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

# Pakistan’s losing to divisive clerics

*Given our history and the current fabric of Pakistani society and polity, it’s not possible to extricate the influence of religion on Pakistani state and the state can’t be anything close to secular*

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The Daily Times

NOVEMBER 8, 2018

It was second time within the last one year that Tehreek-e-Labbaik Party (TLP) brought the government and the state of Pakistan to their knees through sheer street power, violence, sectarian vitriol. Last year its sit-in was about a rumored change in the election nomination form, which TLP took it as a blasphemous act. The then government had to fire the main drafter of the legislative act and had to sign an embarrassing agreement with TLP before it ended the month-long sit-ins.

This year, although the TLP sit-in didn’t last long, it was worse. The sit-in was to protest the Supreme Court’s verdict to acquit a Christian woman Asia Bibi of the blasphemy charges. The hapless woman had already spent around nine years in prison. The leadership of TLP spared virtually nothing to incite even the orderlies of those judges who had acquitted Asia to murder them. In an unprecedentedly treasonous act, they also appealed for a mutiny in the military.

No sooner than the TLP sit-in, violence and the vitriol against state institution went berserk, the same evening Prime Minister Imran Khan warned the TLP leaders and protesters of stern action against them in his speech to the nation. Unfortunately, as it has virtually become a characteristic of the PTI and Imran Khan, all the bravado of his speech suffered a U-turn as next day his government sheepishly agreed to the demands of the TLP, which included not letting Asia Bibi fly out of Pakistan.

Here an important question arises: why does the state of Pakistan had to so often cow down to the whims of Islamic clerics and their political parties? Part of a possible answer may lie in the history of Pakistan’s independence movement and part of it in the political history of Pakistan.

**That Jinnah pitched the case of Indian Muslims with British in their own idiom of democracy, right of self-determination, and that Indian Muslims had the characteristics of a nation than a mere minority community—doesn’t blur the fact that Muslim masses conceived the idea of a separate homeland not in those modern and sophisticated notions but only in plain and simple religious imagery. To think that Jinnah was not aware of this dichotomy in articulation of the idea and the vision of Pakistan between Muslim League’s leadership and the Muslim masses would be naiveté if not outright ignorance.**

**Jinnah knew and recognized this dichotomy. Time and again, 1940 onwards he asserted in his speeches and questions from media that Pakistan was not going to be a theocratic state but a modern democratic state of Muslims. However, with a literacy rate of no more than a paltry of around 8 percent among Indian Muslim back then, it was obviously impossible if Muslim masses could understand what their greatest leader meant and talked about.**

For them, Pakistan was going to be what their local political and religious leaders told them in their own language and in most sweeping terms laced with religious inspirations, while Jinnah just represented their case for a separate piece of land before the British Crown. In this backdrop, it may be safely estimated that at the heart of Jinnah’s famous inaugural speech in the constituent assembly on August 11, 1947 hid his apprehensions vis-à-vis a theological vision of the new state which had attracted people to vote for Muslim League in 1946 elections.

***The state of Pakistan must establish its monopoly over the application of religion in the country, else, Pakistan will keep faltering to achieve political stability and consequent peace and development***

That’s why he came very bluntly on why the new state of Pakistan will not have anything to do with the faith of its citizens. However, it was too late. Muslim League owed its success and the new country its creation to the Muslim electorates who saw the new country only with a religious lens.

The other part of the answer lies in how post-1947 the leaders of Pakistan failed to undertake a nation building project for Pakistan. Islam was used to build a Pakistani nation when the sectarianism among the Muslims divided them so glaringly as each sect called the other as a heretic. This uniformity-ridden nation building was pursued at the expense of the socio-cultural diversity. Even today, no day passes without seeing some ministers invoking religious metaphor, which indirectly empowers the clergy who currently control the religion.

**Given our history and the current fabric of Pakistani society and polity, it’s not possible to extricate the influence of religion on Pakistani state and the state can’t be anything close to secular. However, what might be relatively easier would be that the state of Pakistan must establish its monopoly over the application of religion in the country. Else, Pakistan will keep faltering to achieve political stability and consequent peace and development. For sure, Pakistan was had in the name of Islam. It must not get hurt with ‘Islam in danger’ slogan.**

https://dailytimes.com.pk/319651/pakistans-losing-to-divisive-clerics/

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

# Misusing religion

The Daily Times

*The actual problem is that the loopholes of the blasphemy law allow it to be misused*

[Ikram Sehgal](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/ikram-sehgal/)

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

After some initial political hiccups, the Imran Khan government has passed the acid test last week when it handled the countrywide protests of religious parties wisely and successfully negotiated an agreement with the protest leaders. The previous government had allowed a similar situation to go on for weeks, devastating the capital and destroying public and private property before coming to an agreement with almost the same mullahs. That agreement at that time had been welcomed as a relief to the situation when the capital city of this country had become almost ungovernable. This time though the five point agreement reached was blamed in national and western media as ‘caving in to the mullahs’; a close look at the points of agreement suggests otherwise.

