[**OP-ED**](https://dailytimes.com.pk/opeds/)

# Letter from deathbed

*Just as Aga Khan University in Karachi is the place to go to get your neurosurgical needs met, the premier place for cardiovascular surgery in Pakistan is Tahir Heart Institute in Rabwah, run by Ahmadis*

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OCTOBER 23, 2017

This past week I entrusted my life to the most skilled set of surgical hands at the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Karachi (named after Aga Khan, the first president of the All India Muslim League). A monstrous tumour on the right lobe of the brain was plaguing my existence. Given time, it could have claimed my life but through a cutting-edge surgical technique called awake craniotomy, the brilliant surgeons at AKU saved my life.

Awake craniotomy is one of the most extraordinary surgical procedures. You are kept awake as your brain is cut open, so that your eloquent brain is kept intact. When one has been gone as close to the reality of life (which after all is death) as I did, one only remembers beautiful and tender moments and all the rest becomes a half veiled mist of unrealities. So this is my letter to you Pakistanis from what is effectively my deathbed.

Procedures like awake craniotomy characterise real progress — as opposed to making bombs and blowing up human settlement and mixing religion with statecraft by adding it to the country’s constitution is not real progress I’m afraid. This is what Pakistan needs to understand.

*When Captain Safdar’s antecedents in Majlis-e-Ahrar, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Ulema were trying to destroy the foundations of this country, it was Aga Khanis, Ahmadis, Christians, Dalits and scheduled caste Hindus who stood firm with Jinnah*

When the AKU had started its state of the art secondary education system about 15 years ago, religious parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami (it must be remembered that the party had shamelessly opposed the creation of this country) had accused Ismailis of trying to ‘secularise’ Pakistan (as if that is such a bad thing) and destroy its Islamic ethos. Such shameless acts remind one of that Urdu language phrase: ‘sharam tum ko magar nahi aati’.  Jamaat-e-Islami’s and its leader Maulana Maududi’s hateful discourse against Pakistan and Jinnah is all part of the historical record. Yet these JI wallahs and their supporters like MNA Captain (retd) Safdar have become the uncles of Pakistan’s ideology. I have written in detail about Captain Safdar’s vitriol against another patriotic community of Pakistan — the Ahmadis — in my previous article. The shameless son-in-law of the now thoroughly discredited former Prime Minister of Pakistan had the gall to declare that a ‘sazshi-tola’ (a conspiratorial gang) appointed Sir Zafrullah Khan as Pakistan’s foreign minister.  He should know that if there was such a ‘sazshi-tola’ it was headed by none other than Mohammad Ali Jinnah. It was Jinnah who appointed Zafrullah as Pakistan’s lawyer before the boundary commission and it was Jinnah who asked Ispahani to send back Zafrullah to take over as Pakistan’s first foreign minister. Jinnah had referred to Zafrullah Khan as ‘my Muslim son’ on numerous occasions. How dare this shameless son-in-law of a disqualified Prime Minister refer to the team led by the founder of the nation as a ‘sazshi-tola’. Those of you who have followed my writings here know that I am not a supporter of a judicial coup against an elected government and I have not agreed with Supreme Court’s Iqama judgment but if democracy means sustaining the shamefulness and bigotry of people like Captain Safdar on account of the fact that he is married to the daughter of the then PM, then I am afraid we all have to reconsider our opinions.

Just as Aga Khan University in Karachi is the place to go to get your neurosurgical needs met, the premier place for cardiovascular surgery in Pakistan is Tahir Heart Institute in Rabwah — run by Ahmadis. It is also common knowledge that some of our best schools, hospitals and universities are run by Christian minorities. Pakistan is not just for constitutionally sanctioned Muslims. Pakistan is for all Pakistanis regardless of their faith. The country is sustained through the goodwill and efforts of all Pakistanis, especially non-Muslims.

When Captain Safdar’s antecedents in Majlis-e-Ahrar, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Ulema-Hind were trying to destroy the foundations of this country and abusing Jinnah as Kafir-e-Azam and Pakistan as Kafiristan, it was the Aga Khanis, Ahmadis, Christians, Dalits and scheduled caste Hindus who stood with Jinnah against Majlis-e-Ahrar and other traitors like Khaksars, Khudai Khidmatgars and Jamiat-e-Ulema Hind — all of whom had sold themselves to the Indian National Congress.

