

The persecution of the Ahmadis must not be allowed to spread

Giles Fraser

Driven out of Pakistan, the Muslim Ahmadiyya community now have their global headquarters in the UK. They deserve our protection and respect

Asad Shah, an Ahmadi Muslim shopkeeper who was stabbed to death in Glasgow after posting a message of Easter greetings on his Facebook page. Today a Bradford cab driver admitted to murdering him for 'disrespecting' Islam. Photograph: Social media

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In June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared himself caliph of an Islamic State – a bit like making himself pope without asking anyone else. Most Sunni theologians thought it ridiculous. For the Shia it was an impossibility. The term caliph comes from the Arabic word for successor – variously interpreted as successor to the messenger of God or successor chosen by God. Sunni Muslims believe that the caliph should be elected, Shia Muslims that that he should be a biological descendent of the prophet Muhammad. The theological divisions between Sunni and Shia, reignited in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, began as a dispute over succession. And however much the disastrous invasion of Iraq exacerbated these divisions, it's worth remembering that it didn't create them. The first Muslim civil war erupted within 25 years of the prophet's death, a number of the early caliphs having been assassinated by rivals.

So the subject of who gets called a caliph is dangerous stuff. Which is why it might come as a surprise to learn that tens of millions of Muslims look to the genteel south-west [London](#) suburbs as the home of their caliph, the decidedly genial His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. This caliph does not operate out of the dust and heat of the Middle East. A former agriculturalist and keen gardener, his message is consistently one of peace. Of course he is heavily guarded – one of his predecessors was stabbed in the neck during prayers – but, as little boys stood around and literally saluted him, the caliph was happy to pass the time of day with a Christian

stranger like me, invited to share in the breaking of the Ramadan fast. And he had a twinkle in his eye that suggested a mischievous sense of humour. Nice man, I thought.

But these are some of the most persecuted Muslims in the world. Originating in the Punjab, the reason the caliphate is based in Southfields is because of the victimisation that Ahmadiyya Muslims now receive in Pakistan, where they are considered the wrong sort of Muslims. In fact, since 1974 they are not considered Muslims at all. By law, they are not allowed to call their places of worship mosques or greet each other with "*As-salāmu alaykum*". Their graves are desecrated. Even the application form for a Pakistani passport has a section requiring all Muslims to condemn the founder of their community, making Pakistani citizenship all but impossible for Ahmadis. Remember the shopkeeper in Glasgow, Asad Shah, who was stabbed to death after posting a message of Easter greetings on his Facebook page? He was Ahmadi. This morning [a Bradford cab driver admitted to murdering him for "disrespecting" the prophet](#).

The Ahmadiyya mosque in Morden, south London – a former milk factory – is the largest mosque in western Europe. They don't broadcast the call to prayer out of respect for their neighbours, but they do have their own TV studio broadcasting worldwide. In the main worship space, dozens of little makeshift booths are constructed for the spiritual solitary confinement – called *I'tikāf* – that some undertake in the final days of Ramadan.

Ahmadi Muslims don't believe that prophecy ended with Muhammad and that the promised messiah (an idea common to all Abrahamic faiths) arrived in India at the end of the 19th century. On this difference, the Ahmadis are widely considered apostates and subject to brutal persecution, something we must ensure does not take root here.

As we break the Ramadan fast over a curry, they tell me of [leaflets](#) being handed out on London campuses inciting Muslims to violence against them. They speak with anxiety of Tooting imam Suliman Gani, [who begged a local halal butcher not to sell his shop to an Ahmadi](#). Gani, of course, hails from Sadiq Khan's former constituency. Mayor Khan [says he wants to "get](#)

[out there and build bridges](#)". So maybe he should go and visit the Morden mosque too – it's only a few stops down the Northern line. Eid mubarak.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2016/jul/07/the-persecution-of-the-ahmadis-must-not-be-allowed-to-spread>

Muslim man admits to killing Ahmadi shopkeeper in Glasgow

By News Desk

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Thirty two-year-old Bradford resident Tanveer Ahmed has admitted killing a 40-year-old Glasgow shopkeeper Asad Shah.

Thirty two-year-old Bradford cab driver Tanveer Ahmed has admitted killing a 40-year-old Glasgow shopkeeper Asad Shah.

Tanveer Ahmed was arrested a day after Shah was murdered. Shah, who was a member of the Ahmadi community, had posted a message on Facebook wishing a happy Easter to his customer hours before he was stabbed.



Asad Shah was a well-known figure in the Shawlands area of Glasgow

Ahmed pled guilty to the murder at a hearing at Glasgow High Court, claiming that Shah had “disrespected” Islam.