A mother of five, Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman who had been accused of blasphemy by the Imam of the village mosque based on the hearsay of some Muslim village women, had stayed in jail for nine years before the judicial process reached the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan. On Wednesday last the verdict of the previous court was revised by the SC and in his judgment the learned judge showed that there was insufficient proof for the accusation which made capital punishment impossible. The normal judicial process has one more step that can be taken within a certain period of time: the review of the SC verdict. Only after that the process is complete and the verdict final. Since then the review petition has been submitted to the SC.

Blasphemy is a touchy issue in Pakistan and the case of Aasia Bibi has already cost the life of former Governor Punjab Salman Taseer and that of minority minister Shahbaz Bhatti, both of whom tried to intervene on her behalf. Thus the verdict acquitting Aasia Bibi created a hype among the mullahs that she would be flown out of the country surreptitiously and be out of reach when the SC review removed her acquittal. Two of the five points of the agreement reached between the government and the protesters say nothing more than that: One, the judicial process will be allowed to go its due course and two, until that Aasia will not be allowed to leave country and be put on the Exit Control List. The rest stipulates that the protests will end, protesters be released, apologies will be rendered to who have been unnecessarily hurt.

How has the government ‘caved in’ to the protesters? This is an absolute lie. Keeping Aasia in Pakistan is also part of the ‘due process’ demand because what use would be a review petition with the defendant out of the country? Do the western and Pakistani critics suggest that due process should not have been allowed? Or should a massacre have been staged by the army and police so as to kill whosoever protests?

Imran Khan government has acted prudently which led to the de-escalation of the situation. After the primary danger is gone now the police is getting hold of those miscreants that where seen (and filmed or photographed) while going on rampage and destroying property. This again is a very well thought out and implemented strategy. While protesting may be a right, hooliganism is certainly not.

**The actual problem is that the loopholes of the blasphemy law allow it to be misused. The subcontinent did not have a blasphemy law until the British introduced it in 1860 in the course of their ‘civilizing mission’. The current law was enacted during the rule of Gen Ziaul Haq at a time when the war of the mujahedeen in Afghanistan was raging and jihadi interpretations of Islam were ‘en vogue’. Since then subsequent governments and parliamentarians have been trying to change the law so that it should at least not be misused but without success. Every time any such attempt was made it would be met with hue and cry by the custodians of Islam who pretend to know the “Truth” with a capital T. It will take not only time but real effort to get rid of the left-overs of jihadi ideology.**

*The subcontinent did not have a blasphemy law until the British introduced it in 1860 in the course of their ‘civilizing mission’*

Islam is not complete without respect for the Book and the Prophet of Islam but what would the Prophet himself said about our blasphemy law? We all know the story that relates how the prophet was insulted and garbage was thrown at him every time when he passed the house of a woman. He never resented that or commented on it. One day he passed by her house but she was not there. He inquired about her and got to know that she was unwell. He went to see her asking if he could do anything for her betterment by which action the woman was so ashamed and impressed that she adopted Islam. How far have we removed ourselves from the piety and forgiveness of the Prophet of Islam — especially those who insist on hanging of a woman whose guilt is based on secondary evidence and hearsay!

There are some other issues needing attention. The first is the video circulating on the social media showing the nephew of PML(N) MNA Mian Javed Latif from Sheikhupura carrying out the burning of vehicles on the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway between Kala Shah Kaku and Sukheke reportedly under the control and supervision of Mian Munawar Latif, brother of Mian Javed Latif. First we must ascertain if this was an individual act or a party diktat, it should than be dealt with an iron hand. Deliberate act of arson and looting by political party activists cannot be tolerated in a democracy.

**The other issue is far more important to gloss over. Accusing the Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa of being a Qadiani, therefore a non-Muslim, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) called on the Army rank and file to revolt against him! This is not only “mutiny” buthe also urged for assassination of the three Supreme Court justices. How in God’s name was the Army and the COAS involved in any aspect in this matter?Bringing the Army Chief into the equation suggests enemy interests behind the protest that are interested in dragging the Pakistan Army into an internal conflict. This is pure and simple use of “colour revolution” to incite the mob in a motivated direction, this is the execution of a prime facet of hybrid warfare. False flag operations, misinformation, incitement of people to rioting and revolt are means of hybrid warfare that is increasingly waged in our country as well. Hybrid warfare disseminates a false information for the enemy’s motivated reasons. Without any doubt the TLP Chief is guilty of high treason. Fortunately, the protests ended without army involvement. We cannot afford to ignore this, doing so would be at peril for the existence of our country (the writer is a defence and security analyst).**

The writer is a defence and security analyst

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[**COMMENTARY / INSIGHT**](https://dailytimes.com.pk/commentary/)

# Enforcement of law and order without political considerations

The Daily Times

*The Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mrs Shireen Mazari, invoked parallels with the German Nazi government of 1930s and highlighted the appeasement policy of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain courting with Hitler*

[Imran Ahsan Mirza](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/imran-ahsan-mirza/)

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

It was very hectic past few days in Pakistan in the lives of many of its citizens. The most anxious time was for Aasia Bibi and her family. Finally, the Supreme Court acquitted her from the charges under PPC 295 C and ordered her release. Thank God.