As I have mentioned in my last two articles — it bears repeating that the 1973 constitution and the horrendous 2nd Amendment to this constitution were passed by individuals like Wali Khan, Mufti Mahmood, Maula Bux Soomro and others who had opposed the very making of Pakistan. Upon the fall of Dacca in 1971, Mufti Mahmood, father of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, famously declared ‘thank God we were not part of the sin of making Pakistan’. During General Zia’s time, Maula Bux Soomro declared equally famously ‘I am proud of the fact that my family including Allah Bux Soomro opposed the making of Pakistan’. Soomro’s son Illahi Bux Soomro tragically has been establishment’s go to man in Sindh for decades now.

The point of repeating this history is to make sure that it is clear to everyone. The only way Pakistan can progress is by unwaveringly, unquestioningly and unstintingly following Jinnah’s prescription of August 11, 1947, wherein he clarified that religion had nothing to do with the business of the state and that every Pakistani is an equal citizen of the state, and it does not matter if one is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Catholic or a Protestant. Religion is just not the point.

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**Published in Daily Times, October 23rd 2017.**

**https://dailytimes.com.pk/129031/letter-from-deathbed/**

**Nationwide announcement of Khatm e Nabuat Conferences of Milli Yakhjahti Council.**

**The ones doing amendment in the Khatm e Nabuat Law should be disclosed and the action should be taken against them.**

**The statement of Provincial Law Minister Rana Sana Ullah is a treachery with the constitution, he should be dismissed, Sahibzada Abul Khair.**

Islamabad (special News Reporter) Milli YakhjahtiCouncil while making the demand that the ones making amendment in the decided law of Khatm e Nabuat should be punished, because the Political drama of the government is creating disparity and insurgency among the public. Will held huge Khatm e Nabuat conferences in Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar under Milli Yakhjahti Council. The statement given by Rana SanaUllah is a treachery against the constitution of Pakistan; he should be removed from his office at once. The people of the Occupied Kashmir should be given a positive message, by ending the illegal detention of Hafiz Muhammed Saeed. These thoughts were expressed by the President of the Milli Yakhjahti Council and General Secretary Liaquat Baloch after the meeting while talking to the media. In a released statement Allama Sajid Naqvi, Professor Abdur Rehman Makki, Allama Ibtisam Ilahi Zaheer, Abdul Raheem Naqshbandi, Hafiz Akif Saeed, Syed Moeen Ud Din Koreja, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmd Ali, Asad Ullah Bhutto, Noor Ul Hasan Gillani, Qari Muhammed Shafi Yaqoob, Abdul Ghaffar Ropari, Qari Zaheer Akhtar Mansoori, Peer Ghulam Rusool Owaisi and the other leaders attended the conference. Sahibzada Abu Ul Khair Muhammed Zubair was off the view that the leaders are busy in conspiracies against Khatm e Nabuat, and instead of revealing the ones that are doing conspiracy against Khatm e Nabuat, they are busy in supporting them. He also demanded that the ones doing conspiracy against Khatm e Nabuat should be revealed, they have been giving wrong opinions before as well. One department of the Qadianis is named upon a Qadiani, and despite the protest that has not been reversed, and the issue has been set aside. The provincial Law Minister of Punjab openly supported the Qadianis, but no action was taken against him. Although he openly violated his oath, and the constitution. On one hand the government is running the movement, that we have solved the issue of khatm e Nabuat, while on the other side has excluded 7B and 7C from the constitution. Until it is restored the problem is not solved. We will run a huge movement against it. In order to impose the system of the Holy Prophet (P B U H), a committee consisting of ten men was formed under the leadership of Sahibzada Abu Ul Khair, which will decide the …. for the nationwide movement.