After his arrest, Ahmed had released a statement through his lawyer saying that he had killed Shah because he had claimed to be a prophet. Evidence gathered showed that Shah had posted some videos online that could be seen as him claiming he was a prophet.

“It so offended his [Ahmed’s] feelings and faith that he had to kill him,” advocate deputy Iain McSporran told the court.

The court heard that Ahmed drove from Bradford to Glasgow on the day of the murder and engaged in a discussion with Shah at his store. Ahmed then pulled out a knife and stabbed Shah.

“This was a truly despicable crime, motivated, it seems, by your sense of offence at a man’s expression of his religious beliefs, which differ from yours,” the judge told Ahmed. “Let me be clear – there’s no justification whatsoever for what you did.”

After the attack, Shah’s brother and a coworker tried to save his life, but his wounds proved to be fatal. Meanwhile, Ahmed sat at a bus stop and waited to be detained by the police.

Shah was born in Rabwah, but moved to Scotland in 1998 after which they were granted asylum by the UK.

This story originally appeared on the [BBC](http://tribune.com.pk/story/1137524/muslim-man-admits-killing-ahmadi-shopkeeper-glasgow/)
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Muslim shopkeeper Asad Shah had 'disrespected Islam' according to man who admits his murder

- [Simon Johnson](#)

7 JULY 2016 • 4:43PM

The family of murdered shopkeeper Asad Shah say they have decided to leave Scotland because they cannot cope with their “pain and fear” after another Muslim admitted killing him for insulting the Prophet Muhammad.

Mr Shah’s father and mother, Syed and Sadiqua, his wife Khalida and his six brothers and sisters said they never thought they would be in danger in Scotland but now feel “imprisoned by our pain and suffering” and unable to live a normal life.

They said the murder in March this year had left them struggling with “simple things” like being in public places or communicating with friends and that Mr Shah’s wife now leads “a life of isolation and solitude”.

The harrowing victims’ statement was made public after Tanveer Ahmed, a 32-year-old taxi driver, admitted driving of Bradford, West Yorkshire, to Glasgow then murdering Mr Shah.

The High Court in Glasgow heard the killer was offended by Mr Shah’s Facebook posts, in which he thought the shopkeeper, 40, was claiming to be a prophet and disrespecting the Muslim faith.

On March 24 this year, the Sunni Muslim watched a video of Mr Shah on his mobile phone and left a message for an acquaintance saying: “Listen to this guy, something needs to be done, it needs nipped in the bud.”

Mr Shah was a member of the peace-loving Ahmadi Muslim community which promotes “love for all, hatred for none”.

However, they are persecuted in many parts of the world and his extended family fled from Pakistan to Scotland in 1991 because of their faith. Mr Shah joined his family in Scotland in 1998 and was granted asylum.

Ahmadis differ from the majority of Muslims in that they do not hold that Muhammad is the final Prophet, the court heard.

Advocate depute Iain McSparran said: "He said that he had warned Asad Shah that he was there to kill him, had asked him to stop claiming to be a prophet, but that he had insisted he was."

Mr Shah had wished Christians a Happy Easter on social media hours before his death but the court heard this had no bearing on the crime.

In a later statement he claimed Mr Shah, who was a popular community figure, had "disrespected the prophet of Islam, the messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him."

The statement added: "If I had not done this others would have and there would be more killings and violence in the world.

"I wish to make it clear that the incident was nothing at all to do with Christianity or any other religious beliefs. Even although I am a follower of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, I also love and respect Jesus Christ."

Judge Lady Rae told Ahmed, who will be sentenced on August 9: "This was a truly despicable crime, motivated, it seems, by your sense of offence at a man's expression of his religious beliefs, which differ from yours."

When Ahmed arrived at the shop at 9pm, Mr Shah was serving customers with assistant Stephen McFadyen while his brother was in the basement.

Advocate depute Iain McSparran told the court he "warned Asad Shah that he was there to kill him, had asked him to stop claiming to be a prophet, but that he had insisted he was."

Ahmed could then be seen on CCTV reaching into his robes, pulling out a knife and moving to attack his victim.

Mr McFadyen tried to intervene but Mr Shah was repeatedly stabbed, with the blows continuing as he fled into the street.

Athar Shah dragged his brother away and tried to fend off the killer with a sign, while Mr McFadyen grabbed the knife and hid it in bushes.

Ahmed continued to punch, kick and stamp Mr Shah "with full force" before walking calmly to a nearby bus shelter where he sat with his head bowed "as if in prayer".