Since then her whereabouts remain a mystery. I appreciate this ambiguity and hope she leaves Pakistan without any difficulties. It is very sad that Pakistan, otherwise her homeland where she has spent all her life, grown, married, had children and even grandchildren, is not safe for her despite being cleared on all charges levelled against herby the highest court in the land. I hope this outlook hits us hard on our collective conscience as citizens of Pakistan and as the aspirants of a brighter and progressive future. Is such progress even possible without resolving the sense of right and wrong in our political and religious discourse? I don’t think so.

**People pin their hopes and expectations on the PTI government for a better future. But hope is not enough motivator without timely action by the government. The Tehrik-e-Labbaik agitation started after the 31st October verdict by the Supreme Court disrupted the normal life in all major cities of Pakistan. The leading clerics of this movement may have the right to political protest and even holding irrational views but they did not have the right to violence, threats of killing judges, name calling Ahmadis and labelling every undesirable person as Ahmadi. We can acknowledge that in response to the hostile demonstrations there were few elements of government making the rightful noises, including our Prime Minister Imran Khan and the outspoken Federal Minister of Information, Mr Fawad Chaudhary. However, in the end government inaction overwhelmed all those upright sound bites.**

***The leading clerics of this movement may have the right to political protest and even holding irrational views but they did not have the right to violence, threats of killing judges, name calling Ahmadis and labelling every undesirable person as Ahmadi***

The Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mrs Shireen Mazari, invoked parallels with the German Nazi government of 1930s and highlighted the appeasement policy of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain courting with Hitler. We know this did not end well. Hitler seized on the perceived British weakness and continued to pursue his expansionist ambitions ultimately resulting in World War II. I agree with the parallels drawn between Pakistani clerics and Hitler. Yet, I am surprised that as a senior PTI leader Mrs Mazari failed to raise these sentiments when her party was pleasing these elements before the general elections. I would further remind respected Minister and other government leaders that this appeasement is not unique in Pakistan’s history. A Judicial Commission deliberated in detail on similar events in 1954 and provided insight into the causes and advised on the solutions.

More interestingly the proposed solutions were not some elusive or complex ideas which could not be understood by the government. It was just a simple law and order based mindset which could have enforced the government writ. Unfortunately, we have been through this many time and have always fallen victim to government’s political considerations in appeasing the religious extremists.

**The first major event in our history was the 1953 riots against Ahmadis in Punjab. In the beginning of March 1953, widespread disturbances broke out in the province which in some places continued till the middle of April 1953. These took so alarming a turn and assumed such a menacing form that in several places the military had to be called in, and in Lahore Martial Law had to be proclaimed, which remained in force till the middle of May 1953.**

Before the declaration of Martial Law, the police had to resort to firing in several places and at least two persons were killed on the night of 4th March and 10 on 5th March, 66 persons were injured in the firing on those two days. The number of casualties admitted by the military in quelling the disturbances in Lahore was 11 killed and 49 wounded [1]. The events of 1953 pale in comparison to the violent and vicious religious politics of modern day Pakistan.

The honourable Justice Munir and Justice Kayani drew remarkably uncomplicated and straightforward conclusions. The situation then and now has strikingly comparable themes from the viewpoints of both the agitators of violence and the government functionaries who were dealing with it. The respectable Justices wrote, “The inference can only be one-the Central Government were not sure of their ground or they did not wish to be associated with a step that might turn out to be unpopular.”Furthermore, they concluded, “This policy of indecision, hesitancy and vacillation which the Central Government pursued for several months had its repercussions on the situation in the Province (Punjab which was the centre of the violence).”

The PTI government has also shown utter lethargy in promptly managing the situation in the same manner as their predecessors did not act under the PML-N leadership last November. The reasons of this “indecision, hesitancy and vacillation” by the successive governments remain the same since 1953i.e.,the strong and interconnected political association of government leaders with such religious parties and clerics who lead or support hate filled campaigns against weaker and marginal communities of Pakistan. Political appeasement of violent groups has always been our historical impediment to handle such lawless disruptions and pursue a progressive direction for the country.