**Daily Express, Faisalabad, Sunday, 22nd October, 2017.**

**Religious Parties should fight the international pressure of ending the Islamic terminologies through the Parliament: Fazal Ur Rehman.**

**Will fight the ones doing conspiracies regarding the non-Muslim minority’s law relating to the Qadianis like a man, in today’s world Parliament is the measure of power.**

**The system of the country is in the hands of few people, America and other western countries are busy in creating an environment to end their role, Address, talk with the delegation.**

Tial Gang/Chenab Nagar (Representative Mashriq) the President of JUI-F Maulana Fazal Ul Rehman said that the religious parties should unite against the International Pressure of ending the Islamic terminologies and fight it like a man. Will fight the conspiracies of ending the non-Muslim minority relating to the Qadianis like a man. These thoughts were expressed by him in the Annual Khatm e Nabuat Conference in Muslim Colony Chenab Nagar and before while talking in a meeting with Deputy Secretary Information of JUI-F Chaudary Abdul Jabbar Tala Gang, Dr. Mehmood Ul Hasan Jirah, Muhammed Inam Ullah and Muhammed Yasir Rauf. Maulana Fazl Ur Rehman also said that we should also understand the foreign situation. There is a pressure on the syllabus of the religious institutes; similarly there is a pressure on the constitution of Pakistan and the khatm e Nabuat Law. Even today we want that the religious parties should unite on one platform and fight this international pressure through the platform of the Parliament. The Platform of khatm e Nabuat is the best platform. In today’s world the standard of power is Parliament. The real fight is done with the political power. The system of the country is in few hands. The British are using all the forces against the religious institutes and the Ulemas. America and the other western forces are making the environment to finish the role of khatm e Nabuat. The enemies of Khatm e Nabuat are very keen on removing the laws regarding Khatm e Nabuat, the Blasphemy law. The conspiracies against the Islamic terminologies are the agenda of the Qadianis and the imperialistic forces

**Daily Mashriq, 22nd October, 2017.**

**The ones doing amendment in the Oath-declaration regarding the belief of Khatm e Nabuat should be disclosed: Majlis Ahrar Ul Islam**

**Action should be taken against Zahid Hamid and Rana SanaUllah, demand in the sitting, the committees have been formed for the Khatm e Nabuat Conference.**

Chiniot (Correspondent) Majlis Ahrar Ul Islam and Safeguard Khatm e Nabuat Movement have decided that the peaceful work of safeguard of khatm e Nabuat will be spread on the national and international level, and the arising problems will be fought with great courage. The high level meeting of Majlis Ahrar Ul Islam was held in the central mosque of Ahrar yesterday in Chenab Nagar, under the Presidency Central Senior Deputy Ameer Professor Khalid Shabbir Ahmed. In this meeting, Syed Muhammed Tufail Bukhari, Abdul Latif Khalid Cheema, Miyan Muhammed Owais, Maulana Muhammed Mugheera, Dr. Umer Farooq Ahrar, Syed Atta Ul Manan Bukhari, Mualana Muhammed Akmal, Hakim Muhammed Qasim, Dr. Muhammed Asif, and other …. From around the country attended this sitting. In the sitting committees were formed for the annual khatm e Nabuat Conference going to be held in Chenab Nagar on the 11th and 12th of Rabi Ul Awwal. Syed Muhammed Tufail Bukhari has been appointed as the chief organizer of the two day conference.

The government should adopt a clear-cut opinion about the Qadianis: Muhammed Shahid

Sheikhupura (Beauru Report) Political and Social leader Haji Muhammed Shahid Chaudary said that due to the increasing unannounced activities of the Qadianis, the conspiracies of tension, debating, character assassination, accustaions and the announcement of fatwas have started in the country. The government will have to adapt a clear-cut policy about the Qadianis in order to end the feelings of restlessness and anxiety in the public.

**Daily Khabrain, Lahore, 22nd October, 2017.**

KARACHI DESPATCH | [INTERNATIONAL](http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/)

# Hate speech in Pakistan’s Parliament

[Mubashir Zaidi](http://www.thehindu.com/profile/contributor/Mubashir-Zaidi-4371/)

OCTOBER 21, 2017 18:50 IST

UPDATED: OCTOBER 22, 2017 08:10 IST

Politicians attacking Pakistan’s minority[Ahmadi community](http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/three-members-of-ahmadiyya-community-sentenced-to-death-in-pakistan/article19844347.ece) is not a new thing. But a parliamentarian calling them “a threat to Pakistan” on the floors of the National Assembly is unusual. Still the speech by Captain Muhammad Safdar, son-in-law of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in which he said “Ahmadis should not be allowed in the military or other key institutions”, drew applause from his party members.

