrace and defame Islamic civilization. By these writings, he fulfilled the goals of orientalists and attained the reputation as a leading scholar on Islam in the West. However, he received a strong criticism from Muslim scholars and Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī (1849-1928) declared him as “Islam’s avowed enemy”. Despite this criticism, the book has been published in various editions since its first publication in 1891.

Mas’ala-i Khilāfat (1920) and Islāmī Jumhūriya (1956)

Mawlānā Abū’l Kalām Āzād (1888-1960), a well-known Muslim stalwart throughout the subcontinent, discussed at length the subject in Mas’ala-i Khilāfat (The Issue of the Caliphate, 1920), debating the need of the Khilāfah with the support of theological explanations. In this book, the author tried to convince the Muslims of the sub-continent to unite strongly under one Khalīfah that can help their aspiration to establish the Divine laws on Earth. Similar views have been presented by him in Islāmī Jumhūriya (The Islamic Republic) in a modern tune as to convince the contemporary people who asses the world in democratic perspective. He argues that the government established by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and carried on successfully by the rightly-guided Caliphs can be termed as Islamic Republic where Sharī‘ah is the rule of land and government is run by mutual consultation and accordingly guarantees and protects the human rights. These include provision of basic needs, social security, and establishment of punishments (Ḥudūd) for crimes and penal ordinances to safeguard human dignity and freedom.

The Caliphate (1924)

Another work in this regard is that of Sir Thomas Walker Arnold, the then Professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London (1921-1930), in the name of The Caliphate (1924). In this book, the author has tried to analyze the Islamic Khilāfah in comparison to the ancient Roman Empire. He also traces in this work the origin of Caliphate in the history, its sanction in the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. In the edition in hand, the book is framed into fourteen chapters and five appendices mostly focused on the Abbasid and Ottoman Caliphates. As the book was published at the time of abolition of Khilāfah, the author has criticized those who claim
for the restoration of the Caliphate by saying “the theory of the caliphate is still cherished by theological students who shut their eyes to the altered circumstances of the political world, and expound the doctrine of the Caliphate as though they were still living in the ninth century.” For him like that of Roman Empire, Islamic Caliphate is long dead and the ideal of a united Muslim community under one leader would remain a theme in Muslim aspirations. In reference to the Turkish Grand National Assembly when they claimed in 1922 the caliphate had ceased to exist, the author argues the Caliphate had no political future, yet provided a focus for resentment of European domination and a source of spiritual inspiration. The kind of methodology employed by Arnold in the book has been criticized by Prof. Talal Asad (b. 1932), a modern anthropologist of religion, who argues that it is dangerous to transplant the very particular set of assumptions about religion and politics that derives from the preceding history of European secularism onto the history of other faith traditions.

Al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah al-‘Uzmā (1923)

Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā took the cause of Khilāfah and wrote his book, al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah al-‘Uzmā (The Caliphate or the Supreme Imamate, 1923). Rashīd Riḍā outlined in the book, the role of this institution throughout the Islamic history and argued the desirability of a renewed caliphate. He stressed up on the restoration and preservation of the caliphate in order to put Sharī‘ah into practice. Considering the book “as the authoritative pronouncement on the attitude of modernism to politics”, Rosenthal argues that it “has lost nothing of its topical character.”

Al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm (1925)

The above-mentioned book (Al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah al-‘Uzmā) was refuted by Rida’s contemporary, Shaykh ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq. He in his book titled, Al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm (1925) denied the necessity and obligation of the Khilāfah. Mainly influenced by the methodology of Arnold’s The Caliphate, al-Rāziq also attacked on the viability of Khilāfah, but unlike Arnold’s assumptions, he retained the Islamic supremacy by saying that any form of government that spares the violation of the core principles of Islam is acceptable. Denying the religious basis of the state, the book received a wide range of criticism. Naqd Kitāb al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn, Ḥaqīqat al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm by Shaykh Muḥammad Bākhit al-Muṭ‘ī, *~11~*
and *Naqd ‘ilmī li Kitāb al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm* by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir b. ‘Āshur are some noted works that presented a refutation of al-Rāziq’s arguments he maintained in his book *Al-Islām wa Usūl al-Ḥukm*. Among his contemporary critiques also comes Mamdūḥ Ḥaqqī who criticized him by arguing for his faulty grasp of Islamic doctrine and corruption by the West.\(^5^4\)