**Ahmadis have been at the receiving end of this violence for nearly 70 years. Ahmadis are barred under PPC298 B and C to appropriately respond to any accusations of conspiracy in media, therefore, the lies get carried unchecked. Those lies impact the day to day lives of Ahmadis. As an Ahmadi, I can fully empathise with other marginal communities of Pakistan who are now facing the wrath of extremists under the garb of religious righteousness. The suffocation is growing and choking any decency left in the remaining society. There are many Ahmadis in jail on similar charges as was Aasia Bibi.**

**Shakoor Bhai, in his eighties, is currently spending jail time for selling books to his own Ahmadi community members in Rabwah. I hope that Supreme Court will one fine morning pull out details of all such cases involving Ahmadis charged under PPC 298 B, C and 295 C and act with fairness by relieving the suffering of these prisoners of conscience.**

The honourable Justice Munir and Justice Kayani in 1954pointed out to government its obligations in enforcing and guarding the law and order without political considerations. They wrote, “It seems to be a joke that until then the Punjab Government in the Ministry of Law and Order, inclusive of its civil and police secretariat, did not know that the ordinary law had to be respected.”

**Their last lines of the report provided a critique and an answer which is fully applicable in contemporary atmosphere too. The para has a hint of sarcasm on the misplaced religious notion where politicians leave everything in God’s hands. I quote, “And it is our deep conviction that if the Ahrar (the main agitators of violence and rioting against Ahmadis in 1953) had been treated as a pure question of law and order, without any political considerations, one District Magistrate and one Superintendent of Police could have dealt with them.**

Consequently, we are prompted by something that they call a human conscience to enquire whether, in our present state of political development, the administrative problem of law and order cannot be divorced from a democratic bed fellow called a Ministerial Government, which is so remorselessly haunted by political nightmares. But if democracy means the subordination of law and order to political ends-then Allah knoweth best and we end the report.”

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

# Who are they? Where do they come from?

The Daily Times

*TLPs soldiers of Islam have been instilled, not to tolerate anything less than a theocratic state*

[Dr Faisal Chaudhry](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/dr-faisal-chaudhry/)

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

The venomous speech of Tehreek-e-Labaik’s leadership, inciting common man to murder the three Supreme Court judges, has gone viral. Is it a surprise? Not really. Surprising though, was the decision by Supreme Court, the decision that came nine years too late for the kids who grew up without their mother. In June 2009 Asia Bibi was accused of blasphemy.

In November 2010, Asia Bibi was convicted by a trial court in Sheikhupura, under section 295-C of Pakistan penal codeand sentenced to death.Federal Minister for Minorities Shahbaz Bhatti and Governor Punjab Salmaan Taseer then got involved and advocated on her behalf. Salman Taseer was murdered on 4th of January 2011. Shahbaz Bhatti was murdered on 2nd of March 2011. In October 2014, Lahore High Court dismissed Asia Bibi’s appeal and upheld her death sentence. In November 2014, Asia’s lawyer appealed to Supreme Court, but hearing was postponed more than once, due to varying reasons like refusal of Judge to be part of the bench, resignation of Judge for unclear reason, among others.

In October 2018, Supreme Court overturned the decision and acquitted Asia Bibi. Given the background, judges did have an idea of the hostile repercussions. So we must applaud an support the three SC judges for their courage and their stance for justice. The violent protests that ensued, have pressurized the Government to make a deal with protestors, agreeing not to oppose a review petition filed against the Supreme Court judgment. If this goes through, it would be like throwing the judges to the dogs. It would show weakness of government in protection of judiciary and upholding the rule of law. After seeing the aftermath of their decision, how would the judges conduct a re-trial in an unbiased way?

*TLP was allowed to gain popularity and bully the previous government, time and again. Their nuisance value was cashed in 2017 elections, with expected result. The aftermath was either not thought through or not cared about. Current government is feeling the heat of the fire they themselves lit*

Nothing matches religion, in its potential to motivate masses. Since the conception of Pakistan, religion has been abused time and again, to serve an ulterior motive. **Even in its early days any effort to lessen religious divide in Pakistan, was actively suppressed. Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s speech to the constituent assembly of Pakistan on 11th August 1947 was blocked from publication by a powerful faction in Pakistan Muslim League, led by Liaqat Ali Khan, Mr Ghulam Muhammad (first finance minister and later Governor General of Pakistan) and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali (who later became Prime Minister of Pakistan). For the speech had the unacceptable content like “you may belong to any religion, caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of the state”, among other.**

**The speech still surfaced a few times in next 30 years, before it was completely banned from media by General Ziaul Haq, after Coup d’état of 1977. Having no legitimate claim to power, Ziaul Haq, relied heavily on religion “as the opiate of masses”. Zia who repeatedly used the phrase “Soldier of Islam” to describe himself, oversaw a massive rewriting and distortion of history and indoctrination of children through schoolbooks. The resulting curricula and textbooks were insensitive to the religious diversity of the country and promoted religious prejudice, bigotry and militancy. Jinnah’s biographies were bowdlerized, to remove any mention of his religious moderation and tolerance. Madrassa education was encouraged and its degree held equivalent to normal university degrees, ignoring the seriously flawed pedagogy in these institutions.**

Other than legitimising his status as the unsaid “Ameer” of nation, this helped create the atmosphere where “every member of the blessed nation, became a soldier of Islam” or better put as a soldier of petro-Islam, with a lot of funds flowing from Saudi Arabia to fund Afghan war. Also between 1977 to 1986, a rough estimate is that United States of America invested 50 billion non-Muslim dollars, in the holy war of the soldiers of Islam, against the infidel Russian communist threat on Afghan soil.