“These people are a threat to this country and its ideology and Constitution. Due to them, we have lost wars,” he said. When an MP from the Opposition tried to stop him, the captain yelled at him and called him “ill-fated”. Capt. Safdar also blamed a couple of Ahmadi Generals for the 1971 War defeat to India. But the Generals he named never fought the war. They were revered as heroes of the 1965 war. Military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor quickly snubbed the rant and said Pakistani forces do not discriminate on the basis of religion.

Capt. Safdar even criticised Mr. Sharif’s decision earlier this year to name Quaid-i-Azam University’s Physics department after Dr. Abdus Salam, an Ahmadi, who was awarded Nobel Prize in Physics in 1979. He is revered as the founder of Pakistan’s space programme.

After the speech, Capt. Safdar left the building chanting slogans in favour of Mumtaz Qadri, a guard who killed former Punjab Governor Salman Taseer. Taseer was killed in 2011 after he raised voice for a Christian worker in Punjab, who was booked for blasphemy. Capt. Safdar’s speech came hours after he was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau and presented before the Accountability Court for failing to declare his assets. Mr. Sharif’s family is facing investigation over corruption charges.

Opposition [**Pakistan**](http://www.thehindu.com/tag/371-244/pakistan?utm=bodytag)Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto took to the Twitter to react. “The bigotry, hatred & extremism on display in the National Assembly goes to show Nawaz league has been mainstreaming terror...” Human rights activist Asma Jahangir said Capt. Safdar had tried to incite hatred. “Nawaz Sharif should take note of his hate speech. This is totally unacceptable.”

**In defensive mode**

The reaction put the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) in a defensive mode. As media started to question the party about the motive, leaders distanced themselves from Capt. Safdar’s “personal views”. Mr. Sharif’s daughter Maryam Nawaz, who is married to Capt. Safdar, later tweeted her father’s views. The former Prime Minister said Pakistan’s Constitution and religion guarantee all rights to minorities and anyone who’s saying the contrary has no association with the policy and ideology of the party.

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal also expressed anger over the comments, but refused to say if any action would be taken against Capt. Safdar. Saleemuddin, the spokesman of Jamaat-i-Ahmadiya, an organisation of the Ahmadis, remained a worried man. “Ahmadis across Pakistan felt threatened by the statement of Capt. Safdar. This has been happening to us continuously.”

Dawn newspaper wrote a scathing editorial against Capt. Safdar. “Until all Pakistani citizens are deemed equal before the law, until patriotism or the right to security of life and property is not contingent upon faith, aspirations for a more peaceful polity will remain a pipe dream,” Dawn stated. But will these critical voices help address the problem? Asked if the Ahmadi community will file a complaint against Capt. Safdar, Mr. Saleemuddin was blunt: “Our past efforts yielded no results so there is no use of filing any complaint.”

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<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/hate-speech-in-pakistans-parliament/article19896775.ece>

**All the religious parties are united on the safeguard of Khatm e Nabuat, nationwide protest: Statements of condemnation in the Friday Sermons.**

**The Ulemas of all the sects are of the resolve that they will not sit back, until and unless the responsible for removing the Oath-declaration are punished.**

**Nationwide rallies of Jamaat e Islami, condemnation of the false propaganda of representing the Qadianis as innocents, the leaders also delivered there address.**

