

BI-LINGUAL MONTHLY PUBLISHING FROM LONDON

# Lahore INTERNATIONAL

July  
2020



Is Cynthia Ritchie to  
Islamabad, what 'The Spy'  
was to Damascus?

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A Magazine for Scholarly, Literary, Political, Economic and Religious Activities

[www.lahoreinternational.com](http://www.lahoreinternational.com)



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**Issue : July, 2020**

**Price : UK Pound 2, per copy**

**Annual Subscription : 24 UK Pound**

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## Black Lives Matter (especially in the USA)



**Zakaria Virk, Editor**

BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, murderer of 17 year old Florida high school student in 2012 Trayvon Martin. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power against violence inflicted on Black communities by the state (police) and vigilantes

It is a fact that American police shoot, kill and imprison more people than any developed countries. More people die in police custody than any in the world. The FBI recorded that 407 people were shot in an act of "justifiable homicide" by a police officer in 2018, a decline on previous years. The Washington Post counted 1,004 people fatally shot by police in 2019, for instance, while the group Mapping Police Violence tallied 1,099.

As of June 4, the U.S. police shot 429 people to death in 2020, 88 of whom were Black. In 2018, there were 996 fatal police shootings, and in 2019 this figure increased to 1,004 in the US.

Racism all over the world is like corona virus that has been prevalent for far too long. Every person must stand up to fight this virus. Fighting racism is as important fighting corona pandemic. Both are deadly and dehumanizing. Unless the system is changed nothing will change. The current system brutalizes and oppresses people of color and minorities in many countries. This is entrenched in systemic

racism i.e. form of racism which is embedded as normal practice in society.

Fighting racism is just as vital fighting corona virus. Both are deadly. In the US Black lives matter, in Canada indigenous lives matter, in India Muslim lives matter and in Pakistan Christian and Ahmadi lives matter. America was built on slavery, white supremacy and elimination of native people. Unless these wrongs are acknowledged there can be no peace. People of faith and all humanists must rise to the occasion.

London mayor Sadiq Khan has endorsed Black Live Matter and says he likely would have joined the demonstrations had it not been for coronavirus. As opposed to this US Vice President Mike Pence in an interview last month repeatedly refused to say the words "Black lives matter" The President refuses to utter these words either.

Police reform is urgently needed. The protests across the US have called for defunding police departments and reallocating city and state funds to social programs, specifically those focused on alternative forms of public safety and crime prevention. A town in New Jersey Camden disbanded police department 7 years ago. The city's crime has dropped by close to half. Officers host outdoor parties for residents and knock on doors to introduce themselves. Biden suggestion has merit calling for police oversight board.





# How to talk to your kids about Racism

By Munazza Khan USA

## EDUCATION STARTS AT HOME



It is safe to say, this year has been a roller coaster for all with every individual across the globe experiencing a kaleidoscope of emotions through quarantine, homeschooling, working from home, making sure there is food on the table 3 times a day; and everything else in between. But the recent news of the merciless killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police has been thrown at us like a fireball! Sadly, Covid 19 wasn't going to be the only thing claiming innocent lives this year. Overnight, #thankyouheroes and #weareinthis together hashtags are replaced with #wecantbreathe and #blacklivesmatter.

On the evening of May 25th 2020 while the night was still bright, 46 year old Minneapolis resident George Floyd took his final breaths on the road while he screamed "I can't breathe" to a police officer who had his knee dug into his neck for a whole 8 minutes and more. His crime was hardly that he had counterfeited a \$20 bill, but more that he was a black man. He was unresponsive when the paramedics arrived and was pronounced dead as he reached hospital. The morning after the news exploded all across our TV screens and mobile devices, a family member messaged to ask how we're coping and if we've spoken to the kids about the George Floyd incident. Interesting time to be in the US, he added. Protests have since erupted all across America demanding justice for Floyd and other black lives. Headlines such as 'police fire tear gas to clear peaceful protests' and

'truck ploughs into protestors seeking justice for Floyd' with disturbing images have been popping up as notifications on our phones and TV. Ultimately, my kids (age 5 and 8) who display a keen interest in current affairs (thanks to their media background parents), would be witnessing these horrors as they grab the remote to turn the TV on or as they reach out my phone to FaceTime their cousins across the Atlantic. A controversial question that arises for parents is what age do you stop protecting them and let them experience the realities of the world?

So to answer the question I'd say they definitely need to be exposed so they can learn to stand up for what's right and not be submissive to the pressures of unjust superior forces. But at the same time you don't want to scar them and frighten them at tender years of their life where having fun and feeling safe should be the priority. Feeling hurt, sad or anxious are part of life. Letting kids experience these feelings gives them a chance to practice tolerating discomfort. At the same time, however, we must provide them with the guidance and support they need to deal with the pain and frustration. As with many families around us, recent issues have sparked many uncomfortable discussions within our home too, but we try to relate to the children as it is, exercising age appropriate honesty. Simultaneously though we relate to them the important lessons we have learnt growing up ourselves taught by our own parents and members of the community. The most significant one is that we must exhibit patience in the face of adversity. God is watching and the ultimate judgment lies with Him. As practicing Muslims, religion plays a huge part of our lives, so everything we explain is backed up by what Allah has commanded in the Holy Qur'an and examples from the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings be on him).



I cannot stress the importance of talking to your children about such sensitive topics. One day they will become the decision makers and shielding them from the real world will do more harm to them than good. Some may believe that speaking openly about racism might incite racism in their kids. The opposite is in fact true. Silence equals submission and we do not want to reinforce racism by staying silent. No matter how independent a child might seem, they still need plenty of guidance and a sense of direction. So instead of staying quiet and letting them draw their own conclusions, it is our job as their parents or guardians to direct their thoughts. That does not in any way mean we are disrespecting their freedom to make their own decisions.

When I spoke to my 5 year old daughter about this, I asked her what do you think we can do to help? I gave her the freedom to express her own thought as well which is vital in a two way conversation. She impressed me with her response: "Maybe we can teach people!" and this is basically what we can and need to do at this moment in time.

In order to do this we must first educate ourselves. An incident arose recently where a white mum requested a black lady on facebook if she could help her out and educate her children on 'whatever is happening.' This request sounded so wrong on many levels... 'whatever is happening' displays such ignorance on the topic of injustice taking place around us; and to reach out to a random person on social media for this role displays not only laziness on the part of the white mother, but also could be taken as offensive in the eyes of the black lady. This here is white privilege.

You may have also heard of the case of Amy Cooper, who made a dramatic call to the cops after a black man, who was peacefully bird watching at a park in the early hours of the morning, reminded her to put her dog on a leash, as required by law.

In both instances, the white ladies apologised afterwards for their ignorance, but the reality is their white privilege has not exposed them to tolerance of people of other colours and therefore they were ignorant on how to approach the

situation. Let this be a wake up call for all the Amy Coopers out there.

What other methods can we adopt to make sure we are raising compassionate human beings and not the next Derek Chauvin or Amy Cooper?

### RECOMMENDATION #1



Explain the root of problems - Racism has always existed. It isn't getting worse, we are only more exposed to it now through the media. Talk to your children about Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Ruby Bridges (see link below) and the challenges they had faced. My children were especially immersed in the story of Ruby Bridges, a small 6 year old girl who was the first African American student to integrate an elementary school in the South. Her determination to persevere in her studies at such a young age, despite the torment she endured by white upper class families and their children at the school, is monumental. (<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/ruby-bridges>)

### RECOMMENDATION #2



Speak about emotions - Why are people feeling so angry about what's happening? It is the inaction on part of world leaders, despite years of frustration nothing has changed.

### RECOMMENDATION #3



Encourage your kids to play with children of all colours-befriend their parents yourself and display to them equality through your own actions. We must first be what we want them to be!

### RECOMMENDATION #4



Read books together that feature characters from all backgrounds - Same applies for TV programmes. Keep an eye on what your children are watching and direct them towards programmes that display a sense of diversity.

### RECOMMENDATION #5



Teach them about the different religious and cultural traditions - through videos/books or via craft projects for a more hands-on learning approach.

### RECOMMENDATION #6.

Try to speak to them in a conversational way - Sensitive topics don't need to be explained using an academic method at home.

Whatever you do, just don't stay silent. At least for the families who can't speak up. Start educating today, but don't end your conversation today too.