If experience could teach a lesson, no stronger a lesson could have been taught, than that delivered by the aftermath of this war. The inflammatory spill of this war has been endured globally, time and again. Pakistan suffered enormous losses on personal, social, economic and cultural fronts. The last military operation to address the same, Operation Zarb-e-Azb, was started, as recent as 2014. One hoped that we were done with the idea of toying with religion.

For the political benefit of few, abuse of religion began again in 2013. Characters like Maulana Tahirul Qadri, with their guest appearances and inflammatory speeches, served nothing other than instigation. On 1st of August 2015, Maulana Khadim Hussain Rizvi founded Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). These groups benefit from the ground work laid by Zia et all; the naive minds that were brainwashed in 80s and 90s, are now mature adults. TLP came into existence and rose to fame after hanging of Mumtaz Qadri, the man who murdered Governor Salman Taseer, for his defence of Asia Bibi. The open endorsement by TLP of this murder and the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti, was a clear indication of their extremist intentions. But as I have said before in one of my articles, in politics, present is much more important than future, especially if you want to win an election. Policy makers, continued to ignore long term consequences, for short term gains. TLP was allowed to gain popularity and bully the previous government, time and again. Their nuisance value was cashed in 2017 elections, with expected result. The aftermath was either not thought through or not cared about. Current government is feeling the heat of the fire they themselves lit.

In last 70 years we learnt nothing. Zia’s ‘soldiers of Islam’ were motivated to wage war against infidels across the border. TLPs soldiers of Islam have been instilled, not to tolerate anything less than a theocratic state. While former was conceived to stop the advance of communism and help establish western capitalism as a global system, latter was contrived to serve a local political purpose. From the aftermath of former, sprung a series of extremist organisations, the latter is adamant to burn down its own house. The interior minister differentiated between short term action and long term plan, as firefighting and cure. This may be government showing intent. More importantly, it has backing of security forces, something that lacked for previous government. We may see a massive crack down based on video evidence. Lots of stupid, naïve common men will be arrested and they should be, if found involved in destruction of property and disruption of life. I wonder if any action will ever be taken against the ones who orchestrated it originally. Until then, there is no guarantee we will not toy with the religious sentiment again. Only way to protect the future of country is to have open discussions and raise awareness about this, which may pave the way for coming generations to deal with these issues in a better way and not to be misled by propaganda time and again; Not to be stung by the same hole over and over again.

# توہینِ مذہب کے الزامات پر پاکستان سے بھاگنے پر مجبور افراد کی کہانیاں

BBC URDU

5 Nov 2018

**پاکستان میں پچھلے پچیس سال میں ساٹھ سے زیادہ افراد کو ماورائے عدالت قتل کیا جا چکا ہے جن پر توہین مذہب یا پیغمبر اسلام کی توہین کا الزام تھا۔ پاکستان کی اعلیٰ ترین عدالت نے بھی قرار دیا ہے کہ ذاتی رنجشوں اور حتیٰ کے جائیداد کے تنازعات میں بھی توہین مذہب کے قانون کا غلط استعمال ہوتا رہا ہے۔ توہین مذہب کا یہ قانون آسیہ بی بی کی سپریم کورٹ کی جانب سے توہین مذہب کیس میں بریت کے بعد دوبارہ سرخیوں میں ہے۔**

## آسیہ بی بی کیس کے بارے میں مزید جانیے

[**آسیہ بی بی کیس: ’عوام نہ رہنے دے تو باہر نکلنا پڑے گا‘**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-46033042)

[**آسیہ بی بی کہاں ہیں؟**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-46082036)

[**آسیہ بی بی کے شوہر کی مغربی ممالک سے پناہ کی اپیل**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-46083996)

آسیہ بی بی کے وکیل کا خیال ہے کہ چار بچوں کی والدہ آسیہ بی بی اور ان کے خاندان کو اپنی حفاظت کے لیے پاکستان کو چھوڑنا ہو گا۔

جن لوگوں پر توہین مذہب کا الزام لگاتا ہے، ان پر کیا گزرتی ہے؟ یہی جاننے کے لیے سمعیہ خان نے ان چار افراد سے بات کی جنھوں نے ایسے حالات میں برطانیہ جائے پناہ تلاش کی۔