Lahore (Correspondent) on the appeal of All sects ‘World Pasban Khatm e Nabuat’ the religious parties Safeguard Harmain Sharifeen Movement, JUI, JUP, International Movement of the Safeguard Khatm e Nabuat, Jamaat e Islami, Jamiat Ahl e Hadis, Jamiat Ahl e Sunnat, Millat Jaffria Movement and the Ahl e Sunnat Movement of the Ulemas celebrated the day of safeguard of Khatm e Nabuat nationwide. With relevance to that the Ulemas of all the sects on the occasion of the Friday sermon gatherings registered a strong protest for not punishing the ones responsible for omitting the Oath-declaration of Khatm e Nabuat. Resolution of condemnation was also passed. They also demanded that the ones responsible for omitting the oath-declaration should be punished. The Ulemas upon answering that Nawaz Sharif and family should be punished said that because of causing damage to the belief of Khatm e Nabuat and the economy of the country Nawaz Sharif is facing consequences for his acts. Allama Mumtaz Muhammed Aiwan condemned the objection of the two members of the British Parliament on Captain’s Safdar’s speech on the topic of khatm e Nabuat. He also condemned the false movement of showing Qadianis as innocent. On the appeal of Ameer Jamaat e Islami Lahore Miyan Maqsood Ahmed protesting processions and rallies were held all over Punjab including Lahore relating to Khatm e Nabuat issue. In many big cities huge number of people attended the protesting processions to guarantee the safeguard of khatm e Nabuat and to also make the ant-Islamic conspiracies go unsuccessful. Ameer Jamaat e Islami Punjab Miyan Maqsood Ahmed also said that conspiracies against Oath-Declaration of khatm e Nabuat is unacceptable. Miyan Aslam also said that did the government wanted to convert the infidels to Muslims? Javaid Qusoori in Multan said that won’t let the law of the British operate. Ameer Azeem said that the evil desires of the rulers have become evident.

**Daily Ausaf, Lahore, Saturday, 21st September, 2017**

**An action must be taken against Qadianis for their Anti Pakistan activities, Zulfiqar Sooba.**

**Khatm e Nabuwat is the part of our faith. We have gained nothing except a chaos by making amendments in constitution.**

Tobatek Singh (special reporter) Zulfiqar Ali Soba the chairman of Soba group demanded for an action against Qadianis as per the National Action Plan for the Anti Pakistan activities. Qadianis are clearly declared non Muslims according to the constitution. Considering them Muslims or even a Muslim sect is against the ideology of Islam and the constitution of Pakistan. Qadianiat apostasy is a rebel against the constitution of Pakistan. Muslims cannot bear a soft corner against the rebels of Pakistan. Enemies of the country are trying to make it a country full of problems.

**Daily Nawa I Waqt, Lahore, 20th October, 2017.**

**Statement of Rana Sanaullah in favor of Qadianis is condemnable, Arshad Qamar Gurwah.**

**We strongly condemn the efforts made to amend the faith of Khatm e nabuwat into an oath.**

Chiniot (special Reporter) President of Muslim League religious leader Makhdom Arshad Qamar Gurwah talked to the journalists that we demand an immediate removal of federal Law Minister from his post. He further said that faith of Khatm e Nabuwat is a Part of our faith and its amendment is unacceptable. Government’s efforts to amend this are condemnable. All religious leaders and the members of our party condemn this. They demanded from the government to punish the culprits so that no one can ever try to amend this law in future.

**Daily Pakistan, Lahore, 20th October, 2017**

**The marquee of Khatm e Nabuwat was echoed with the slogans of Takbeer. Terrorist attacks were condemned.**

**Conference was started with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Maulana Khalil Ahmad led the attendees in silent Prayers where as Maulana Aziz Jalindhari watched over the whole arrangements.**

Chiniot (reporter) The central vice Ameer of International Majlis Tahafuz Khatm e Nabuwat said in his opening address explained the causes of the conference. The colorful banners with the messages and statements regarding the importance of Khatm e Nabuwat were creating a spiritual atmosphere. Whole arrangements of the conference were under Maulana qazi Ehsan Ahmad, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Rehmani, Maulana Mohammad Khubaib and Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad. Maulana Abdul Hakim Nomani was taking the speeches to the medium room and Maulana Abdulnaeem Alrahmaniand Maulana Mohammad Waseem Aslam were briefing journalists about the conference. They strongly condemn the cowardice attack of terrorists on Police Training Centre Quetta. They also showed sympathies with the martyrs and their families. Different caravans came from Faisalabad, Sargodha, Jhang and Chenab Nagar.

**Daily Nawa I Waqt, Lahore, 20th October, 2017.**

[**THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE**](https://tribune.com.pk/) > [**OPINION**](https://tribune.com.pk/opinion/)

# [Our pet obsession](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1535932/our-pet-obsession/)

By [Ayesha Ijaz Khan](https://tribune.com.pk/author/184/ayesha-ijaz-khan/)

Published: October 20, 2017

As someone who lives in the West, I am troubled by the rise of Donald Trump in the United States and of far-right anti-immigrant movements across Europe primarily because, as a Muslim, I resent their Islamophobic politics. I am concerned about their attempts to scapegoat Muslims and stir fear and hysteria against a minority community. Yet I am also heartened by the fact that the law does not discriminate against Muslims, and that Muslims do technically have the same rights as those belonging to any other faith. This includes, for example, in the case of the United Kingdom, state funding for Islamic schools.

