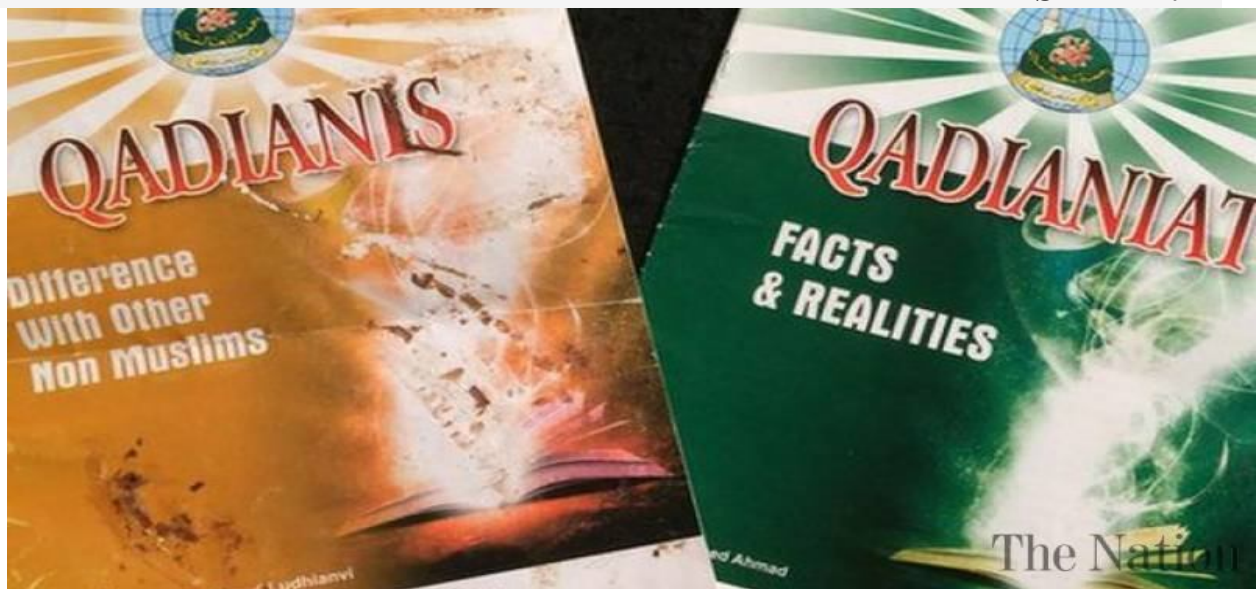


Self-mutilating sectarianism: Pakistan's murderous anti-Ahmadiyya takfir has reached the UK

Declaring any sect, group, or individual, unworthy of self-identifying as a Muslim, reinforces the idea of a 'true Islam,' which in turn, mobilises religiously-inspired violence that is currently destroying us from within

May 03, 2016, 7:54 pm/ 1 Comment

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Lejla Kurić

“[Faced with the] 90 year-old problem of the Qadianis [Ahmadiyya] who challenged the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, [The PPP] shut them up, then broke the problem's neck and buried it.”

These were the words of the former Prime Minister and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Raja Parvez Ashraf at a political rally this weekend.

Just over a month ago, on March 24th, the British media reported that a Muslim man was stabbed to death in a particularly savage attack in

Glasgow shortly after he wished Christians a happy Easter on his Facebook profile.

British Muslims took to social media to express their outrage and to point out how intolerance, media bias, and anti-Muslim bigotry can inspire acts of violence against ordinary Muslims. Non-Muslims were urged to show greater tolerance and to curb their palpable 'Islamophobia.'

But these self-righteous Muslim voices, calling for tolerance and decrying bigotry, suddenly fell silent as further details of the crime emerged. The suspected murderer, it turned out, was a Muslim, not an 'Islamophobe'. And his victim happened to be a member of the Ahmadiyya community. It is believed that the suspect, Tanveer Ahmed, travelled over 200 miles, all the way from Bradford to Glasgow, for one purpose only — to murder an Ahmadi named Asad Shah.