## ’ہمیں اپنے ملک سے پیار ہے، پاکستان ہمارا گھر ہے‘

**جان (اصل نام نہیں) ایک اہم مسیحی شخصیت ہیں جو پاکستان کی سیاست اور بیکنگ شعبے سے وابستہ تھے۔**

**جان کی زندگی اس وقت بدل گئی جب ان کے 13 سالہ بیٹے پر سکول میں توہینِ مذہب کا الزام لگا کیونکہ انھوں نے مبینہ طور پر اسلام قبول کرنے سے انکار کر دیا تھا۔**

**انھوں نے اپنی بیوی اور دو بیٹوں کے ساتھ برطانیہ میں ایک دہائی سے زیادہ زندگی گزار دی ہے تاہم وہ خود پر عائد ہونے والے توہینِ مذہب کے الزامات سے پیچھا چھڑانے میں کامیاب نہیں ہو سکے۔**

**وہ ابتدائی طور پر برطانیہ کے شہر برمنگھم میں ایک مسجد کے قریب رہے۔ یہ علاقہ پاکستانی مسلمانوں میں مقبول تھا۔**

ان کا کہنا ہے ’ایک دن ایک شخص نے دروازے پر دستک دی اور میری بیوی پر مسجد کی دیوار کے باہر کوڑے کا سیاہ بیگ رکھ کر مسجد کی بےحرمتی کرنے کا الزام عائد کیا۔‘

سی سی ٹی وی فوٹیج میں دیکھنے کے بعد یہ ثابت ہوا کہ بیگ کسی اور نے رکھا تھا، تاہم یہ بات ختم ہونے کے بعد بھی مسائل جاری رہے۔

ان کا کہنا ہے ’اس واقعے کے بعد جب بھی ہم اپنے گھر سے باہر نکلتے مقامی برادری مسلسل ہم پر نظر رکھتی، یہاں تک کہ پانچ مکان بدلنے کے بعد ہم زیادہ عیسائیوں کے علاقے میں آباد ہو گئے۔‘

انھوں نے کہا کہ ان کے دونوں بیٹے اب تک اس صدمے سے دوچار ہیں اور انھوں نے پاکستان واپس جانے سے انکار کر دیا ہے۔

جان کا مزید کہنا ہے ’میں ایک برطانوی شہر کے طور پر پاکستان جانا چاہتا ہوں کیونکہ میں خود کو برطانوی پاسپورٹ کے ساتھ زیادہ محفوظ سمجھتا ہوں۔

## یہ بھی پڑھیے

[**پاکستان میں توہینِ مذہب کے قوانین ہیں کیا؟**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-46042517)

[**مسلم دنیا میں توہینِ مذہب کے قوانین**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-39732386)

[**توہین مذہب قانون کا پاکستان میں ارتقاء**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-38388658)

## ’آپ نے کچھ کیا یا کہا ہو گا‘

عاصم سعید ایک سنی مسلمان ہیں، تاہم سوشل میڈیا پر پوسٹوں میں وہ پاکستان کی طاقتور فوج پر تنقید کرتے ہیں۔

[**وہ ان پانچ بلاگروں میں سے ایک تھے جنھیں سنہ 2017 میں مبینہ طور پر انٹیلیجنس ایجنسی نے اغوا کیا تھا**](https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-38561296)۔

ان پر توہین مذہب کا الزام تھا جس کی وہ تردید کرتے ہیں۔

عاصم سعید کا کہنا ہے کہ ان پر یہ الزامات صرف اس وجہ سے عائد کیے جاتے ہیں کیونکہ وہ پاکستانی فوج کے ناقد ہیں۔

وہ ایک سال پہلے برطانیہ آئے تھے اور تب سے اب تک وہ محتاط زندگی گزار رہے ہیں۔

انھوں نے کہا ’برطانوی مسلمانوں میں بھی بہت عدم برداشت ہے۔ اسد شاہ نامی ایک دکاندار کو مذہب کی بنیاد پر قتل کیا گیا، اسی طرح کسی دن مجھ پر بھی حملہ ہو سکتا ہے۔‘

عاصم کا کہنا ہے کہ انھوں نے اپنے بجپن کے دوستوں کو کھو دیا ہے کیونکہ ان کا کہنا ہے کہ ’میں نے ضرور کچھ کیا یا کہا ہو گا‘ جس سے میں اپ سیٹ اور بے چین ہو جاتا ہوں۔

ان کا مزید کہنا ہے ’اگر آپ پر توہینِ مذہب کا الزام ہے تو اس صورت میں پاکستان واپس جانا بہت خطرناک ہے کیونکہ لوگ آپ کو جانتے ہیں۔ اگر آپ ایک دہائی کے بعد بھی پاکستان واپس جائیں تو بھی آپ کو مارا جا سکتا ہے۔‘