Think about that for a second. Muslims in the UK can get funding from the government to run an Islamic school. While there have been cases where some of these schools have found themselves at odds with the government regulator or been the targets of rather negative media attention, fundamentally, the eligibility for government funding remains intact. The rights of Muslims, thus, are not different from the rights of those belonging to any other faith. This does not mean that Muslims are never targeted unfairly or discriminated against but it does mean that the law is, by and large, fair.

Ironically, this is only possible in a society that acknowledges that religion must be separate from the business of the state. The state must protect all its citizens equally and this can only be done if it is not partisan to any community and does not declare itself to have an official faith. Muslims in the West routinely rely on this principle to enforce their rights. What happens then to our sense of fair play when it comes to the rights of those who may not adhere to the majority faith in our own countries? The recent tirade against Ahmedis by the dubious Captain Safdar springs to mind. The very fact that the floor of the National Assembly could be used for such invective is mind-boggling. Nor is he alone in attempting to demonise this community. It has happened so many times before, by the likes of Sheikh Rashid, PPP’s Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, and most recently, PTI’s Ali Mohammed Khan.

To someone like me, viewing the situation from abroad, the frenzy such men try to whip up against Ahmadis is no different from how the Islamophobes target Muslims in the West, and scapegoat their problems on a minority community. The big difference is however that if, like Captain Safdar, a member of parliament in the UK spoke so derogatorily about a minority community, like Muslims in the UK, he would have been booed and hissed by the opposition and marginalised by the community at large.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the Ahmadi card is so potent that instead of putting Safdar in his place, the National Assembly was cowed down into unanimously, and without any discussion, restoring the Khatam-e-Nabuwwat laws. Captain Safdar alluded to Maudoodi’s vision, a man who opposed the very idea of Pakistan, and sadly those who prefer Jinnah’s vision were too afraid to speak up.

We, as a country, have become obsessed with declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims, it appears. But let me ask a few simple questions. How come none of Pakistan’s founding fathers and mothers felt the need to affirm Khatam-e-Nabuwwat in order to get passports or hold public office? Was Pakistan not a Muslim country in 1947 but suddenly became one in 1974? Was Jinnah, who actively courted the Ahmadi community in the quest for Pakistan and appointed an Ahmadi as Pakistan’s foreign minister, less of a man than Z A Bhutto, who capitulated to right-wing pressure and declared Ahmadis non-Muslims?

What did Pakistan accomplish with this declaration and subsequent amendments to our laws in 1984? Did the rest of us become better Muslims by declaring that Ahmadis are not Muslims at all? Wouldn’t it be better to leave such judgments of faith to Allah alone?

**Published in The Express Tribune, October 20th, 2017.**

# Pakistan, Land of the Intolerant

[**Mohammed Hanif**](https://www.nytimes.com/column/mohammed-hanif)**OCT. 19, 2017**

KARACHI, Pakistan — This country has a poor record of protecting its religious minorities, but we outdo ourselves when it comes to Ahmadis. Members of the sect insist on calling themselves Muslims, and we mainstream Muslims insist on treating them like the worst kind of heretics.

The day I wrote this piece, a small headline in a newspaper informed me that an Ahmadi lawyer, his wife and two-year-old child had been [shot dead by gunmen at home](https://www.rabwah.net/ahmadi-lawyer-wife-son-shot-dead-pakistan/), for being Ahmadis. Killings like this have happened [so many times](http://www.dw.com/en/the-persecution-of-ahmadis-in-pakistan-and-beyond/a-36748924)that the story wasn’t even the main news. On May 28, 2010, some 90 Ahmadis were killed during attacks on two mosques in Lahore. No public official attended the funerals.

You would think that the government, law enforcers and the courts would do something about such sustained acts of brutality. But they are too hard at work. I learned from another recent headline that a district court near Lahore, in eastern Pakistan, had [sentenced three Ahmadi men to death for blasphemy](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/ahmadis-sentenced-death-blasphemy-171012081709423.html). A fourth man was shot dead before the trial while in police custody.