Shah was stabbed over 30 times in broad daylight and in front of passers-by. He collapsed on the ground bleeding to death, but this did not satisfy the killer who continued his assault. Witnesses described how the killer savagely stamped on Shah's head and finally sat on his chest laughing. Shah was rushed to hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Police have described the incident as a "religiously-prejudiced attack" and Tanveer Ahmed has been charged with murder. He has since released a statement claiming that:

"Asad Shah disrespected the messenger of Islam . . . If I had not done this, others would have."

This brutal murder has sent shockwaves through Scotland and the rest of the UK. Shah was a popular and much-loved shopkeeper in Glasgow. Several vigils were held in his memory, attended by hundreds of people, including Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's First Minister.

Asad Shah had left Pakistan in 1998. But it was events in Pakistan's history which unleashed the forces that killed him 18 years later in the UK. The Ahmaddiya community was declared to be 'non-Muslim' in 1974 by an amendment to the Pakistani Constitution. Then in 1984, Ordinance XX was

introduced that forbade Ahmadis from 'posing as Muslims.' Henceforth, they could be imprisoned for 'crimes' such as reading from the Quran, using Islamic greetings, or in any way 'outraging the religious sentiments of Muslims.'

In the 1980s, blasphemy laws inherited from British Raj were expanded with a number of clauses making them Islam-specific and sanctioning the death penalty. Since then, accusations of blasphemy have become a popular way of settling personal, political, or sectarian grievances resulting in the current situation, where a mere accusation of blasphemy is enough to mobilise lynch mobs, who will torment and murder their victims in a pious frenzy — the same kind of 'justified' derangement Shah's alleged killer must have felt while stamping on his victim's head.

Religious minorities have become easy targets for this kind of violence. Ahmadis, whose necks had already been figuratively broken by the government itself, could not hope for much protection. Thus, many Ahmadis, including their spiritual leadership, moved to Britain. Unfortunately, they did not find the sanctuary from sectarian hatred and persecution they hoped for.

Khatm-e-Nubuwwat followed them and established a presence in the UK. Several years ago, leaflets were distributed arguing that Ahmadis deserve death under Islamic law, posters went up in the shops calling for Ahmadis to be shunned, and an Urdu-speaking satellite channel [broadcast programs](#) in the UK referring to the Ahmadiyya as '*wajib-ul-qatal*' (worthy of being murdered). As a result, [Ahmadis became targets of harassment and intimidation](#) and their businesses were boycotted.

British authorities had largely ignored the problem until Asad Shah was stabbed to death in Glasgow. The controversial Racial and Religious Hatred Act, passed by the Blair government in 2006, specifically outlaws the incitement of violence, but indifference to anti-Ahmadi hatred on the part of the authorities was most probably due to the fact that this was considered an internal Muslim affair. So instead, as in the times of the

British Raj, the problem was carelessly referred down to 'community leaders' who were themselves responsible for the incitement itself.

In a wake of the murder, a [BBC investigation found leaflets calling for the killing of Ahmadis](#) in the Stockwell Green Mosque in south London. The same mosque had already been accused of helping to promote acts of sectarian terror and hatred in Pakistan in 2011. But back then, the mosque's trustee, a well-known 'community leader' named Toaha Qureshi, claimed:

"We do not have any linkage with this organisation [Khatm-e-Nabuwwat] that is promoting hate."

Notwithstanding his denial, the BBC has now established that Stockwell Green Mosque is in fact Khatm-e-Nabuwwat oversees office in the UK. Saroop Ajaz from Human Rights Watch [explains](#) how the organisation operates in Pakistan:

"Khatm-e-Nabuwwat do not inflict violence themselves, but they provide an enabling environment for a number of actors to do so."

When accusations that Ahmadis are '*zindiq*' (dualist infidels) and therefore '*wajib-ul-qatal*' (deserving of death) are continuously fed to an audience already inclined towards religious fanaticism, violence becomes almost inevitable. But it is not just Khatm-e-Nabuwwat that acts as an enabler. Takfir (the act of a Muslim accusing another Muslim of apostasy) has been enshrined as a legal principle in Pakistan's constitution, making Ahmadis useful punchbags for Pakistani politicians.