عاصم محسوس کرتے ہیں کہ پاکستان تبدیل نہیں ہو گا۔ انھوں نے آسیہ بی بی کی توہینِ مذہب کیس میں بریت کا خیر مقدم کیا ہے۔

## ’میں کبھی واپس نہیں جاؤں گا‘

**طاہر مہدی احمدی ہیں اور پاکستان میں اپنی برادری کے لیے ایک روزنامے کے پبلشر اور مینیجر ہیں۔**

**خیال رہے کہ پاکستان میں سنہ 1970 کی دہائی میں احمدیوں کو غیر مسلم قرار دیا گیا تھا جس کے بعد سے احمدیوں کا کہنا ہے کہ انہیں پاکستان میں تکالیف اور مصائب کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے۔**

**ان پر الزام لگایا جاتا ہے کہ وہ پیغمبرِ اسلام کو آخری نبی نہیں مانتے۔**

**طاہر مہدی پر گستاخانہ مواد شائع کرنے کا الزام ہے جس کی وہ تردید کرتے ہیں۔ انھوں نے ڈھائی سال جیل میں گزارے۔**

**ان کی قید کے زمانے میں ان کے دو بھائی اس دنیا سے گزر گئے اور انھیں ان کے جنازے میں شرکت کی اجازت نہیں دی گئی۔**

**طاہر کا یہ بھی کہنا ہے کہ جن لوگوں پر توہینِ مذہب کا الزام ہوتا ہے انھیں قید کے دوران برترین سلوک کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے۔**

**انھوں نے بتایا: ’ہمیں ایک ہفتے میں اپنے قریبی رشتہ داروں جیسے بہن، بھائی، والدین، بیوی اور بچوں سے صرف ایک بار 20 منٹ تک ملنے کی اجازت تھی جبکہ باقی قیدیوں کو ان کے رشتے داروں اور دوستوں کے ساتھ ہفتے میں تین بار 30 منٹ تک ملنے دیا جاتا تھا۔‘**

**ان کا مزید کہنا تھا کہ آسیہ بی بی کی توہینِ مذہب کیس میں بریت ’عظیم انصاف‘ ہے تاہم انھیں اپنے برادری کے مستقبل کی فکر ہے۔**

**طاہر مہدی کے مطابق ’میں پاکستان میں احمدی برادری کے لیے کوئی تبدیلی نہیں دیکھتا اور میں کبھی پاکستان واپس نہیں جاؤں گا۔‘**

## ’زندگی پہلے کی طرح کبھی نہ تھی‘

زاہدہ کے والد ڈاکٹر حامد اللہ رحمت اللہ پاکستان میں ایک نامور دندان ساز تھے جن سے ہر طبقے سے تعلق رکھنے والے ان کے مریض محبت کرتے تھے۔

تاہم زاہدہ کا کہنا ہے کہ مذہبی انتہا پسند ان کا تعلق احمدی فرقے سے ہونے کے باعث ان سے نفرت کرتے تھے۔ ان کے مطابق یہ بھی ایک حقیقت ہے کہ انھوں نے ایک عبادت گاہ بنائی تھی جسے جرم تصور کیا گیا۔

ڈاکٹر حامد اللہ رحمت اللہ کو 11 سال قبل اغوا کیا گیا اور اس سے پہلے ان پر دو حملے کیے گئے۔

زاہدہ نے کہا ’میرے والد پر تشدد کیا گیا، انھیں مجبور کیا گیا کہ وہ سنی اسلام مذہب اختیار کریں اور جب انھوں نے ایسا کرنے سے انکار کیا، انھوں نے میرے والد کے سر اور سینے میں گولی مار دی۔‘

اس واقعے کے وقت ڈاکٹر رحمت اللہ کے بیٹے پہلے ہی سے برطانیہ میں مقیم تھے۔

ڈاکٹر رحمت اللہ کے قتل کے بعد ان کا خاندان پاکستان میں قائم احمدی علاقے میں منتقل ہو گیا اور برطانیہ جانے سے پہلے وہاں ’چھپ کر‘ رہنے لگا۔

زاہدہ کا کہنا ہے: ’زندگی پہلے کی طرح کبھی نہ تھی۔ میرا خاندان مالی اور ذہنی طور پر متاثر ہوا۔‘

نئے ملک میں زندگی کو دوبارہ شروع کرنا بہت مشکل تھا۔

زاہدہ کا کہنا ہے کہ آسیہ بی بی کیس نے پاکستان میں رہنے والی اقلیتی برادری کو امید دلائی ہے۔

https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-46093598?ocid=wsurdu.chat-apps.in-app-msg.whatsapp.trial.link1\_.auin

https://dailytimes.com.pk/319172/who-are-they-where-do-they-come-from/

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[**SC to announce verdict on Asia Bibi's appeal against execution shortly; capital on high alert**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1442396/sc-to-announce-verdict-on-asia-bibis-appeal-against-execution-shortly-capital-on-high-alert)