Mr Shah was born in Rabwah, Pakistan, and moved to Glasgow in 1998 to join his father in business.

The shopkeeper had also uploaded hundreds of videos about his spiritual beliefs to YouTube, most of which were filmed behind the counter of his shop.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/07/muslim-man-admits-murdering-shopkeeper-asad-shah-who-wished-belo/>

UK Muslim pleads guiltily to murdering Ahmadi shopkeeper

July 07, 2016, 7:04 pm

LONDON: A Muslim man from Bradford in northern England has admitted to killing an Ahmadi shopkeeper in Scotland in March this year because he felt the latter had 'disrespected Islam'.

Shopkeeper Asad Shah was stabbed and beaten in March at his convenience store in Glasgow.

Police suspected the slaying was "religiously prejudiced", with Judge Rita Rae terming it "a truly despicable crime."

Suspect Tanveer Ahmed pleaded guilty during a hearing at Glasgow's High Court on Thursday.

Prosecutors said that when 32-year-old Ahmed was interviewed by police, he said his actions were motivated by Shah's "disrespect [for] the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Allah and faith".

Ahmed will be sentenced Aug 9.

<http://nation.com.pk/international/07-Jul-2016/uk-muslim-pleads-guiltily-to-murdering-ahmadi-shopkeeper>

ٹیکسی ڈرائیور نے احمدی دکاندار کے قتل کا اعتراف کر لیا

• 7 جولائی 2016

شاہ نے ایسٹر کے موقع پر فیس بک پر اپنے گاہکوں کو ایسٹر کی مبارک باد پیش کی تھی اور اسی پیغام کے فوراً بعد انہیں قتل کیا گیا تھا

برطانوی شہر گلاسگو میں ایک ٹیکسی ڈرائیور تنویر احمد نے ایک دکاندار اسد شاہ کو قتل کرنے کا اعتراف کر لیا ہے۔

بریڈفورڈ سے تعلق رکھنے والے 32 سالہ ٹیکسی ڈرائیور تنویر احمد نے رواں سال 24 مارچ کو گلاسگو میں جماعت احمدیہ سے تعلق رکھنے والے ایک دکاندار اسد شاہ کو اس بنا پر حملہ کیا تھا کہ اس نے مبینہ طور پر اسلام کی توہین کی ہے۔

40 منٹ تک جاری رہنے والی عدالتی کارروائی میں ملزم نے عدالت کے سامنے اپنے جرم کا اقرار کیا۔

جج لیڈی ری نے کہا کہ اس نے یہ قابل نفرت جرم کسی دوسرے شخص کے مذہبی خیالات سے ناراض ہو کر کیا ہے اور اسے لمبی قید کا سامنا ہوگا۔

جج نے کہا: 'میں آپ پر واضح کرنا چاہتی ہوں کہ آپ نے جو کچھ کیا اس کا کوئی جواز نہیں تھا۔'

تنویر احمد نے اپریل میں اپنے وکیل کے ذریعے ایک بیان جاری کیا تھا جس میں اس نے کہا تھا کہ اس نے دکاندار اسد شاہ کو اسلام کی توہین کرنے کی پاداش میں کیا ہے اور اس قتل کا عیسائیت سے کوئی تعلق نہیں۔

دکاندار اسد شاہ نے اپنے مذہبی خیالات پر مبنی سینکڑوں ویڈیوز یوٹیوب پر پوسٹ کی تھیں۔ اسد شاہ نے ایسٹر کے موقع پر فیس بک پر اپنے گاہکوں کو ایسٹر کی مبارک باد پیش کی تھی اور اسی پیغام کے فوراً بعد انہیں قتل کیا گیا تھا۔

عدالت کو بتایا گیا کہ اسد شاہ نے کچھ ایسی ویڈیوز پوسٹ کی تھیں جن کے بارے میں کہا جا سکتا ہے کہ وہ پیغمبر ہونے کا دعویدار ہے۔

تنویر احمد نے اپنے وکیل کے ذریعے پیغام میں کہا تھا کہ ،اگر میں یہ کام انجام نہیں دیتا تو کوئی دوسرا کر دیتا جس سے دنیا میں مزید خون خرابہ اور قتل و غارت گری ہوتی۔‘

احمدیہ جماعت سے تعلق رکھنے والے اسد شاہ تقریباً بیس برس قبل پاکستان سے برطانیہ کے شہر گلاسگو منتقل ہوئے تھے۔

http://www.bbc.com/urdu/world/2016/07/160707_glasgow_killer_admit_ra