The ultimate enabler of religiously-inspired violence, however, is a deep-seated hatred of all those deemed infidels, heretics, or blasphemers, that festers amongst the ordinary Muslim population, springing from a fanatical reverence for religious authority, which in turn results in widespread institutionalised persecution.

The situation is equally dispiriting in Britain. After Asad Shah's murder, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), a nationally representative

umbrella body with over 500 affiliated Muslim organisations, issued brief statement:

"There is no place for hatred of this kind."

Had that statement been intended as a meaningful defence of religious liberty, the MCB would have asserted that Ahmadis, just like any other group of people, have every right to self-identify as they wish; they would have called for an end to the discriminatory anti-Ahmadi laws in Pakistan; and they would have addressed the blatant anti-Ahmadi bigotry blaring from too many Muslim institutions in Britain. Instead, just four days after Asad Shah was buried, MCB published another statement excommunicating murder victim as a 'non-Muslim' and distanced themselves from Ahmadiyya community.

Stockwell Green Mosque, where the BBC found the 'kill Ahmadis' literature, happens to be one of the MCB's affiliates. Due to public pressure, the MCB have now suspended the mosque and are apparently launching an independent investigation into its conduct, albeit with an important disclaimer:

"The Investigation Panel shall not involve itself in matters of theology or in actions/conduct/laws in countries other than the United Kingdom."

Calls to expel Stockwell Green Mosque have put MCB in an embarrassing spot. According to both the MCB and the mosque, Ahmadis have made a grave theological mistake that disqualifies them as Muslims. However, the Stockwell Green Mosque is merely reminding us that, in line with medieval Islamic jurisprudence, apostates should be killed. This is a morally repugnant but perfectly consistent point of view. In contrast, the approach taken by MCB and by the majority of British Muslims is unintelligible — condemning violence, while simultaneously reaffirming the very concept that motivates it. This is an evasive and unsustainable position that smacks of hypocrisy.

The MCB is more than happy to exclude Ahmadis on the grounds of theology, but not an organisation that says Ahmadis should be murdered. It is easy to see why. The MCB would have to admit that death for apostasy

is an abhorrent and inhuman law, thus forcing them to undertake the perilous task of reforming problematic aspects of Islamic theology. Conversely, the MCB would have to concede that Stockwell Green Mosque is indeed making an argument compatible with orthodox interpretations of Islam, thereby effectively handing a moral victory to those who describe Islam as a violent and barbaric religion, and whom the MCB routinely denounces as 'Islamophobes.'

This small drama at the Muslim Council of Britain is a perfect illustration of the much bigger problem responsible for untold amount of suffering within Muslim societies. It is not just about the 'misinterpretation' of religion by a handful of extremists — it is about orthodox interpretations of sectarianism, *takfir*, apostasy, and Islamic blasphemy codes, preached by Islamic institutions, politicians, and public figures, and uncritically accepted by the masses. This is the key driver of religious intolerance and, consequently, of violent extremism.

We can see it all around us: one group of Muslims claims to represent 'true Islam' and rejects other groups as 'non-Muslim,' just because their beliefs or their interpretation of the Islamic scripture differs. Supported by a doctrinal view that apostates deserve death, violence ensues.

Pakistan's Shias are now targeted more frequently than the Ahmadiis, in attacks bearing a sinister resemblance to the violence that preceded the constitutional *takfir* of Ahmadiyya. Militants carrying out these attacks believe that Shias are 'apostates' for simply choosing to follow a different order for respecting the companions of the Prophet. The danger is that some future Pakistani government could eventually succumb to the shrieks of "Shia kafir!" from the self-appointed representatives of the 'true Islam.' After all, it would not be too difficult to further restrict the official constitutional definition of a Muslim to a reverence of the first three Caliphs of Islam, and thereby effectively excommunicate all Shias.