[Dawn.com](https://www.dawn.com/authors/202/dawn-com) |

[Haseeb Bhatti](https://www.dawn.com/authors/3093/haseeb-bhatti)

Updated October 30, 2018

Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, accused of blasphemy in June 2009 and sentenced to death a year later. ─ Reuters/File

**The Supreme Court is set to announce its judgement on a 2015 appeal filed by Asia Bibi, a Christian woman condemned to death on blasphemy charges.**

According to a supplementary cause list issued by the SC on Monday, the verdict was scheduled to be announced by a special bench at 9am. The bench comprises Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel.

The apex court had [reserved its ruling](https://www.dawn.com/news/1437772) on Bibi's final legal appeal against execution (Asia Bibi v. The State, etc) on October 8. The appeal challenges the Lahore High Court’s October 2014 verdict of upholding a trial court’s November 2010 decision of sentencing Bibi to death for committing blasphemy.

While reserving the verdict after an hours-long hearing, the top court had restrained both electronic and print media from discussing or commenting on the matter till the final judgement.

**High security**

The federal capital was [put on high alert on Tuesday night](https://www.dawn.com/news/1442467/capital-on-high-alert-as-aasia-bibi-appeal-verdict-today). Extra contingent of police and law enforcement agencies have been deployed in the capital. Sources in the administration told *Dawn*that Rangers and Frontier Constabulary had been called as part of measures to step up security in Islamabad. Security of the Judges Enclave and the Diplomatic Enclave has been handed over to Rangers.

The sources said security personnel had been asked to guard the Red Zone as it houses sensitive installations, including the Supreme Court.

The decision to take stringent security measures was made after a number of meetings held to thrash out a strategy to deal with any unforeseen situation after the verdict.

According to the sources, when some senior police officers met officials of the apex court, the law enforcers were asked to adopt security measures for the Supreme Court and other key points.

About 300 police personnel, along with paramilitary units, are guarding the SC building, adjacent to Parliament House on Constitution Avenue.

**Allegations against Asia Bibi**

Asia Bibi was convicted for blasphemy under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code for allegedly defaming Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The offence carries the mandatory death penalty under Pakistani law.

The allegations against Bibi are that she made three “defamatory and sarcastic” statements about the Holy Prophet on June 14, 2009 during an argument with three Muslim women while the four of them were picking fruit in a field in Sheikhupura.

She was asked to fetch water, but the Muslim women objected, saying that as a non-Muslim she was unfit to touch the water bowl.

The women later went to a local cleric and accused Bibi of blasphemy against the Holy Prophet, a charge punishable by death under legislation that rights groups say is routinely abused to settle personal vendettas.

**Arguments on appeal**

During the hearing of Bibi's appeal on Oct 8, the prosecution side, represented by Additional Prosecutor for Punjab Chaudhry Zubair, and Ghulam Mustafa Chaudhry from the complainant side had supported each other by arguing that the accused had not denied committing blasphemy or presence of the accused as well as the witnesses at the place of occurrence. Besides, they said, the allegation of a quarrel before the incident in which Bibi was first insulted for being a Christian had also not been proved.

Advocate Saiful Malook, appearing on behalf of Bibi, had argued that the prosecution’s case was replete with infirmities and subsequent improvements and, therefore, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the accused and the entire investigation be declared illegal and unwarranted.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice Nisar had observed that committing blasphemy was the most appalling and spiteful offence, and not only “our laws but the fundamentals of our religion also place strict standards of proof to prove the crime”.

**Case history**

The prosecution had claimed that Bibi “admitted” making the blasphemous statements at a “public gathering” on June 19, 2009 "while asking for forgiveness".

A trial court convicted Bibi for blasphemy in November 2010 and sentenced her to death. The Lahore High Court (LHC) had upheld her conviction and confirmed her death sentence in October 2014.

She had then challenged the LHC verdict in the Supreme Court, which [stayed her execution](https://www.dawn.com/news/1437772) in July 2015 and admitted her appeal for hearing.

The top court had first taken up the appeal in October 2016, but had to adjourn the matter without hearing after one of the judges recused himself from the SC bench. Two years later, the appeal was heard earlier this month and the CJP Nisar-led bench reserved its verdict.

Bibi's supporters maintain her innocence and insist it was a personal dispute, and the Vatican has called for her release.

In 2011, former Punjab governor Salman Taseer, who spoke out in support of Bibi, was gunned down in broad daylight in Islamabad. His assassin Mumtaz Qadri was executed in 2016 after the court found him guilty of murder.

If the SC bench upholds Bibi's conviction, her only recourse will be a direct appeal to the president for clemency.

If that fails, she could become the first person in Pakistan to be executed for blasphemy