## Important Notice

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As our readers are well aware of the fact for publishing such magazines, the support of a organization or advertisements is needed. But unfortunately, we don't have any of these.

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**May Allah be with you – Amen**

**MOHIUDDIN ABBASI**  
Editor-in-chief



# Army tightens grip on Pakistan as Khan's popularity wanes



Bloomberg

Islamabad: The generals are back in control in Pakistan - unofficially that is.

There's now more than a dozen former and current military officials in prominent government roles, such as running the state-owned air carrier, the power regulator and the National Institute of Health, which is leading the country's pandemic response. Three of those appointments happened in the last two months. The military's heightened profile comes as Prime Minister Imran Khan sees his influence and popularity dwindle due to a slowing economy, high consumer prices and corruption investigations involving his close aides. Analysts have long seen army support as critical for Khan's party, which holds 46 per cent of seats in parliament, to hold together a government that relies on several smaller coalition partners to stay afloat. In some ways, this is nothing new: The military is Pakistan's most powerful institution and has directly ruled the country for large parts of its seven-decade history. Yet it's a far cry from the "New Pakistan" Khan promised when he took office back in 2018. "By appointing an increasing number of current and retired military officials in key positions, the government is ceding what little

space civilians had in developing and executing policy in the country," Uzair Younus, non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, said by phone. "The military's overt and covert role in governance continues to grow."

## Key roles

Many in Pakistan can see the shift during government virus briefings on state television, in which uniformed current army officers are seen assisting the government's pandemic response. Retired lieutenant general Asim Saleem Bajwa is now Khan's communication adviser and also oversees the implementation of about \$60 billion in Pakistan investments as part of China's Belt-and-Road Initiative. At least 12 army loyalists in the cabinet also took part in dictator-turned-President Pervez Musharraf's administration, which ended in 2008. That includes Interior Minister Ijaz Shah and Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Khan's finance adviser. The greater military involvement even has the support of civilian government advisers such as Zaigham Rizvi, member of Naya Pakistan Housing Programme taskforce in charge of running Khan's main economic project of building low-cost houses. Two army officers were appointed to the body last month.



“There was a feeling that if we give the majority leadership to the army, the army has a good system,” said Rizvi, who worked at World Bank for 10 years as an housing expert. “They get things done.”

Pakistan’s army declined to comment. Nadeem Afzal Chan, a spokesman for Khan, wasn’t immediately available, while Information Minister Syed Shibli Faraz didn’t respond to a request for a comment.

### Economic distress

Khan has long dismissed allegations that he was too close to the military, saying in 2017 ahead of his election win that any notion that he’s an army stooge was a “bizarre conspiracy.” Last year he told local media “the army is standing with me.”

Yet economic distress from the pandemic is again raising tensions. Pakistan is the most infected nation in Asia after India, with more than 108,000 coronavirus cases and about 2,200 deaths.

The economy is forecast to contract for the first time in 68 years, with the central bank expecting the economy to shrink 1.5 per cent in the year ending June. The nation received an emergency loan of \$1.4 billion from the International Monetary Fund in April, and is among countries seeking debt relief.

Questions over the army’s role in running the government came to the fore when the virus started escalating in March. While Khan addressed the nation and urged citizens to remain calm, it was the army spokesman who announced the lockdown the next day. Most of the press statements from the country’s virus nerve center, chaired by Planning Minister Asad Umar, are produced by the army’s media wing - complete with its byline and logo.

On March 24, Khan was visibly annoyed when reporters asked him “who is in charge here?” Although there was no reference to the military, he threatened to leave abruptly.

Then in late May, his aviation minister, Ghulam Sarwar Khan, defended the national carrier’s

performance and its military leadership following a passenger plane crash in the financial capital, Karachi. “It’s not a crime to appoint people affiliated to the military,” he said.

### Diminishing power

Khan’s hold on power will likely continue to diminish as current and retired army officers, as well as army-backed political appointees, assume more executive authority, said Arif Rafiq, president of New York-based Vizier Consulting, a risk advisory firm focused on the Middle East and South Asia. He noted Khan will come under further pressure as Pakistan’s economic challenges continue to mount.

“The army has signalled its dissatisfaction with Khan’s handling of the coronavirus lockdowns - there are also indications that the army has not been happy with the handling of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as well as governance in Punjab, the largest province,” Rafiq said. “We’ve seen the chief military spokesman openly push for a tougher lockdown and a retired army officer assume roles as a government spokesman and top CPEC administrator.”

The military last year had already begun taking a more active role in policy making beyond foreign and national security policy, with Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa meeting top business leaders privately to find ways to boost the economy. The country’s Parliament adopted a law in January giving Bajwa a three-year extension starting from November 2019 and he was also made a member of a government’s economic board.

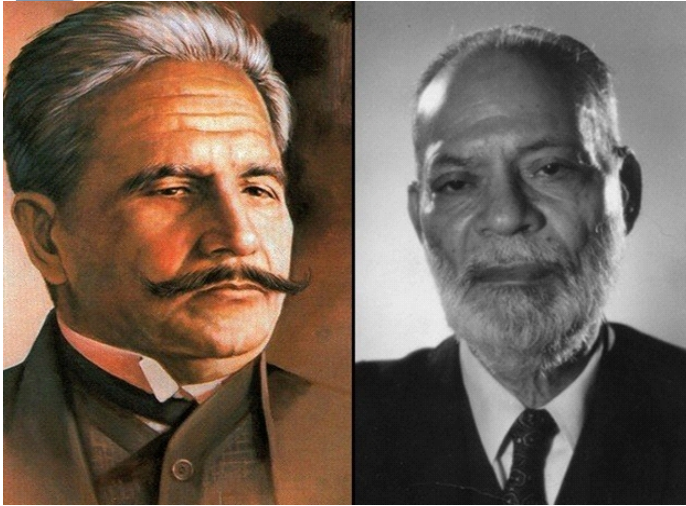
While many democracies appoint retired military officers to senior government positions, it becomes a problem if the civilians aren’t calling the shots, according to Michael Kugelman, a Washington, D.C. based South Asia senior associate at The Wilson Centre.

<https://gulfnnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/army-tightens-grip-on-pakistan-as-khans-popularity-wanes-1.71971339>



# What if Allama Iqbal had remained an Ahmadi?

By Kashif Chaudhry USA



Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan was one of the leading founding fathers of Pakistan. You know, the Pakistan Resolution that our national struggle was based on? He drafted it. He was the first foreign minister of Pakistan. He was known for his eloquent representation of Pakistan at the United Nations and is the only Pakistani to have served as the President of the United Nations General Assembly, and that of the International Court of Justice in Hague.

While working in international diplomacy, Sir Zafarullah Khan's tireless advocacy for the freedom of Arab states and for the resolution of the Kashmir and Palestine issues is well known.

The King of Jordan, His Majesty the Late King Hussein bin Talal, invited Mr Khan to his palace in 1953 and awarded him the highest honour in his Kingdom for Mr Khan's heroic and courageous fight for the cause of Palestine.

When he passed away, the King paid him a personal tribute in these words:

"He was indeed a champion of the Arab cause and his ceaseless efforts whether among the Muslim and non-aligned countries or at the International Court of Justice will remain for ever a shining example of a great man truly dedicated to our faith and civilisation." (Review of Religions Sept/Oct 1986, page 6)

Paying tribute to his bold stance on Palestine, the Iraqi Foreign Minister at the time, Mr Muhammad

Fadhel al-Jamali, said:

"In fact, it was not possible for any Arab, however capable and competent he may be, to serve the cause of Palestine in a manner in which this distinguished and great man dedicated himself. We expect from all Arabs and followers of Islam that they will never forget this great Muslim fighter. After Palestine, the services of this man for the independence of Libya also deserve admiration. In the United Nations, his struggle for the rights of Arabs formed the basis of firm and lasting friendship between us." (Al-Sabah Oct 10, 1985)

Many other world leaders expressed similar sentiment and hailed him as a hero of the Arab world and of human rights in general. King Faisal al Saud's letter is also worth reading in this regard.

Sir Zafarullah Khan was also a prolific author on Islam and human rights.

Think for a minute, Is there anyone who comes close to his achievements for a progressive Pakistan and a free and empowered Muslim world in general? Yet, he is rarely mentioned in Pakistani textbooks, and unfortunately not even acknowledged as the founding father that he was. And we all know why – he was an Ahmadi.