In Britain too, there is talk in the Sunni community that Shia are not Muslims. Anti-Shia rhetoric has hardened and became more prominent since Syrian war. It is no longer uncommon to hear the '*rafida*' (rejectors) slur hurled at them. A Shia mosque in Bradford was defaced with sectarian

graffiti last summer. But most disturbing of all, [a BBC investigation has found](#) that Sabir Ali, head of religious events at Glasgow Central Mosque, was formerly president of Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP), now known as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), the group which bears responsibility for a number of deadly attacks against Shias and other minorities in Pakistan.

If the followers of second largest branch of Islam are not safe from collective *takfir*, then no sect is. One would hope that at least Shias, who are often victims of sectarianism, would be sympathetic to sects smaller and weaker than themselves, but this is unfortunately not the case. Despite the sectarian chasm between the two, Shias and Sunnis often unite to persecute smaller sects like the Ahmadiyya.

Meanwhile, as the House of Saud and the Ayatollahs in Iran fight struggle for influence in the Middle East and the imposition of their own version of Islam, *takfiri* madness has plunged the region into an apocalyptic, sectarian bloodbath presently producing hundreds of thousands of Sunni and Shia corpses, and causing other religious groups to face the prospect of total annihilation. This conflict is now spilling beyond the region and it has become a serious security threat for the rest of the world. Europe is destabilised by the ensuing refugee crisis and the threat of terrorism, the [scale and ferocity](#) of which has not been seen before.

No doubt, some Muslims will say none of this has anything to do with 'true Islam' hoping that reality can be wished away and blame assigned to someone else. No doubt, some Muslims will say that extremists have misinterpreted the teachings of Islam and others will even denounce them as 'non-Muslims.'

Is it not curious how *takfiris* from very different backgrounds – ISIS, Boko Haram, TTP and the deranged individual who stabbed an Ahmadi in Glasgow – all 'misinterpret' their religion in exactly the same manner? There is little point in telling them that their Islam is wrong. It is not wrong to them. In their minds, they are the only 'true Muslims' and their ideology requires them to excommunicate and kill anyone who disagrees.

Their identity rests on belittling another's faith, sect or denomination as a way of reaffirming their own. They expect everyone to adhere to one monolithic version of Islam and completely reject the idea that differences of opinion are a normal and healthy occurrence amongst people. Instead, they see it as unbearable and threatening to the point that it justifies any atrocity. The antidote to sectarian conflict, therefore, cannot be based on any notion that 'our Islam is better than yours.'

Some Muslims will argue that the answer to sectarianism is to embrace a plurality of interpretations. A strong case for this can be made from within the religion itself. Islam has a long-standing tradition of *ikhtilaf* (difference of an opinion on religious matters) that stretches all the way back to the Companions of the Prophet. It is often noted that the founders of two widely-followed schools of thought in Sunni Islam, Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik, were in fact students of Jafar al-Sadiq, the sixth Shia Imam.

However, these commentators forget that later in his life, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq was subjected to persecution, since his beliefs were perceived to be a political threat to Abbasid rulers. Accepting pluralism of interpretations has its merits, but it offers only a partial solution. Any system that marries religion to legal institutions will inevitably give the rise to sectarian strife.

A sect whose interpretation is accepted as the basis for legislation and political infrastructure holds political power, while all others are disadvantaged and marginalised, leading to persecution and perpetual conflict. Harmonious coexistence of plural identities and interpretations is only possible within a system that is neutral on matters of religion and does not advantage or disadvantage anyone based on their personal faith.

The Muslim world is now a battlefield of competing Islamisms, ideological movements seeking to enforce one particular version of Islam onto entire societies, all of whom articulate their political ideology through religious supremacism and claim to fight for a united Ummah, a goal that is apparently best achieved by excommunicating and murdering other Muslims.