**Islām kā Niẓām-e-Ḥukūmat (1956)**\(^5^5\)

The book is a very important contribution to Islamic political thought in Urdu language. According to the author, the book is a message of divine government to the man-made systems of government—a message of universal peace and universal brotherhood to those quarrelsome powers who are divided into various nations, tribes and races. The “state of war” and “the absence of peace and solidarity” thus, seem major themes that motivated the author to pen down this essential work. The book was written during period when colonized states were struggling for decolonization and the political elites were thinking about the future of newly born states. In this situation, Mawlānā Ḥāmid al-Anṣārī Ghāzī presented the Islamic scheme of governance and its relevance and validity in said atmosphere. The author focused on the evolution of the government, its necessity for human existence, and other related issues in a systematic and comprehensive manner. Interestingly, the author traces the origin of government in the creation of First Man, Prophet Adam (ﷺ) and argued that through its evolutionary process it came to its complete form during the final prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Besides, the book also deals with the non-Islamic ideologies of statecraft, Islamic concept, and organization of governance, concept of sovereignty, head of the state, his qualities, nature of election, relation between ruler and ruled along with their corresponding rights and duties. The concept of Divine state, popular state, vicegerency, and the principle of *shūrā* is also discussed in the book. The domestic and foreign administration including organizing of social system based on divine commandments, economic system, organizing and training of military, and the debate of the main organs of the state—legislative, judiciary, and executive—are also addressed in the book. The book not only compares the contemporary model of Islamic State with the classical but also deals with modern notions of statecraft.
The book is essentially a compilation of the writings and lectures of Mawlānā Mawdudi on theme of Islamic Political System, systematically arranged by Prof. Khurshid into sixteen chapters and divided into four sections. In this book, Mawdudi highlights the comprehensive nature and the guiding principles of Islam regarding political affairs. He has not only discussed the literal concept of the term *Khilāfah* but has also denied the notion of Islam-politics segregation. He emphasized on the need of an ‘Islamic State’, its nature, and structure with reference to the Qur’ānic texts and Prophetic sayings. The author chiefly deliberates over the Islamic concept of nation, rights, and duties of citizens, status of women and non-Muslim citizens, Islamic legislation, difference between Islamic and Muslim governments and other related concepts of statecraft. Besides discussing the principles and structure of the state, he underscores the fundamental principles that should be mentioned in the Islamic constitution like, Sovereignty of Allah (ﷻ), Status of Prophethood, *Khilāfah*, principles of consultation, Principles of Election, status of women, objectives of the state, authority and principles for obedience, fundamental rights, social justice, and human welfare. The primary focus of the book is Islam, as a better and peaceful way of bringing a revolution to establish the Divine Command on Earth.

*Mawdudi* discusses the essence, nature and specific characteristics of *Khilāfah* in this volume. The author surveys the nature of early *Khilāfah* and discusses the transition of *Khilāfah* to Mulukiyah (Monarchy). At the very outset, the author sketches out the Qur’ānic foundations of *Khilafah*, its essence, qualities of Amir/Khalifah, rights and duties of ruler and the ruled, salient features of Islamic State and its nine guiding principles. In the later part, Mawdūdī discusses the beginning of religious differences among Muslims and their causes and analyzes the negative effect of such discrepancies in understanding the nature of an Islamic State and its importance in Islam. In the concluding part, the author highlights the contribution and approaches of Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Abu Yusuf regarding the issues of *Khilāfah*.

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The book, *Islamic Government: The Governance of the Jurists*, is essential contribution to the Islamic political thought and is the compendium of thirteen speeches delivered by the author, Ayatollah Khomeini, during 1970s. The author has emphasized on the importance of the Jurists’ role, which they can play in the consolidation of an Islamic state. The book constitutes a major theological case and accordingly signals a landmark shift in Shiite political thought. Hāmid Algar, the translator of the book, observes three major points from its text—(a) the necessity for the establishment and maintenance of Islamic political power for Islamic goals, precepts, and criteria; (b) the duty of the religious scholars (the *Fuqahā* ) to bring about an Islamic state; and (c) a program of action for the establishment of an Islamic state, including various measures for self-reform by the religious establishment.