It is always prudent not to ask what blasphemous act is said to have been committed, because under the law, [repeating something blasphemous](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/05/pakistans-blasphemy-laws-colossal-absurdity) can itself constitute blasphemy. According to one newspaper report, the men were on trial for attempting to remove from a wall religious posters that incited hatred against Ahmadis. That’s right, they were sentenced to death for taking down posters that incited people to kill them. (The prosecution argued that since the posters were religious, removing them was an insult to the Prophet Muhammad.)

Pakistanis in Lahore mourned outside one of two mosques of the minority Ahmadi sect that were attacked on May 28, 2010, killing some 90 Ahmadis.

The Ahmadi (or Ahmadiyya) sect is a reformist movement founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad toward the end of the 19th century in the city of Qadian, in what is today the Indian part of Punjab. Ahmad claimed to be the incarnation of a Messiah promised in Islamic holy texts. That challenged the mainstream Muslim belief that Muhammad is Islam’s last and final prophet. Ahmad was accused of being an agent of the British Empire.

### [Opinion Op-Ed Contributor](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/opinion/pakistan-education-schools.html)

## [What’s Really Keeping Pakistan’s Children Out of School? OCT. 18, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/opinion/pakistan-education-schools.html)

There are no reliable statistics about the number of Ahmadis in Pakistan today. Many Ahmadis don’t publicly identify as Ahmadi; others refuse to take part in the census. Estimates range from [500,000](https://www.dawn.com/news/1334630) to [four million](http://a-m-l.blogspot.hk/2017/07/ahmadiyya-population-in-world-2016.html).

In 1974, Pakistan’s elected Parliament [declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslims](https://archive.org/details/NAProceedings1974). Religious parties had held street protests demanding this, and even though Parliament back then was full of liberals and socialists, there was hardly a dissenting voice when the time came to pass the law.

Our Parliament today is still at it. Last week Muhammad Safdar, a son-in-law of the recently deposed prime minister, thundered against Ahmadis, demanding they be banned from joining the armed forces. He also demanded that a physics department of a university in Islamabad be renamed because in 2016 it [was named](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/05/world/asia/pakistan-honors-nobel-laureate-physicist-of-ahmadi-minority.html) after Abdus Salam, the only Pakistani scientist to become a Nobel laureate. The Pakistani government had already taken close to four decades to name anything after Mr. Salam, a theoretical physicist, because he was Ahmadi. It appears that not a single parliamentarian spoke up against Mr. Safdar’s diatribe.

Earlier this month, Parliament also changed [the oath](https://www.dawn.com/news/1261622) that Pakistanis are required to take to get [a passport](http://www.pakembassyankara.com/userfiles/files/Form_A_Passport_Form.pdf) or run in an election. A standard version of the statement goes: “I hereby solemnly declare that I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an impostor nabi and also consider his followers, whether belonging to the Lahori or Qadiani group, to be non-Muslims.” (Nabi means prophet.) Language in the election law was changed from “I solemnly declare” to “I believe.”

It’s not clear why this happened. The government claims it was [a clerical error](https://www.dawn.com/news/1361665). But there was [a public uproar](https://propakistani.pk/2017/10/03/public-fire-govt-removes-khatam-e-nabuwat-clause-elections-bill/) over the change, including accusations that the government was going soft on Ahmadis. Parliament promptly backtracked, and we all resumed solemnly declaring rather than just believing.

The word “Ahmadi” was hardly even used during the debate in Parliament. We prefer to call the Ahmadis “[Qadianis](https://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/09/pakistan-politicians-are-doing-too-little-to-stem-violence-against-religious-minorities/),” meaning from Qadian. Ahmadis consider the word derogatory, which is why we use it.

I got a call a few months ago from my family who still lives in my ancestral village in Punjab. A stranger had come asking about me, I was told. He claimed to be my friend from school. While I was still trying to put a forgotten face to the name, my relative asked, “Is your friend a Qadiani?” I suddenly remembered the boy from my school who was indeed a friend and happened to be Ahmadi. I asked the relative, “How did you know he was a Qadiani?” The reply shouldn’t have shocked me, but it did. “I have an inbuilt Qadiani detector. I can always smell them.”