“Who are the ‘true’ Muslims?” one wonders. In reality, religious believers subscribe to ambiguous and often confusing ideologies. No one can possibly adhere to all dogmas and fulfil all religious injunctions at the same time. Everyone cherry-picks their religion — this is what we casually call an ‘interpretation.’ Moderates emphasise compassionate parts of scripture and ignore others, while extremists do the opposite. The vast and contradictory nature of the texts makes this inevitable.

Hence, it makes little sense to define Muslim identity exclusively as a theological checklist, especially since most of us were conscripted into this tradition by the accident of the birth. Regardless of what we actually believe, we are bonded to our Muslim identity through our family, ethnicity, citizenship, culture, and life experience. It is the reality we cannot escape. This alone underscores the need to foster an inclusive, pluralistic Muslim identity that is non-sectarian and it is not equated with an unquestioning adherence to theology.

Declaring any sect, group, or individual, unworthy of self-identifying as a Muslim, reinforces the idea of a ‘true Islam,’ which in turn, mobilises religiously-inspired violence that is currently destroying us from within. There is a desperate need to embrace secular ideals as the long-term solution to curb Islamism, sectarianism, and their violent manifestations. It is simple really – we can continue to believe in old ideas that bring us mayhem and misery or we can embrace new ones that could bring us peace and prosperity.

<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/03-May-2016/self-mutilating-sectarianism-pakistan-s-murderous-anti-ahmadiyya-takfir-has-reached-the-uk>

Will Bilawal be the new voice for minorities?

No, I am not a supporter of PPP but this does not mean that I will criticize Bilawal for the sake of it. I am not talking about the previous governments, his mother or his father, I am just talking about him

May 04, 2016, 12:01 am

Shamila Ghyas

As always chaos ensued on social media yesterday.

Not when the former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf said "PPP broke the neck of Ahmadis."

For that there were a lot of loud claps, thumps at the back, laughter and roars from the on looking crowd with unabashed glee 'look, we got those Ahmadis good, didn't we!"

The uproar came when Pakistan's People Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto took a stand and said "Politicians have no right to comment or question people's faith. History has taught us politicization of faith has lethal consequences for all."

That's when the fight(s) started.

Some pointed out that he did not mention Ahmadis by name, or the fact that he did not mention the ex-PM's name either or take any action against him. There were also reminders that it had been his own grandfather who had constitutionally deemed Ahmadis as non-Muslims. (Mind you, most of these comments came from non-Ahmadis themselves and people who had been asleep most of their lives regarding the persecution.)

Going back then; it had been the Second Amendment in 1974 which became part of the Constitution of Pakistan that declared that Ahmadis were not Muslims.

While Zulfikar Ali Bhutto clearly laid the foundation, it is not until Ziaul Haq came into power bringing along with him Ordinance XX in 1984 which started the actual persecution of the Ahmadis, and that too out in the open.

Ordinance XX stated that Ahmadis would no longer be allowed to:

- practice their faith,
- use an Islamic texts for praying purposes,
- use the greeting As salamalaykum (Peace be upon you),
- recite the 6 kalimas,
- build mosques,
- call the Adhan,
- go to mosques,
- make any citations from the Quran or Hadith.

Clearly Ziaul Haq was bored and had nothing else to do the afternoon when he penned down these new laws so as to hurt and put down 5 million Pakistanis in one go.

Any Ahmadi who simply called himself a Muslim from that day on could be jailed for 3 years.

Basically, the Ordinance and 1974 amendment together played God by deciding who could be called a Muslim and who could not.

As expected, based on the hate filled Ordinance, the persecution took an ugly and sadistic turn.

So much so that masses went into exile. Children in Pakistan grew up not even knowing who Abdus Salam (Nobel Prize in physics) was just simply because he was an Ahmadi. Ironically he was one of the top ranking science advisers to the government from 1960 to 1974. (Till the amendment, after which he left the country in protest.)

Which brings us back to the now. People can say that Bilawal Bhutto is just saying things to please the liberals and it is just a tweet which his true (and not as educated) followers will never see, or the more crude version that it is all BS, or they can dissect it questioning why he did not say Ahmadi specifically, etc.