Authored by Ihsan abd al-Mun‘im Samarah, this book deals with the subject as reflected in its title. However, the pages 140-163 and 223-238 present a biographical sketch of Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī and an apologetical treatment to his party. The author has tried to show that the party is against and rejects the concept of social justice by a thorough discussion of aspects of the party’s thought.

*Who Needs an Islamic State? (1991)*

Abdelwahab El-Affendi, a well-known Islamic scholar and political philosopher from Sudan, has authored this volume, wherein he discusses the paradigm shift that took place in the contemporary political thought. He highlights the reasons responsible for the failure of the proponents of Islamic State in developing a consistent position on such crucial issues as limits to state authority, people’s participation in law-making and governance, the role and status of non-Muslims and women and the question of violence. The author attempts to convince that Islam has no defined political system and makes the conventional democratic system more apt to be followed by the Muslims in the modern world. However, the arguments proposed in the book have been objected by Ian Nisbet in his *Who Needs an Islamic State? We Do!: A Critical Review of the Book by Abdelwahab*
El-Affendi; and is also an attempt to respond the query posed by El-Affendi in the title of the book.61

*The State in Contemporary Islamic Thought: A Historical Survey of the Major Muslim Political Thinkers of the Modern Era (2009)*62

The book analyzes the notions of an Islamic State as presented by the major Muslim political thinkers of the modern period, encompassing three successive waves—the modernist trends of the early and later reformers like Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī; the dogmatism of ideologues like Shaykh Ḥasan al-Banna; and the rhetoric of revivalists like the Ayatollah Khomeini. The author, Abdelilah Belkeziz, argues in the book that modern Islamic political thought, though succeeded in producing ideologies, but ultimately failed to produce a unified theory of state. The book surveys the two-century history of an Islamic state discourse in which the author has framed the chapters into two sections namely, ‘From the Nation State to the State of the Khilāfah’ and ‘From the Islamic State to the Religious State’.

*The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State (2012)*63

This book, written by Noah Feldman, gives us the sweeping history of the traditional Islamic constitution—its noble beginnings, its downfall, and the renewed promise it could hold for Muslims and Westerners alike. In the book, the author attempted to propose an interpretation of the Islamic constitution in its old and new forms that amply helps a reader to clarify the current position of Muslims and their future with respect to governance/state in the Muslim world. In this regard, he argues that a modern Islamic state could provide political and legal justice to today’s Muslims. This, he believes is possible, if new institutions emerge that restore classical constitutional balance of power. Feldman discusses developments in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and other Muslim-majority countries since the appearance of dramatic events like the Arab Springs and describes how ‘Islamists’ must meet the challenge of balance if the new Islamic states are to succeed. Among the Muslim countries, Feldman argues, it is only Saudi Arabia that has preserved some recognizable version of classical Islamic constitutional order.
The Inevitable Caliphate?: A History of the Struggle for Global Islamic Union, 1924 to the Present (2013)\(^6\)

The book, written by Reza Pankhurst, surveys the history of an Islamic state beginning from the demolition of the last edifice of Caliphate in 1924 until 2013, the period marked by Arab-Spring. The author analyzes how the Institution of Khilāfah is treated among its opponents and proponents and accordingly examines the discourses of Islamic movements including Ḥizb al-Tahrīr (the party established by al-Nabhānī who is an integral part of this study). The author has attempted to identify similarities and differences in their approach of establishing a global Islamic community.

The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity’s Moral Predicament (2014)\(^6\)

Wael B. Hallaq has denied the compatibility of an Islamic State with modern nation states because the latter challenges the basic fundamental principle of Tawḥīd. He argues, “the Islamic state, judged by any standard definition of what the modern state represents, is both impossible and inherently self-contradictory.” Comparing the legal, political, moral, and constitutional histories of pre-modern Islam and Euro-America, he finds the adoption and practice of the modern state to be highly problematic for modern Muslims. He criticizes the modern state by arguing that it not only suffers from serious legal, political, and constitutional issues but also by its inconsistent nature. The constitutional battles in Egypt and Pakistan, the Islamic legal and political failures of the Iranian Revolution, and similar disappointments underscore the fact that Muslims have done little to advance an acceptable form of genuine Sharī’ah governance. He has boldly argued that the crisis in the world are not unique to Muslims alone rather these crises are integral to the modern condition of both East and West, and by acknowledging these parallels, Muslims can engage more productively with their Western counterparts.