I wanted to remind my relative that when I was a kid and he was a young man, all his best friends were Ahmadis and I had seen him locked in our bathroom smoking his first cigarette with those infidels. But then I remembered the slap.

It must have been around 1974. I was about nine years old and was taking my Quran lessons. My teacher was gentle. At the time, protesters in the bazaars were asking shoppers not to go to Ahmadi-owned shops. I asked my teacher who the Ahmadis were, and he patiently explained that they were heretics, because they challenged the notion that Muhammad was Islam’s last prophet. I said, even if they are heretics, does Islam say we can’t buy stuff from their shops? The slap was full and hard.

As I grew up, Ahmadis went from being treated as zealous reformist Muslims to non-Muslims to kafir, or heretics — worse even than Hindus or Jews. In the mid-1980s, a decade after Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims, another set of laws [forbade them to act like Muslims](https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/06/01/pakistan-massacre-minority-ahmadis).

This is the tricky bit, because Ahmadis insist on calling themselves Muslim and behave like Muslims. They pray in mosques, they call out the azaan at prayer time, they say “assalam alaikum,” they invoke Allah’s will or his mercy — and every time they do any of the above, they violate the law of the land. If they call their mosque a mosque, they become criminals. If they call their daily prayers namaz, as Muslims do, they risk imprisonment. Ahmadis have been charged with blasphemy for printing [a verse of the Quran on wedding invitations](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-britain-arrest/arrested-in-islamic-pakistan-for-reading-the-koran-ahmadi-sect-under-siege-idUSBRE9BE02J20131215).

Early this month, I saw Pakistan’s foreign minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, give an interview on television. He had just returned from a tour of the United States and had been accused of hobnobbing with Ahmadis while there. He was at pains to explain that he had never met an Ahmadi in his life. To prove his point, he said that once, while he was sitting in a restaurant in Islamabad, two boys came up to get a selfie with him. “I asked them, ‘I hope you are not Qadianis.’” The foreign minister and the show host shared a hearty laugh.

I called up my long-lost Ahmadi friend recently and the brief conversation that followed was full of blasphemies. He was acting all Muslim. “Assalam alaikum,” he greeted me. By the grace of Allah, he said, he still has a job. Sometimes, when people suspect him of being Ahmadi, he is thrown out of shops or business meetings. But Allah is kind, my friend insisted. His wife, a teacher of fashion design, still has a job at a university — though she doesn’t use the staff room because some people have become suspicious. The kids are doing well, thanks to Allah, but he has told them not to tell even their closest friends that they are Ahmadis.

He tried to make us both feel better: Thanks to Allah, it’s not as bad for us as it is for Shias. Look how many of them get killed for their beliefs.

Pakistan was essentially created to protect the religious and economic rights of Muslims who were a minority before India’s partition in 1947. But since the country’s inception, we have created new minorities and keep finding new ways to torment them.

[**https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/19/opinion/pakistan-muslims-ahmadis.html?smid=tw-share**](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/19/opinion/pakistan-muslims-ahmadis.html?smid=tw-share)

**Rana Sana Ullah’s clarification regarding the statementsof Khatam-e-Nabuwat is unsatisfactory.**

The views of Dr. Muhammad Anwar ‘Ameer Jamat-e-Islami’ and Mushtaq Ahmad Kamboh.

Faisalabad (city reporter) The chief coordinator of ‘Bain ul Mazahib Aaman (inter religions peace) Committee Punjab Pakistan & New York City, Mushtaq Ahmad Kamboh and ‘Ameer-e-Jamat-e-Islami’ Halqa (constituency) PP-70, Dr. Anwar said that every Muslim is protesting upon the conspiracies against the belief of Khatam-e-Nabuwat and Islamic jurisprudence. We are not satisfied by the government committee on the bill of Khatam-e-Nabuwat. Statements of national & provincial ministers are all apprehensive and alarming. They said that Rana Sana Ullah’s clarification regarding the statements of Khatam-e-Nabuwat is unsatisfactory. It seems as, with a proper planning grieve-able & condemnable statements are being stated. Moreover, they stressed that the responsible of amendment in Khatam-e-Nabuwat oath declaration, must be dismissed.

**(Daily Pakistan, Lahore (12) 16thOctober, 2017)**