But the simple yet strong words he has spoken clearly denote that his stance is different from what the constitution states and perhaps even his own grandfather. It is an obvious reply to what the former PM had stated.

While no action has been taken against him, or even an apology received, Bilawal has certainly made it clear that he does not agree with the persecution and what Raja Pervez said.

If memory serves me right, he was also vocal against terrorists and clearly declared them as enemies of the state. He has also always been inclined to raise the status of women and promote equality. Or as an individual sadly commented “he must be a feminist.”

No, I am not a supporter of PPP but this does not mean that I will criticize Bilawal for the sake of it. I am not talking about the previous governments, his mother or his father, I am just talking about him.

Things are never solved in one go; it takes steps, sometimes even tiny minute baby steps. And this is definitely a very positive one in the right direction. No other politician or person in a powerful position has ever said anything even remotely close to what he has regarding the status of Ahmadis in Pakistan and it must be applauded and encouraged.

I imagine that there will no more hate filled and/or violence enticing speeches from anyone in PPP regarding any of our minorities after this. Isn't that a big thing considering anyone anywhere says whatever they want about Ahmadis and gets congratulatory hugs as a result?

I do hope that Bilawal Bhutto proves his many critics wrong by having an apology issued.

As for the people who are on team ‘Persecute Ahmadis’

The founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his first Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1947 said:

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state.”

This should tell you of what Pakistan stood for when it was created.

As for Bilawal Bhutto, empty words or not, time will tell.

<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/04-May-2016/will-bilawal-be-the-new-voice-for-minorities>

The unapologetic syndrome of truth

May 04, 2016

Saria Benazir

The PPP Chairperson's origination of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir election campaign on Saturday in Kotli, was discolored by the prejudice of the country's former Prime Minister for probably the most persecuted religious community in Pakistan. The remarks eulogized the PPP government of its founder Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for the execution of the 'Qadiani' (a derogatory term for the Ahmadiyya – Muslim community) question; hence closing the mouth and severing the neck of it thereof. The spleen disgorged by the person who no more than three years ago engaged the most sacrosanct spot in the government, is not wholly disconcerting and comparable of hate speech, but also factually erroneous and disingenuous demonizing the epicenter of Pakistani populism and its highest leader in prestige- next only to Jinnah.

Anecdotes of the founder's trusty involvement with the Ahmedi community in the years that led to the foundation of Pakistan- the most prominent of them being Muhammad Zafarullah Khan who chaired the All India Muslim League for a term, sketched the momentous Lahore Resolution and served as the debut Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The middling Pakistani mind has been doctored with vitriol for decades and is barefaced in the treatment parceled out to the country's first Nobel laureate, renounced for his adherence to a religious faction disbanded by the self-righteous majority and the elegy of his grave defiled for removing the name 'Muslim' from it. The perplexing biasness is positioned on partial awareness which is perilous and has misinformed the discourse on the matter.

The buoyancy of the 'old' Pakistan comes out mind-boggling in the present commotion. The anti – Ahmadiyya uprising in 1953 prompted by the Jamaat-i- Islami and Majlis Ahrar was effectively trampled by the state which snubbed the claim of pitching the Ahmadiyya out of the crease of Islam and proscribed the movement's leaders for instigating violence

against the state. The feat lasted for no more than couple of decades. The issue resurfaced in 1974 after a group of Islami Jamiat-i-Talaba (IJT) rose anti – Ahmadiyya catchphrases and cursed their spiritual figurehead at a railway station in Rabwa provoking clash with members of the community.

Jl's unfair rage on an episode of their making was conveyed by parties of centre and right. Agitation in Punjab reached the community's doorstep; they were victimized and their properties and businesses razed. Mobs called for their exclusion from Islam-fold and state's institutions. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto discarded the idea of trading religious rhetoric in the National Assembly, stating that the upshot of such verdict would be deleterious and the opposition was 'hell-bent on destroying the country'. Unabated, incongruous remonstrations of the right and in the streets forced him to authorize the Parliament to vote on the issue which led to the passing of the 2nd Amendment to the constitution of Pakistan – a patent act of apartheid but soothing to the zealotry of the large.