A Fundamental Quest: Ḥizb al-Tahrīr and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate (1996)\(^6\)

Suha Taji-Farouki in this work discusses the nature, structure and objectives of Ḥizb al-Tahrīr al-Islāmī. The book makes a thorough assessment of the movement on the basis of the documents stretching from 1953 to 1996. For the historical examination of the movement, the author discusses the views of its founder, Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī about the notion of an Islamic State and his stance towards the modern system of

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governments. The book also analyzes the strategy developed by al-Nabhānī in fulfilling his aim of Muslim renaissance, which he believed, is possible only by means of an Islamic state. Contrary to other contemporary Islamic movements, the author argues that the death of its founder, *Hizb al-Tahrīr* has not diverted far from its goal and methodology.

**Political Thought of Muhammad Asad (1998)**

This P.G. dissertation by Pipip Ahmad Rifai Hasan (submitted in the Department of Religion, Concordia University, Canada) is meant to analyze the religio-political thought of Muhammad Asad. The thesis comprises of five chapters including its *Introduction* and *Conclusion*. The study focuses on discussing Asad’s position on the various issues of Islamic political thought and constitutional questions like nature and power of the state, law-making, political rights of women and non-Muslim states and relation of the Islamic state with non-Muslim states. Besides, the thesis presents a brief historical survey of Islamic political thought and discusses the key concepts of State like *Imām*, *Sharī‘ah* and *Ummah* with special reference to different politico-religious schools and political thinkers.

**Muhammad Asad: Europe’s Gift to Islam (2006)**

This work—Muhammad Asad: Europe’s Gift to Islam—is a huge project of Muhammad Ikrām Chugtā’ī comprising two volumes, interspersed with reproduction of rare documents which depict the life, works and thought of Muhammad Asad. The first volume of this book is divided in the following three sections:

1. The first section comprises of Personality, Biography, Works etc. including annotations to the autobiographical passages of The Road to Makkah and the author’s article Muhammad Asad’s Indian Years (1932-1947) as a sequel to his spiritual journey.

2. The second section keeps the themes like appreciation, evaluation and criticism of Muhammad Asad. Such subjective and objective studies of Asad’s personality, religious concepts and political thought, helps the reader to understand him in a real perspective.

3. The third section of the first volume includes book reviews of or on Asad by those scholars who converted to Islam after reading his books.

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The second volume of this book consists of Asad’s own writings arranged in a chronological order, beginning from 1923 until late 1980s. All his articles, published in his own journal *Arafat* (Dalhousie/Lahore, 1946-48) have been reproduced in this volume. At the end of this volume, except addenda, a comprehensive bibliography of Asad’s works and relevant sources (original, secondary and tertiary) have been enlisted. Numerous photographs, showing the different phases of Asad’s life, are likely entertained to present a pictorial sketch of his life from the cradle (Lemberg) to the grave (in the Muslim cemetery, Grenada, Spain).^69^

In addition to the above reviewed titles, there exists a plethora of works related to the field and sub-fields of Islamic political thought. An analysis of twentieth century ideas of Muslims about Islam and politics is provided in *Modern Islamic Political Thought*.^70^ The book emphasizes on the issue of Caliphate mainly in Iranian and Egyptian context. Similarly, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*,^71^ *Islam Assembled*,^72^ *Voices of Resurgent Islam*,^73^ *Many Faces of Political Islam*,^74^ *The Future of Political Islam*,^75^ *Law and Power in the Islamic World*,^76^ *Islam, the People and the State*,^77^ *Islam in Transition*,^78^ *Islamic political Thought*,^79^ *Islamic Political System in the Modern Age*,^80^ and *Muslim Conduct of State*^81^ are few books to mention that examine different issues of an Islamic State from both Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives.