Abu Enany

جلالة الملك حسين يمنح المسلم الأحمدي ظفر الله خان أعلى وسام في تاريخ المملكة  
لمواقفه البطولية تجاه قضية فلسطين



Now consider this:

What if Sir Zafarullah Khan had left the Ahmadi community just as Sir Muhammad Iqbal did? Today, he would have been the shining star of right-wing Pakistan. Chapters in Pakistani textbooks would have been dedicated to his work. There would have been endless songs singing his praise, and every time the state of the Muslim world was discussed, he would have been presented as an icon, a flag bearer of our rights and freedoms. Mullahs would have been heads over heels in love with him. He would have been declared the saviour of the Ummah. Every Pakistan – young and old – would have been celebrating his legacy like no other.

And now consider this.

What if Sir Allama Iqbal had remained an Ahmadi?

For those who do not know, Allama Iqbal joined the Ahmadi community at the hands of its founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in 1897. He is known to have said,

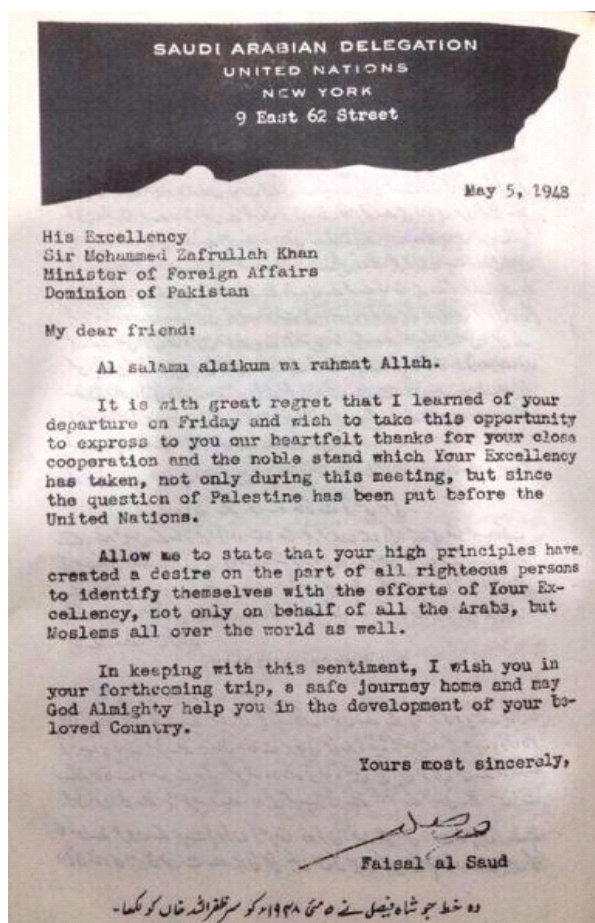
“If you want to see Islam alive in this age, you must visit Qadian.”

He considered the founder of the Ahmadi community as the most prolific theologian in the Muslim world. Sometime after the demise of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Allama Iqbal left the Ahmadi community. It is not clear exactly when, but he continued to be in close contact with the Ahmadi leadership till at least 1931, when he vouched for the Ahmadi Khalifa as the most able person to lead as the first president of the newly founded all-India Kashmir Committee. His parents and elder brother remained Ahmadis.

Back to the question – what if Allama Iqbal remained an Ahmadi?

Today, he would have been absolutely no one.

He would have been abused and ridiculed by mullahs and right-wing Pakistan. Instead of the eagle, his symbol would probably have been the snake – out to bite the Ummah, out to hurt the



Muslims, an agent of the western imperialist powers. And much proof – like his knighthood and his poems in reverence of the British rule and the Queen – would have been found, tailored and then floated around.

While official books would probably only have dedicated a one-liner to his role in the Pakistani Movement, there would have been no shortage of books in the market condemning him and his work. He would have made the perfect poster boy for a 'British agent out to destroy the Ummah' – sound familiar?

And this is our tragedy.

We are fond of reading history with glasses coloured

in religious prejudice and intellectual dishonesty. We do not honour people for their services, as much as we do for their perceived proximity with us on the religious spectrum.

This is just one of the numerous examples of how our religious biases have influenced the history taught to us in Pakistani schools and media.

But while we continue to commit crimes against our own selves by distorting the history, the truth is like the sun; it does not remain hidden for long, and it shines even brighter in this age of global connection and information. I am certain, a few generations down, we will be forced to embrace intellectual honesty and honour Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan for the real superhero that he was. For in celebrating a shining star, we do the star no honour, we honour ourselves.

So, to answer the question, what if Allama Iqbal remained Ahmadi and Zafarullah Khan did not? Zafarullah Khan would have been our Iqbal today and Iqbal our Zafarullah Khan.

<https://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/30242/what-if-allama-iqbal-had-remained-an-ahmadi/>





# Tele-medicine in service of heart patients

By Prof Dr. (Major General retd) M.M.H Nuri, S.I., (M)



Technology with digital revolution has invaded practically all aspects of contemporary life. Tele-medicine is now in vogue in many developing countries and is also now being tried in Pakistan.

It is convenient, less costly, speedier and effective. By reducing healthcare costs, raising care accessibility, and even helping to improve patient outcomes tele-medicine is essential.

Nearly a half century ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, while addressing the May Day workers highlighted the role of essential service of workers, laborers, doctors and caregivers -- who generally remain un-recognized, invisible and undervalued.

After the global COVID-19 crisis in late November-2019 and still ongoing it has become imperative that we shall have to rely more on technology in the management of other chronic diseases as well, besides Corona virus.

In fact, other major diseases are part of the health landscape and get exacerbated with the virus: heart conditions, diabetes, respiratory and many others, impairing human body's immune system.

Creditably, during this current crisis, Pakistani doctors, nurses, paramedics and caregivers have been in the 'frontline' while coping with the deadly virus -- thus earning gratitude and good will of the Pakistani nation. Why there is now a pressing need for adopting tele-medicine?

The sudden, rapid outbreak of COVID-19 has over-whelmed health infrastructure, including hospitals, trained doctors, nurses, para-medics and

equipment. While the avoidance measures taken during the ongoing Covid-19 virus through segregation/ quarantining are important, other serious health -related conditions cannot be ignored. This makes employment of tele-medicine service a dire need. It is often said that desperate situations call for desperate remedies. Earlier the suspension of transport services, businesses and partial lockdown of public places, restricted timings in hospitals, curbs on travel and public gatherings -- all made easy access to hospitals difficult. Particularly, patients from the rural areas were hard hit when faced with pre-existing chronic medical conditions. The situation continues to date. Moreover, travel and commuting restrictions enhances vulnerability to the virus and exposes them to contagion; even waiting and assembling in hospitals for consultation poses a greater risk. So, the economic constraints and difficulties of travel and gathering need to be minimized. Repeated visits are to be avoided, unless very necessary. As for use of tele-medicine, clinical records of patients are properly maintained, a contact is made for an appointment. This contact reviews progress, makes alterations in medicines, if needed, and addresses any complaints or queries.

It makes the doctor- patient contact active through mobile (now available to many), reassuring patients who face seclusion under the lockdown. Albeit not perfect, it is experienced that short conversation with a doctor on his/her condition is

very therapeutic and gratefully appreciated. It relieves anxiety, depression and uncertainty. This is also true for the near and dear ones of the patient in the household. If any further tests are required they can be done and medicines required are suggested. Hopefully with the end of lock down, if and when it occurs, they could travel and have a follow up in person meeting. The recent illnesses and death of doctors during Covid-19 crisis and nursing staff are unfortunate incidents; tel-medicine and provision of anti-virus personal protection equipment (PPE) to doctors, nurses, medical and administrative staff can protect them against infection. -The procedure runs like this:

A cardiologist/ heart specialist with record of heart patients at the hospital makes an appointment for free consultation with the patient / family through the hospital staff. The patient is approached online and narrates his/ her condition, maintenance medicines and complaints/anxieties, if any. To this, the doctor responds with suggestions combined with counseling. -Tele- counseling experience has proved to be very therapeutic. Under isolation, a conversation with a caring doctor is reassuring and, in fact, uplifting to many patients. Most of the patients are elderly, men and women who need approachability and assurance that they are still looked while confined in their homes. -It is less costly as patients can avoid gathering in large numbers: they are satisfied in lesser time, avoid travelling, and waiting for appointment. -As experienced, besides the specific medical issue, it is the gnawing fear, uncertainty and lack of communication. Alienation often compounds the disease. When normal business activity hopefully re-starts they can always physically come and discuss their cases. Having empirically observed the positive effects of tel-counseling along with medic care, the results have been very encouraging. Granted, it cannot substitute for the physical proximity and close physical examination but under the circumstances it is very beneficial for patients.