Newspaper headlines cited the occasion as a laudable landmark. Bhutto, however abstained from alluding to it as an achievement because it hurt the religious sentiments of a population that rather pioneered the Pakistan Movement and served its cause enthusiastically by their constructive contribution to the country they deemed was theirs – and which had voted greatly for the PPP in the 1970 elections, also because it was completely at odds with the policy of the left-wing political party founded by him and very tenets on which the country came into being. Furthermore, he also maintained that the amendment did not deprive them of their citizen- rights as preserved in the constitution of Pakistan.

The purification mission ignited the country to permanent disaster in 1977 with ziaulhaq's military coup (who referred to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a 'threat to Islam and Pakistan' both despite having ceded to the right's most ostentatious demands), eventually resulting in ZAB's judicial murder on April 4, 1979. In 1984, Ordinance XX was issued which barred the Ahmadis from professing their faith in public and forbidding them from using Islamic salutations, call to prayer or quoting from the Quran along with other diminutions which could lead to a sentence for a period of three years.

Incessant tyranny forced their expulsion in large numbers evident in the May 28, 2010 massacre in Lahore causing fatalities in hundreds; the culprits of which hang about scot-free.

The switch to religious nationalism and muddying of the country's ideology – which was never created to gratify the caprice of clergy-cum-politicians and who heatedly contested the establishment of Pakistan - is the most spiteful legacy of Operation Fair Play. Minorities already reside on the edge in Pakistan. The smoldering of three churches and 200 houses belonging to the Christians in Lahore's Joseph Colony in March, 2013 on accusations of blasphemy for example, or the burning alive of a Christian couple in a brick kiln in Kasur in November 2014 illustrates the ruthlessness and viciousness of the head-eating religion card that has transformed the country into a den of vigilantism and religiously incited violence. The dissemination of political Islam has been toxic to the cultural vibrancy and multi - ethnicity of the original nation we were when we came into being in 1947. Iqbal and Jinnah's spirit will be ripping apart in the firmaments to see the course their envisioned land has taken.

Al Qaeda, ISIS and other terrorist associations use their sort of faith to validate bloodbath. The caricature unfurls in bizarre ways. – it is not only the temples, synagogues and churches that are crushed; bombings in the mosques are recognizable clamor too. Militant Islam tags the disciples of an adaptation of Islam dissimilar to theirs as heretics depriving them of their cardinal right of existence. The phenomenon is not novel to Pakistan. Anti – Shia graffiti are regular sight in the homeland; targeted attacks directed towards them and the ethnic cleansing of the Hazara Shia community only makes to the last lines of the news bulletins. A National Assembly debate on their faith next? One cannot rule this out in a turbulent, harried environment subjugated by all types of fanaticism and bigotry.

Religion is a double-edged sword. Once in motion, there is no curtailment. April 30th chapter was repellent, more so because Raja Pervez Ashraf made these remarks at a political rally of the PPP, the only centre-left, federal, liberal political party of Pakistan and which many, including myself, view as the sole citadel of pluralistic politics. One must be mindful of the

fact that it is the same brazen speechifying that goes unbridled in the name of religion which fuels the likes of Mumtaz Qadri and is a vote – winning ploy adopted by political parties. This is precisely what instigated the murder of former Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, who is undeniably a true martyr for braving bullets in the fight for justice for an aggrieved Christian woman synonymous to the teachings of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH):“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.” The PPP Chairman’s rejoinder to the former Prime Minister’s bile-dipped speech: ‘politicians have no right to comment or question peoples’ faith. History has taught us politicization of faith has lethal consequences for all.’ exemplifies a glow in this sinister abyss of bigotry and fittingly how a conscientious political leader and citizen must conduct himself.

Religious discrimination must not be spared to swallow up our generations to come. It is regrettable that the battle to salvage Jinnah’s Pakistan is yet to start on!

<http://nation.com.pk/columns/04-May-2016/the-unapologetic-syndrome-of-truth>