**Significance and the Objectives of Present Work**

Despite the serious engagements of intellectual world on such a live and crucial subject and provided the availability of abundant literature on the subject followed by the presence of some analogous Islamic movements, a viable and unanimous theory/model of an Islamic state in the contemporary challenging scenario is still an imagination. An assessment of the literature reviewed, entails the significance of the present work on the concept of Islamic state. During the twentieth century, a number of Muslim scholars proposed their theories of an Islamic state and its need in the contemporary time. The academic circles have mainly restricted the study to highlight and explore the thoughts of very few scholars such as Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā and Mawlānā Mawdūdī. In addition, at academic level extensive research has been carried out regarding the thought and methodologies as adopted by these scholars and the like, yet meager attempts have been attempted in discussing this issue in light of other scholars like Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī and Muhammad Asad. The current work, thus filling a research gap, is concerned with
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bringing to a sharper light this grave issue of the concept and establishment of an Islamic State in the modern world in light of a comparative study between these two scholars.

Furthermore, if these two scholars attracted the attention of the academic circles but have been confined to a small numerical sphere or have not been recognized as authentic political theorists. Shaping their worldview largely by interwar period, both these scholars worked for the Muslim renaissance and believed an Islamic State a best tool in this regard. Muhammad Asad developed his theory of an Islamic State, while working for the establishment of a separate state for Indian Muslims. Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī after assessing the decadence in the Muslim world, Arab nationalism and the creation of the Israel developed his political ideas and insisted on the immediate restoration of the Caliphate as only solution for the Muslim predicament.

The significance of the study lies in its discussion of Islamic concept of State employing a comparative study of (the duo in context of) its several crucial topics including nature of an Islamic State, structure of an Islamic State, Head of the Islamic State, political rights of Muslims and non-Muslims in the State. Accordingly, the study is an attempt to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand the nature and concept of an Islamic state;
2. To examine the Islamic state discourses of the Twentieth century and the aspirations of Muslims to struggle for restoration of institution of Khilāfah;
3. To introduce and highlight the contribution of Muhammad Asad and Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī as the theorists of an Islamic state;
4. To explore and analyze comparatively the concept of an Islamic state proposed by these scholars; and
5. To examine critically the models/concepts of an Islamic state of the duo and exploring their significance in context of their proximity towards a more viable and Sharī‘ah based model.

Methodology and Structure of the Thesis

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the present work titled, “The Concept of Islamic State: A Comparative Study of Muhammad Asad and Taqi-ud-Din al-Nabhant” is basically analytical and comparative in methodology. However, it also follows
historical, descriptive, and theoretical methodology while attempting to analyze the concept of an Islamic State, especially as advocated by these two scholars. For a systematic and consistent approach in achieving the objectives, the work is framed into four chapters in addition to Introduction and Conclusion.

The introductory part of the Thesis provides an outline of the whole work. In this portion, a brief summary of the Islamic State Discourse is presented, followed by a brief assessment of literature on the subject. The significance of the work, its structure and objectives, format and methodology is also summarized in this part.

It is a fact that the Islamic State discourse has been into debate since the classical times with different approaches and priorities in hand. After the colonialists’ invasion of the Muslim territories and during the struggle for decolonization, the subject became highly contested and many scholars and Movements across geo-political and sectarian divides came forward to offer a viable model of an Islamic State to be adopted by the Muslims. As the twentieth century is “marked by a world-wide violent transformation and confusion ... a confusion endangered by two world wars and the subsequent breakdown of centuries old social, ethical and economic forms;” the first Chapter titled Concept of Islamic State in Contemporary Islamic Thought is devoted to present an overview of how Muslims reacted to a situation marked by violent transformation and confusion. The chapter discusses the nature of Islamic State Discourse in reference to main proponents of Islamic State such as Mawlānā Āzād, Rashīd Riḍā, Mawlānā Mawdūdī, Ayatollah Khomeini, Ḩasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Isrār Aḥmad, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and some analogous Muslim organizations and movements such as Khalīfat Movement, al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (The Muslim Brotherhood), Jamā’at-e-Islāmī and their offshoots. The chapter explores that how the aspirations for establishing an Islamic State survived though these scholars and movements faced many challenges and oppositions from within and without.