Verily, lack of education and health facilities are going to remain as future challenges after the covid-19 crisis: the brunt shall be however faced by developing countries. Besides unemployment, food insecurity, plummeting economy, disruption of supply chains and low production -- will be compounding health issues.

Health care has been neglected in Pakistan, barring the well-endowed few who can easily afford; unfortunately, the virus has aggregated the adverse effects of chronic ailments. But, hopefully, these systems are being streamlined by improving tele-medicine infrastructure, training and equipping of staff, improving capacity-building and streamlining the SOPs.

For this, a sine qua non is the medical staff's humanity, dedication and expert care. Adhering to Hippocratic oath, but more importantly, imbibing values of True Islam, is the care for the old, sick and under-privileged sections of the society. The humble contributions made by the state-of-the-art charity hospital, Tahir Heart Institute, Chenabnagar, Jhang, is blazing a new trail. For the last decade, it is rendering humanitarian medical services to the poor, needy and the sick, especially in the impoverished regions of central and southern Punjab. Together, the affiliated Pakistan Humanity First, a welfare organization, is also working with committed corps of workers in Thar on medical and poverty-alleviation programs. Ventilators are made, personal protection equipment is locally made, masks sanitizers and food provided through volunteer contributions. Overtime, this is envisioned to expand to other regions in the country. Ending on a philosophical note: Things are constantly changing during the Covid-19 pandemic, yet two things remain the same. First: the quiet assurance of a beautiful sunrise over river Chenab, and at night, the brightly-lit stars; secondly, the prompt medical response to cardiac emergencies in Tahir Heart Institute (TTH) and the unstinted care of its devoted staff.

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---The writer is presently Executive Director of Tahir Heart Institute, Chenabnagar--Rabwah, District Jhang, and former Commandant, Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFIC), Rawalpindi. He is also Chairman of Pakistan Chapter of The Humanity First. -Tahir heart Institute (THI) is a charity hospital run on private donations from by Pakistanis.

Thanks for,  
Muhammad Aslam



# Pakistan initiates action against Ahmadiyya channels



Pakistan authorities have initiated actions against Ahmadiyya channels and issued notifications to ensure none of the channels belonging to the community operate in the country.

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on May 28 has issued instructions to all regional offices to ensure that none of "illegal" channels especially Ahmadiyya operate in the country, the Dispatch News Desk (DND) reported.

It also warned strict action over non-compliance by any distribution service licensee.

As per a notification issued by the PEMRA Director General (Operations-Distributions) Muhammad Farooq, the authority has been receiving numerous complaints against the distribution of illegal Channels especially Ahmadiyya Channels including MTA, MTA-1, MTA-1-Al-Awla, Ahmedia-1 (Urdu), etc.

However, it maintained that despite an inquiry having been conducted, specifics of such distribution networks remain unavailable.

Therefore, the authority directed its all Regional Offices to remain vigilant and to ensure that no such illegal Channel is carried by any distribution service licensee.

Furthermore, it noted that the action will also include the cancellation of the license besides confiscating the equipment.

Pakistan has more than half a million Ahmadis, who have been declared "non-Muslim" under Pakistan's constitution since 1974 for their

belief in the sect's founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, being a subordinate prophet to Islam's final prophet, Muhammad, according to Al Jazeera.

Ahmadis routinely face widespread discrimination and persecution in Pakistan, with members of the sect denied service at shops or businesses if they identify themselves. (AND)

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/pakistan-initiates-action-against-ahmadiyya-channels20200612002258/> \*\*\*

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# Is Cynthia Ritchie to Islamabad, what 'The Spy' was to Damascus?



By Major (retd) Javed Ali

of ISPR or other powerful quarters in the country. Cynthia herself brags about her connections to the security establishment in her social media posts.

Cynthia Ritchie has cultivated an image in Pakistan of being an American who supports Pakistan. But there is no evidence that she has done

A Caucasian (white) American woman, Cynthia D. Ritchie, living in Islamabad for the last several years, has recently created a storm with an abusive tweet about former Prime Minister, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

She is one of several self-styled 'Gora Pakistanis' who praise Pakistan on social media while enjoying Pakistani hospitality though she goes farther than most in supporting the current ruling party (PTI), abusing its opponents, defending the Pakistan army, and attacking its critics.

Former prime minister and veteran PPP leader Yousuf Raza Gilani on June 10 sent a legal notice to Pakistan-based American blogger Cynthia Ritchie, asking for an apology and withdrawal of the "false" and "frivolous" allegation that he "physically manhandled" her.

Ritchie is supposed to be a 'social media influencer.' But she is not published outside Pakistan, her film on Pakistan has been seen mainly by Pakistanis, and her social media following is also largely among those Pakistanis who feel good at seeing a white skinned person praising their country.

14 It makes one wonder who she is influencing. There have been rumors that 'Cynthia Baji,' as she is known to her supporters, or 'Ritchie, the Bitchie,' as she has been nicknamed by those she routinely abuses and attacks, enjoys the support

anything to support Pakistan in America. She has never testified before Congress, written an oped in a U.S. newspaper, or appeared on U.S. television. Nor has she registered in the U.S. under law as a lobbyist for Pakistan.

In an article on a Pakistani website, Cynthia Ritchie "describes herself as a global citizen" and claims that "her childhood desire to be Indiana Jones led her to Pakistan and the love for [Pakistan's] people keeps bringing her back."

India Jones, as we know, was a fictional adventurer and professor of archaeology, not a self-proclaimed media consultant with no post-graduate education.

Still, Ritchie churns out great words for those who want to hear positive things about Pakistan from foreigners at a time when most international news outlets do not say enough good things about Pakistan. But what is the point in a foreigner saying good things about Pakistan to Pakistanis. Where is her media influence when it comes to the international media?

Moreover, nobody knows how Cynthia Ritchie pays for her lifestyle, her residence in Islamabad's posh E-7 neighborhood where nuclear scientist Dr. A.Q. Khan once lived, her travel, or the boozy parties that attract powerful members of Rawalpindi-Islamabad society.

If someone in the Pakistan government or armed

forces is paying her to praise Pakistan to Pakistanis, that is a waste of Pakistan's meager resources.

Moreover, those who have watched the Netflix series 'The Spy' would notice the similarity in the conduct of Cynthia Ritchie and the show's chief character, the real life Israeli spy, Eli Cohen.

Cohen arrived in Damascus, Syria in 1961, pretending to be of Syrian origin and to love Syria. He praised the Baath Party and cultivated ties with senior military officials. He even became a confidante and adviser to the Defense Minister. In 1965, he was discovered as a spy while transmitting intelligence to Israel by wireless.

By the time he was discovered, Eli Cohen had done much damage to Syria. His 'affectionate' and seemingly harmless gestures contributed to Syria's military defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Cohen's most famous achievement was the tour of the Golan Heights in which he collected intelligence on the Syrian fortifications there.

'The Spy' ostensibly pretended to sympathize with soldiers exposed to the sun, and helped plant trees at different positions, supposedly to provide shade. During the 1967 war, the Israeli army used the trees as targeting markers for their artillery. This resulted in Israel being able to capture the Golan Heights in two days.

It is interesting to note that all the so-called 'Gora Pakistanis' who shower praise on Pakistan to win access and influence in Pakistan started showing up after the U.S. raid on Abbottabad targeting Osama bin Laden. Is that just a coincidence or did someone discover a new technique for embedding intelligence gatherers in a Pakistan that had become more security conscious?

Praise is a deadly weapon and foreign intelligence services must have noticed the Pakistani desire for international praise and 'positive image of Pakistan.' Have they exploited it by sending the likes of Cynthia Ritchie, who became known only after their arrival in Pakistan? Spies usually have simple back stories and their background is always

mired in secrecy.

Little is known about Cynthia Ritchie's life before she found proclaimed her 'love for Pakistan.' On social media, she describes herself as 'World Traveler. Communications Consultant. Producer.' But Ritchie has yet to complete her Master's in Strategic Communications from George Washington University and, except a strong social media presence and occasional articles in Pakistani media, she has no serious track record as a Communications Consultant.

