

Premonition of evil?

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Sample this: The recent terror attack in Mumbai was not by Lashkar-e-Toiba but a front outfit of 8-12 men calling themselves Deccan Mujahideen.

The Rozabal Line: "Unknown to most intelligence agencies, the Lashkar-e-Toiba had spun off an even more elite group within itself called the Lashkar-e-Talat-shar, the army of 13, consisting of 12 elite holy warriors who would deem it an honour and privilege to die for the cause of Allah."

The similarity between the two lines, the first describing a true-life nightmare, and the second extracted from a work of fiction, may be "purely co-incidental" as author Ashwin Sanghi says ("I'm totally spooked by it"), but there are certain uncanny resemblances between his book and the war on Mumbai.

The idea of a novel had been bothering Sanghi for at least a decade. Until he decided to put it down in words. Thus was born *The Rozabal Line* (Westland,

Rs 250), a book on the controversial subject of Jesus Christ's link with India, which spans centuries and continents.

Sanghi's research kicked off when he laid hands on *The Unknown Life of Jesus* by 19th-century Russian explorer Nicholas Notovitch, who came across scrolls



Far sight: Ashwin Sanghi's book bears similarities to the attack on Mumbai

with the name Issa inscribed on them in Tibet, and conjectured that Issa was none other than Christ. "While most scholars dismissed this as fantasy, it was only in the 1980s, when Holger Kersten took up the issue, that there was speculation that Jesus sur-

vived crucifixion and came to India," says Sanghi. "If Jesus came to India, logically, he would have entered through Kashmir. So what if his bloodline today belongs to a jihadi?"

Though Sanghi asserts that his book

is heavily fictional, it's definitely not "simply a Dan Brown" either.

Among his elaborately researched subjects are the Ahmadiyas, a section of Muslims who believe that Jesus didn't die on the cross.

A businessman, Sanghi first self-published the book in 2007 under the pseudonym Shawn Haigins, an anagram of his real name. "I wasn't sure whether this could be a topic for a first book. When I self-published it I used a pseudonym because I didn't want my profession to be affected. But when Westland approached me to publish it, I decided to come clean," he laughs.

Sanghi is sure that he'll receive either brickbats or bouquets for his work. "That's been the response so far. No midway," he wraps up.

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