Since the present work is essentially based on discussing the concept of Islamic State as provided by the two scholars—Asad and al-Nabhānī—who lived and witnessed the whole turmoil of the century in a comparative fashion. Therefore, it was necessary to introduce these scholars in the present work. In this regard the next two chapters—The Second Chapter and the Third Chapter—focus on presenting the biographical accounts of these two scholars. The second chapter titled, Muḥammad Asad in Light of His Bio-
Academic Profile, is devoted to the life, works and thought of Asad that is, otherwise, scattered in many publications. The chapter also discusses Leopold Weiss’s search for the truth, which he ultimately found after embracing Islam in 1925 and came to be known as Muhammad Asad. The chapter further discusses his curiosity to have a deep understanding of basic sources of Islam, struggle for Muslim renaissance, participation in creation of Pakistan and its constitution making, withdrawal from the state administration and his death in 1992. The chapter also yields a brief review of the publications of Asad mainly stretching from 1930s until late 1980s.

Chapter third titled, Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī: A Biographical Account covering his early life, education, his governmental services, engagement in political deliberations, formation of political party, Ḩizb al-Tahrīr etc. The chapter also discusses al-Nabhānī’s reaction towards the creation of Israel, Arab Nationalism and his struggle for Muslim renaissance. The approach of al-Nabhānī to religion and Ijtihād and a brief literature review of his works also form a part of the chapter.

Chapter four titled, Concept of an Islamic State: A Comparative Study of Muhammad Asad and Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī, forms the main part of the thesis. This chapter yields a comparative study of the concept of an Islamic State and its related issues as presented by these scholars in their writings. The chapter discusses the circumstances in which the duo developed their political ideas and their position in the Islamic State discourse. The chapter compares the theories of State propounded by these scholars, especially on the concept and nature of an Islamic State, Head of the State and his eligibility qualifications, rejection of contemporary notions of statecraft, principles and structure of the State, citizenship, their rights and duties, political rights of non-Muslims.

The chapter also envisioned that how these scholars contributed in shaping the Muslim world’s post-colonial reality and how they advocated a system of government that would cater and preserve the overall welfare of the society. Rejecting the Western concepts of government, both the scholars attempted to show that Islam has its own principles of governance where laws are made and implemented not for the interests of the majority on the cost of minority rather for the whole community, keeping the Divine will superior, that entails equality among humanity. To yield the inferences from the whole work a Conclusion follows this chapter and finally the work culminates with a well-listed Bibliography.
Notes and References

1 In Arabic known as Dā‘ish (داعش) short form of al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī ‘Irāq wa al-Shām (الدولة الإسلامية في عراق و الشام).


6 Ibid.


8 Ahmed, Islamic Political System in the Modern Age, op. cit., p. 15


11 Ibid.


13 Muhammad Hamidullah, The Prophet’s Establishing a State and His Succession, (Hyderabad, India: Habib & Co., 1986), p. 15


15 Feldman, The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State, op. cit., p. 2

16 Khan, “The Islamic State” op. cit., pp. 266-67

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17 Ibid., p. 267

18 Ibid., p. 273


20 On 1 March 1924, Müșafâ Kamâl [Kemal] submitted a proposal for the abolishment of the Caliphate to the Turkish National Assembly. After a long debate, the delegates almost unanimously approved the new law Article I of which reads: “The caliph has been dismissed. The office of the caliphate has been abolished, since the caliphate is essentially contained in the meaning and concept of government and republic”. See Reinhard Schulze, A Modern History of the Islamic World, (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), p. 66


26 Black, The History of Islamic Political Thought, op.cit., p. 307


28 Black, The History of Islamic Political Thought, op. cit., p. 309


30 Abu-Rabi’, The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought, op. cit., p. 14

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31 Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* op. cit., p. 105


34 Ibid., p. 312


36 See the ISIS’s announcement published as “This is the Promise of Allah” accessed on 02/01/2016 from http://myreader.toile-libre.org/uploads/My_53b039f00cb03.pdf


41 Ibid., pp. 1-3, 18


43 Ibid., p. 18

44 Ibid., pp. 179-82


47 Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, op. cit., p. 67


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69See my review of the book by clicking on the following link: [https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Muhammad_Asad.html?id=LiLYAAAAMAAJ](https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Muhammad_Asad.html?id=LiLYAAAAMAAJ)

70Hamid Enayet, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, (Hong Kong: Macmillan Press, 1982).