According to an earlier article on New-Pakistan, "There used to be a website [www.cynthiaritchie.com](http://www.cynthiaritchie.com), which had her biography but it has been disabled since New-Pakistan raised questions about her qualifications." Now that website is only password accessible –hardly how eputable international media consultants operate.

When her bio was accessible, Ritchie claimed that she had made "TV commercials for AT&T, Political Campaigns, HGTV" but did not explain what political campaigns she worked on or what she did on HGTV—"an American basic cable and satellite television channel," which primarily broadcasts reality programming related to home improvement and real estate."

It is clear that Cynthia Ritchie is, at least, a charlatan, and possibly an individual who might pose a threat to Pakistan's national security by living in Pakistan and embedding herself in Pakistan's ruling party and the military officers' corps.

A person with no security clearance and an unexplained past shows up on stage with known propagandists for Lashkar-e-Taiba and attends parties with the rich and famous as well as the influential and powerful. Do not be surprised when an India-American operation targets Dawood Ibrahim or Hafiz Saeed the night after Cynthia Ritchie boards her final flight out of Islamabad.



# Against Coronavirus, Pakistan Turns to a Traditional Remedy: Blame Ahmadis and Jews



A Sunni Muslim prepares to torch flags of US, India and Israel during a rally against Israel and United States to mark the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Day in Ramadan. Peshawar, May 22, 2020 Credit: AFP

By Kunwar Khuldun Shahid

inflicted, predicament in the country is cited as a Jewish plot, not just by dedicated conspiracists, also by those ruling the country. As the perpetual imagined enemy of Pakistan, Israel is almost always hyphenated with its "partner in crime": the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a revivalist, messianic Muslim sect founded in the late 19th century Punjab, in then-British India, with a following of 10-20 million, of which four million adherents live, precariously, in Pakistan.

Excommunicated in the very text of Pakistan's constitution,

Every few minutes for the past week, a viral meme entitled "coronavirus timeline in Pakistan" has been shared by social media users in Pakistan. Written in Urdu transliterated into Latin script, the meme helpfully conveys the evolution of Pakistani conspiracy theories surrounding COVID-19 from January 2020 till May, as coronavirus has mutated from "Allah's wrath on China" (January) to the globe-spanning claim that it's a "hoax designed by Bill Gates to forcibly implant microchips" (May). Tucked in for April is: "American and Israeli conspiracy." No anthology of conspiracy theories in Pakistan could be complete without superlatively imaginative attributions to Israel. In fact, had the meme been ranked by the degree of fixation of the conspiracists, and not a take on the evolution of the theories, Israel would've won first place in a walkover. In meme terms, Israel would be best described by the baton roue, or bike fall, template in Pakistan: the country is riding along steadily, when the movement is arrested by an obstacle of its own making. The bike falls, and the rider blames Israel. Almost every perceived, often self-

forbidden by its Penal Code from "posing as Muslims," the Ahmadis, like Israel, are designated as "enemies of Islam" – and hence of Pakistan – with the two accused of working in tandem to provoke crises across the Muslim world. On cue, conspiracy theories surrounding Pakistan's two greatest imaginary enemies have been wildly reimagined during the pandemic, with allegations in the local Urdu press calling coronavirus everything from an "Israeli plot to shut down mosques" to a pretext to disguise and indeed propagate "anti-Islam" Ahmadiyya beliefs. The clerics of Pakistan's fifth largest political party, the Jamiat Ulema-e Islam, warned Pakistanis to be on their guard against the Ahmadiyya "conspiracy" to use the coronavirus crisis to undermine the true faith, and to consider them the "eternal enemies not only of Pakistan but also of Islam."

The words could have been lifted from a description of the Jewish conspiracies against Pakistan so beloved of many Pakistani politicians; indeed, the head of the Jamiat Ulema-e Islam, Fazlur ul-Rahman, has previously warned that



"the Yahoodi (Jewish) lobby's money is working [for Prime Minister] Imran [Khan]" and that Khan is "an agent of Americans, Jews, Ahmadis."

The charge that "Qadianis" – the ubiquitous and derogatory term for Ahmadis – are a "virus worse than coronavirus" has been reiterated by multiple Urdu publications in recent months as part of the successful bid of Islamist groups to pressurize the government into removing the Ahmadiyya community from a recently formed minority rights commission. With COVID-19 offering a unique opportunity to pin a pandemic on the "Jewish-Qadiani" nexus, it was time to rehash the half-century old, regularly regurgitated "evidence" that "irrefutably" establishes the Ahmadi-Israel collaboration against Islam. On April 28 and 29, two rabidly Islamist Urdu newspapers, Daily Ausaf and Daily Qudrat, curated an article – which the former posted again on May 3, under a different headline, in case someone missed it – first published in Nawa-e-Waqt on December 29, 1975, and reproduced on innumerable occasions since. The article claims that 'Pakistani Qadianis are deployed in the Israeli Army.'

The piece, which claims that 600 Pakistani Ahmadis serve in the IDF, quotes the 1972 book "Israel: A Profile," written by political scientist Israel T. Naamani. The author's name has been misspelt across publications throughout the 45 years since the Nawa-e-Waqt article cited the book; however, the number of "deployed Pakistani Ahmadis" has remained fixed at 600 for five decades, since the same passage from the book has been repeatedly – and incorrectly – quoted in Urdu publications. Page 75 of the first edition of "Israel: A Profile" under the chapter 'Religion in the Holy Land' states that: "Two other small non-Arab Muslim groups, the Circassians, who came in the ninth century from Russia and now number about 2,000 souls, and the Ahmadi sect of some 600 people from Pakistan, can also serve in the army."

As is evident from the passage, and further elaborated by the preceding and following texts, Naamani merely underlines the freedom that persecuted sects from the Muslim world can enjoy

#### DECLARATION IN CASE OF MUSLIMS

I ..... S/O ..... Aged ..... Years, adult Muslim, Resident of ..... hereby solemnly declare that:-

- (i) I am Muslim and believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) the last of the prophets.
- (ii) I do not recognise any person who claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever after Muhammad (peace be upon him) or recognise such a claimant as prophet or a religious reformer as a Muslim.
- (iii) I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an imposter nabi and also consider his followers whether belonging to the Lahori or Qadiani group to be Non-Muslim.

Signature & thumb impression (with name in block letters of applicant in indelible ink)

Date .....

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

To obtain a Pakistani passport, if you check the "Islam" box then it is mandatory to formally denounce Ahmadi Muslims as heresy, and to curse its founderCredit: Twitter

in Israel, including the possibility of being conscripted into the army unlike Arab Muslims, who are exempted from the draft and can only volunteer. With 1,700 Bedouin Muslim soldiers as of 2015, and a growing number of Arab Muslims joining the IDF, Ahmadis would be one of many Islamic sects represented in the Israeli army. However, what none of them can be is a Pakistani.

Pakistani passports are "valid for all countries of the World except Israel." The document unites Ahmadis and Israel in its bigotry by making it mandatory for anyone wishing to check the "Islam" box for their religion to formally denounce the sect as heresy, and to curse its founder, to obtain it.

Ahmadis were legally sanctioned as "heretics" by the second amendment to the Pakistani constitution in 1974. Hence, the 1975 Nawa-e-Waqt article came at a time when the anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment was at its zenith. This might also explain why another Nawa-e-Waqt report, from May 1, 1976, isn't quite as enthusiastically quoted. In it, the then-Minister for Religious Affairs Kausar Niazi categorically said that "no Pakistani Ahmadi is in Israel," citing the restrictions imposed by Pakistani passports. The Ahmadiyya presence in the area that has since become Israel predates the Jewish state's creation – ironically, just like its existence in Pakistan predates the

birth of the Muslim state. The Ahmadiyya community established its presence in Haifa in 1928, as part of its missionary work, when Palestine was under British Mandate rule.

Indeed, a month after the 1929 Palestinian riots, the community organized an event in Qadian – now in India, where the sect was founded – to formally condemn British plans to create a Jewish state in the territory. After successfully founding a nation-state based on Muslim nationalism, Pakistan's first foreign minister, Zafarullah Khan, passionately opposed the creation of its Jewish counterpart in the October 1947 United Nations General Assembly session, calling the move an 'artificial' result of "immigration" that damaged Palestinian rights. Despite the Ahmadis' wholehearted participation in what became an Islamist separatist movement for the creation of Pakistan, demands for the community's excommunication were already echoing around the political and religious sphere in 1930s owing to the Ahmadiyya belief in the prophetic status of its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, deemed by clerics of other sects an apostasy against the status of Muhammad as the final prophet of Islam.

But at that point there was still pushback from the highest political echelons; the founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, stated in 1944, "Who am I to declare a person non-Muslim who calls himself a Muslim?" and promised equal rights and sanctuary to Ahmadis who migrated from India. But that period of official tolerance was short-lived. Following Pakistan's creation, anti-Ahmadiyya riots grew into formal excommunication, and by 1984 it had been codified as a veritable apartheid system – the same system Pakistan vociferously accuses Israel of undertaking in Palestine. The Ahmadis are legally barred from self-identifying as Muslims in Pakistan, where anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment has been weaponized over the decades.

In the meantime, efforts to conflate Ahmadis with Pakistan's foes – actual and fabricated – have persisted. In addition to Israel, the Ahmadiyya community is also falsely accused of working in tandem with the India's radical Hindu organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Where "Zionist-Hindu conspiracies" were

peddled by the Pakistani media during Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in 2017, the Urdu press also had a field day over the Indian premier's meeting with the head of the Ahmadiyya community in Israel. Of course, column inches aren't similarly filled with self-congratulatory bigotry over Modi's bonding with the Saudis. Meanwhile, a daily expose of "Jewish-Qadiani" conspiracies continue to be published without any consideration for ethics or facts. Sometimes the conflation goes as far as calling the only Ahmadi majority city in Pakistan (a haven for the persecuted minority) a "mini Israel." The analogy suggests Ahmadis are behaving like Israeli settlers, "purchasing land" to crowd out the "real" Muslims. Imran Khan has conscientiously addressed this persecution with full-scale appeasement. He allowed state television to air fabricated stories on Ahmadiyya-RSS links, requested that an Ahmadi economist step down from a financial advisory body owing to his faith and most recently by expelling the community from a human rights commission that merely accepts the fact that they are a minority living in Pakistan. Khan, long accused of being a "Jewish agent," seems to think his best strategy is to performatively display a hardline Muslim "authenticity." He has now surrounded himself with ministers who vow the "destruction" of 'those accepting Israel' and openly call for the decapitation of heretics (which would include the Ahmadiyya.)

The cricketer-turned politician loves to boast about Pakistan's protection of minorities, particularly when he speaks to foreign audiences, and especially to contrast it with what he describes as India's turn towards Nazi-style state-sponsored bigotry. But as Pakistan experiences a drastic surge in coronavirus cases and what medical workers have termed Khan's complete "lack of strategy" for dealing with the pandemic, the prime minister (and his pet media outlets) knows that a hate campaign against Pakistan's perpetual domestic scapegoat, the Ahmadis, with the added bonus of their automatic connections to puppetmaster Jews-is a politically priceless explanatory narrative for how Pakistan finds itself in crisis.

<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium-against-coronavirus-pakistan-turns-to-a-traditional-remedy-blame-ahmadis-and-jews-1.8902949>





# UK: GDP slumped by a record 20.4 percent in April

## UK sees biggest GDP fall ever in April



Boris Johnson gave a glimmer of hope the two-metre rule will be relaxed soon today as figures showed the UK economy in freefall with a record 20.4 per cent decline in April.

GDP plummeted by more than a fifth in the first full month of the crippling lockdown being in place, following a 5.8 per cent slump in March - which was in itself a the biggest dive ever at the time UK plc has now contracted by 25 per cent since February - with the country facing the worst recession in 300 years, when the Great Frost laid waste to Europe. The eye-watering plunge, even worse than analysts had predicted, fueled frantic call for the two-metre rule strangling the hospitality and retail sectors to be eased. Chancellor Rishi Sunak has been leading a push in Cabinet, and Scottish Secretary Alister Jack broke cover today to signal he supports the move to 'save people's livelihoods'. Mr Johnson insisted this afternoon that infections were still too high for an immediate change, but raised speculation of an imminent change by adding that 'as we make further progress I hope to say more'. He said the

UK economy was bound to be hit hard by the pandemic because of its reliance on services, but added that the country is 'resilient' and 'dynamic'. Pointing to the massive government support through furlough and other bailouts, he said: 'We will bounce back.' Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey also tried to put a brave face on the data, saying it was 'not surprising'. 'We see signs of the economy now beginning to come back into... we do see that,' he said. 'It's early days, and obviously I don't want to emphasise too much. It's a gradual coming back into life but we do see those signs.'

The CBI says halving the distance to one metre - regarded as a 'minimum' by experts - could double the level of activity possible for firms. Meanwhile, school leaders have warned there is no chance of Mr Johnson fulfilling his promise to get all children back into classrooms by September unless the guidance is overhauled.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8413479/GDP-plummeted-20-4-CENT-April-amid-coronavirus-chaos.html?ito=>





# We Ignore Tablighi Jamaat at Our Peril



By by Abhinav Pandya and Sam Westrop

In India, the academic and journalistic discourse on jihadi terrorism mostly revolves around transnational and Pakistani terrorist organizations. Meanwhile, non-violent and semi-violent Islamist groups such as Jamaat-i-Islami, and its proxy charitable fronts in the US, UK, and Canada, along with groups such as the Popular Front of India and the Social Democratic Party of India have so far, more or less, managed to escape the attention of intelligence and security agencies. However, after a number of critical investigations recently revealed Jamaat-i-Islami's role in radicalizing the society and aiding terrorist organizations in Kashmir, impelling the Home Ministry to ban it, other lawful Islamist groups, also masquerading as peaceful, social organizations, are finally the subject of investigations by India's intelligence agencies. One noteworthy example is Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), which has, impressively, operated across the length and breadth of India for decades, loudly recruiting millions, and yet somehow avoiding the notice of the law enforcement agencies, despite laying a fertile ground for the spread of jihadist ideology. Ironically, in the West, TJ has been carefully watched by law enforcement agencies, aware of its links to terror, for the last two decades, despite TJ taking care to operate more carefully and in greater secrecy. TJ is an offshoot of the fundamentalist and hardline Deobandi sect of Islam. A global missionary movement, TJ

operates the largest Islamic network in the world, with perhaps as many as 70-80 million members spread over 150 countries. Its ijtemas (religious gatherings) in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh attract the largest number of Muslim devotees after the Haj.

TJ claims to be a quietist, apolitical organization. In the popular perception, TJ is a guileless missionary organization simply preaching Islam through door-to-door mobile bands. In reality, TJ preaches a regressive, extreme religious outlook. It serves to Islamize existing Muslim communities, encouraging Muslims to embrace a more ascetic, Deobandi strain of Islam, in which every aspect of a Muslim's life is dictated by TJ rules. The essence of TJ's philosophy is the importance of protection from the fitna [test] of the outside world, through intense piety and adherence to TJ's very particular strain of Islam. Only once the ummah has undergone the "purification of self", TJ believes, can the spread of Islam to non-Muslims, through jihad or otherwise, take place. In essence, TJ's work is predicated on the idea of inevitable conflict with the non-Islamic world. French TJ expert Marc Gaborieau goes further, and has suggested that the supreme goal of TJ is nothing less than a "planned conquest of the world in the spirit of Jihad."

TJ's influence is widely felt. In Bangladesh, TJ works to rid Muslim communities of perceived Hindu heritage and influence, which, the Hudson Institute claims, has exacerbated significantly the Islamization of Bangladeshi society. In North Kashmir, a senior police officer there told us, the terror group Hizbul Mujahidin sends potential recruits on a 40-day TJ religious training program, after which they are permitted to join the organization. TJ cadres visiting Kashmir from Northern and Eastern India face no resistance or opposition from local groups such as Jamaat-e-

Islami and violent Islamists, reportedly because TJ has assisted them with the movement of money and messages, especially during Kashmir's frequent internet shutdowns.

Further, reports claim TJ is also involved with the radicalization of youth in Kashmir's Deoband seminaries. In the past, several seminaries were banned after they were found to be sending students for terrorist training. Marhama village, in the Anantnag district, where the Pulwama suicide bombing conspiracy was hatched, has a powerful Deoband madrasa, whose faculty includes TJ preachers. As former Islamist Bashir Ahmad notes, the area is a stronghold of Deobandi terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed. One prominent Barelvi Sunni Muslim leader from Uttar Pradesh, who has studied the functioning of TJ on the ground for the last 25 years, told us that TJ recruits, after taking part in the obligatory travelling missionary work for set periods of time (a practice common to TJ members all around the world), are often sent to join prominent Islamist organizations such as the Popular Front of India, Social Democratic Party of India, and Jamaat-e-Islami. Barelvīs have good reason to be concerned about the missionary arm of their Deobandi rivals. TJ cadres have long been significantly involved in the occupation and takeover of Barelvi mosques in villages and cities across India. Initially, TJ tries to infiltrate the local mosque committee with its members. If successful, they re-register the mosque as Deobandi, relying on the endorsement of Waqf boards, which are largely controlled by Deobandis. Failing that, TJ establishes a rival, anonymous mosque committee of their own, and attempt to supplant the existing committee, once again relying on the Waqf boards' approval. Either way, Barelwi imams and management are ejected, leading frequently to violent clashes between the two groups. In the National Capital Region, TJ cadres have ensured the Deobandi takeover of 150-200 Barelwi mosques. In Gujarat, the TJ and Deobandis have taken over 80% of the mosques. In one such incident in Jaipur, where TJ cadres violently captured Karbala mosque, criminal

investigations were initiated. However, law enforcement agencies failed to follow through, apparently only because TJ is not a formally registered organization. Deobandis teach and practice a fundamentalist, exclusivist form of Islam, which blends easily with extremism and terror. As TJ's seizures of mosques continues, so does the threat of Deobandi influence. And that threat is just not an Indian issue; TJ and hardline Deobandis are a global problem.

### Islamizing the West

TJ has operated in Europe since 1945, when the first TJ missionaries were sent out from the British Raj to England. Working in non-Muslim environments, TJ's work has been quieter and more careful than its activities in South Asia, with many Western Muslim communities, for decades, not even aware of its existence. But Western Muslim communities were a particularly important target for TJ. The ostensible sins of the secular world – especially in the 1960s and 1970s – were all too apparent for religious conservatives horrified by moderate Muslim communities that enjoyed music, dance and mixed-gender events. It was felt that TJ's work to Islamize Muslim communities was particularly vital here. Journalist Innes Bowen, writing about TJ activity in Britain, cites one early missionary who wrote: "The bazaar of immorality thrives and Satan has set here a wide and tough snare." Much later, in the 1990s, another British TJ official declared: "a major aim of tablighi is to rescue the ummah [Muslim nation] from the culture and civilization of the Jews, Christians and (other) enemies of Islam to create such hatred for their ways as human beings have for urine ... and excreta..."

As in India and the rest of South Asia, TJ sought to operate in Europe primarily through Deobandi networks. In fact, as the academic Philip Lewis notes, the most important Deobandi institution in Europe, Darul Uloom Bury, was established on the orders of Indian TJ leader Muhammad Zakariya, who penned the essential TJ text, *Faizail-e-Amaal*. A second Darul Uloom, in the Northern English town of Dewsbury, was established

in the late 1970s, becoming one of TJ's chief institutions outside of India and Pakistan – it is often referred to, in fact, as TJ's headquarters in Europe. Using Dewsbury as a base, TJ missionaries travelled Europe and the rest of the world, recruiting followers and Islamizing Muslim communities. Upon arriving in a new city, these missionaries would "soon spread out into mosques throughout the city, state and country, usually sleeping in bedrolls on the floor of host Islamic centers." A common tactic in the West, report some studies, is for TJ missionaries to "suddenly show up in small groups at the homes of Muslim individuals who have not been seen at a mosque lately."

In some cases, TJ missionaries served as a vanguard for Deobandi expansion into South Asian communities in Europe. This was a clever investment. TJ's assistance in the expansion of the Deobandi presence produced an extensive network of Deobandi mosques, many willing, decades later, to serve as key outposts for TJ missionary work. It is unclear whether TJ have helped Deobandis seize mosques in the West, as they have done in India. But, in Britain, it is worth noting that Deobandis constitute a mere estimated 20 percent of Britain's 3 million Muslims, and yet control over 40 percent of the mosques. In France, where TJ could not rely on as large a South Asian population, it has recruited an enormous number of Muslims from North African backgrounds. Along with the establishment of several TJ mosques, the movement is now, one academic writes, "part of the daily fabric of Muslim life in France."

TJ gatherings in Europe can attract thousands, although they are arranged, as Innes Bowen notes, without websites, press releases, or other advertising materials. TJ remains largely a secretive force, that only comes to the public's attention when its influence is sporadically uncovered. In the United States, the TJ approach has been a little different. First arriving in the 1950s, TJ found that a relatively small Deobandi presence required them to find new Muslim community partners and establish mosques of

their own, often targetting black Americans who had recently left the Nation of Islam in large numbers (a quasi-Islamic black nationalist movement) and who were looking for a new ideological home.

Today, in fact, TJ mosques in America cater to a diverse array of Muslim converts and immigrants from all corners of the globe. It is estimated there are 15,000 TJ members active in the United States, of which, reportedly, only 60% are South Asian. TJ's American headquarters is considered by some to be the Alfalsh mosque in New York City, which, unusually, openly acknowledges its TJ identity on its own website. Contrast this with Darul Uloom Dewsbury in the UK, which admits no public link to TJ at all, despite being its most important TJ center outside South Asia. Other prominent TJ centers in America include Chicago, San Diego and Los Angeles.

In the 1980s and 90s, TJ operated more overtly in North America, in a manner similar to its operations in India today. It openly held conferences in Chicago and Toronto, which many thousands attended. After 9/11, however, TJ activity has been more careful, and much less visible. Some analysts have concluded that TJ's relatively inconspicuous existence today suggests it has lost influence and members; although it is difficult to square that claim with the fact that TJ missionaries continue to be found at mosques across the US, and that so many recent jihadists have passed through TJ programs. Indeed, that many Western jihadists have some involvement with TJ at some point in their radicalization is indisputable. Somewhat in contrast to Indian intelligence services, Western officials have been aware of TJ's dangerous influence for decades.

US officials stated in 2003: "We have a significant presence of Tablighi Jamaat in the United States and we have found that Al-Qaeda used them for recruiting now and in the past." In the early 2000s, a Pakistani intelligence source claimed that 400 American terrorist recruits in Pakistan or Afghanistan had emerged by the American TJ network. French intelligence, meanwhile, has claimed that 80 percent of its own Islamist



extremists may have once been part of TJ, referring to it as an " antechamber of fundamentalists."

TJ-tied Western terrorists have included Richard Reid, the transatlantic 'shoe bomber', and Mohammed Siddique Khan, mastermind of the 7/7 terror attacks in London. Even Abu Qatada, a leading Jordanian jihadist preacher and Al Qaeda contact, was reportedly involved in TJ circles. Although TJ operates a little more cautiously in the West, its ideological adherence to TJ branches in South Asia is clear. In fact, even the split between TJ's branches in India and Pakistan was reflected among Western TJ networks.

In 2017, supporters of the two TJ camps came to blows outside a London TJ institution. In the US, TJ members who subscribed to the 'wrong' TJ faction were apparently expelled from TJ mosques. It is unsurprising that not all Western TJ members were willing to support the Indian faction of TJ; Pakistani TJ institutions have long attracted the loyalty of TJ members around the world.

### TJ and Pakistani Islamism

In Pakistan, the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq supported the work of Deobandi and Tablighi extremists. Since then, Tablighi cadres have continued to play influential roles in Pakistan, including, positions as powerful as the Director-general of ISI, Pakistan's notorious terror-tied spy agency. Multiple reports claim that TJ cadres of Pakistan meet with their Indian counterparts in Bangladesh, where they work in close coordination with Jamaat-i-Islami, which colluded with the Pakistani army in the genocide of civilians during Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War. Today. Reportedly, TJ's Pakistani cadres enter India through Bangladesh, where some believe they may serve ISI's interests.

It is also important to note that in Pakistan, TJ has further demonstrable connections with terror groups. Top-level recruiters from terror groups have visited TJ cadres in Raiwind and encouraged individual Tablighis to join terror groups. Reportedly, in 1995, TJ's military offshoot, Jihad-

bi-Al Saif, was accused of plotting to kill Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's former prime minister. The dreaded terrorist group Harkat-ul-Mujahidin (HuM), founded in 1980, drew all of its original members from Tablighi Jamaat. HuM was responsible for hijacking Indian Airlines flight IC 814 in 1998 and brutally murdering French engineers in Karachi in 2002. Later, 6000 Tablighis were trained in HuM camps, many of whom fought in Afghanistan and joined Al Qaeda after the defeat of the Soviets. Another violent offshoot of TJ, Harkat-ul-Jihad al Islami (HuJI), is active in Kashmir and Gujarat.

HuJI was responsible for the attack on an American cultural center in 2002, as well as the 2004 assassination attempt on Sheikh Hasina Wajid, then the leader of moderate Awami League and now the current prime minister of Bangladesh. Further, when TJ's Indian cadres travel to Pakistan for ijtemas and preaching work, they are reportedly lured by terror groups like Al Qaeda, Lashkar, and Harkat-ul-Mujahidin.

### Recognizing the Threat

Of course, TJ's more overt links to Islamism and terror are not limited to the countries we have already mentioned. Alex Alexiev has written that the Government of Philippines has accused TJ (which has at least 11,000 members in the their country) of acting as a conduit for Saudi money to terrorists in its south and as a cover for the Pakistani jihadist volunteers.

In Tunisia, Rachid Al Ghannouchi, co-founder of Tunisia's Ennahda Party and one of the most prominent Islamist ideologues in the world, is a graduate of TJ, having joined the movement in Paris in his youth. Terrorists from Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA), meanwhile, were closely involved with TJ. The list of examples goes on. TJ is a pestiferous force. And, given the evidence, who could seriously still consider it a quietist movement?

Certainly, terrorist groups in Kashmir, Pakistan and Afghanistan, along with jihadist preachers and recruiters in the West and elsewhere, have long used it to their advantage, with no apparent effort

by TJ to refuse them. Omar Nasiri, a spy who infiltrated Al Qaeda in the 1990s, reveals that Al Qaeda encouraged potential recruits to first join TJ, partly because TJ's missionary work offered important cover for travelling jihadists. Indeed, Zeeshan Siddiqui, a British jihadist tied to Al Qaeda, flew to Pakistan, allegedly to meet Al Qaeda contacts, while claiming to be attending a TJ conference.

Despite these facts, it is pertinent to mention that unlike the US, TJ's alleged links with terror groups, Islamist radicalization, and other illicit activities have neither received much attention from India's intelligence and counter-terrorism agencies, nor from journalists and Indian scholars of terrorism studies. TJ's unofficial, unincorporated status, its vague recruitment processes and secret and dubious financial practices makes it particularly challenging for law enforcement agencies and financial watchdogs to track its activities.

But there is also no doubt that, even without the direct terror links, TJ has radicalized entire communities across the globe. Once moderate communities are regularly targeted by TJ for re-education. As Yoginder Sikand noted in his 1998 study of TJ in Britain, the movement works to "promote a sense of paranoia and even disgust of non-Muslim society."

Nor is TJ ultimately limited to just Deobandi Islam, even within South Asian communities. The BBC has noted that, despite many Muslims belonging to the somewhat moderate Barelvi movement, they were still being drawn into TJ circles. TJ's reputation for pure piety among the world's Muslims has seemingly often afforded them the permission to cross sectarian lines, while still using Deobandi mosques all around the world as bases.

One former TJ member told the BBC: "I saw teenage boys, go to the mosque, go home, preach to their families. Six months later, all the women in the family would be wearing the niqab – you wouldn't see their faces again. I saw entire families change through Talibghi Jamaat."

But even if one were to discount the evidence in South Asia tying TJ to jihadists and extremist groups, as well as ignore the well-documented facts that too many Western jihadists have passed through TJ ranks and that too many TJ members embrace violent thought, one crucial point remains.

If TJ's claim to eschew all political discussion is genuine, by refusing to discuss certain political issues, TJ isn't guaranteeing that extremism cannot be taught; it is guaranteeing that TJ will avoid doing anything to discourage the violence that is the obvious corollary of the dogma TJ preaches and enforces.

Islamism is not just about violence; it is fundamentally about the embrace, and imposition, of absolutist theology. TJ, perhaps more extensively than any other radical sect in the world, preaches and insists on that absolutism.

Indians know what happens when these extremists operate with impunity, even if Indian intelligence services have been slow to catch on. Western intelligence services, meanwhile, knew of dangers of TJ and yet failed to counteract their influence, despite Western Muslims using TJ to travel in significant numbers to South Asia to join terrorist organizations.

The threat of the hardline Deobandis and their missionary arm, TJ, is global and obvious; it requires cooperation between India and the West to produce a global and tough response, starting with international investigations into TJ's financing, its links with Pakistani and Kashmiri terrorist organizations, and its role as a incubator for jihadist radicalization.

Abhinav Pandya is a counterterrorism expert and author of *Radicalization in India: An Exploration* (Pentagon Press, 2019); Sam Westrop is director of Islamist Watch, a project of the Middle East Forum.

<https://www.meforum.org/islamist-watch/60816/we-ignore-talibghi-jamaat-at-our-peril?utm>





# Mosques Across America Dedicate Friday Sermons to Confronting Racism, Police Brutality

By Ayesha Khan



George Floyd's killing was a final straw for thousands of Americans protesting against police brutality and systemic police racism.

Muslim leaders say it may also, at long last, prove to be a tipping point for non-black Muslim communities. "This has been a rough week, a rough two months for Black Muslims who have been deeply impacted by police brutality and mass incarceration," said Margari Aziza Hill, co-founder of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative. "We are in mourning, we are tired, we are angry, we are mobilizing."

On Friday, a wave of mosques will dedicate their Jumma sermons to preaching against anti-black racism and police brutality, following urgent calls from black Muslim leaders to publicly speak up with a "Day of Outrage." (For most mosques, these sermons and talks will be livestreamed because of coronavirus closures.)

"We expect all allies to publicly condemn police brutality across the U.S. as despicable, harmful, and an injustice that must end immediately," the group urged. "History is being made, we must not sit on the sidelines."

Led by Imam Jihad Saafir of inner-city community center Islah LA, a coalition of black Muslim leaders in California has demanded that, in Friday sermons and talks, Islamic organizations address racism and that they also address it in letters of solidarity with black

Americans. It's the first step in a longer push. The coalition is encouraging non-black Muslims to take five action items—including committing to addressing anti-blackness internally, calling on Minnesota officials for police accountability and joining local efforts to promote racial justice. And the campaign is catching on, from Georgia to Seattle to Philadelphia. "This is unprecedented," said Hill, who was involved in developing the action items. "We are currently getting a flood of expressions of support, and many in the Muslim community are taking to Islah L.A.'s five demands more seriously."

Thousands of people gather at the state Capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota, on June 2, 2020, to protest the death of George Floyd. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

The Islamic Association of North Texas has been holding a series of livestreamed conversations on race between local Muslim leaders. Its previous Friday sermon focused on racism, as will this week's. "Outrage over the murder of George Floyd, and subsequent calls for justice and reform, should not be limited to coming from only African Americans," the mosque told congregants in a statement. "The onus is on everyone. For those that are not African American but are a minority, there is a responsibility to support your fellow brothers and sisters because you, too, know of the pain." In New Jersey, more than 60 groups signed on to a statement agreeing to commit to the action items.

"We stand in love and solidarity with every Black person who was ever excluded, ignored, or made to feel unequal within our Muslim organizations, masjids, Islamic schools, or businesses," the signatories, more than half of which were



mosques, agreed. “We will no longer wait for another death to move us to recognize that Black people have an inalienable right to exist peacefully in this country.”

In the Bay Area, nearly 30 mosques took part in the Day of Outrage. Most, like the Shia Association of the Bay Area, livestreamed sermons. Others participated in a socially distanced “open air” Jumma service in downtown Oakland focused on confronting anti-blackness and police brutality. The Northern California Islamic Council was one of the first Muslim organizations to publish a statement in “steadfast solidarity” with black Americans. “We are all connected through the long, painful, and constant historical struggle for justice, fairness and equality for all,” the group, led by Zaytuna College co-founder Hatem Bazian, wrote. “Let’s be clear, State violence against Black Americans has gone on for far too long and without any accountability; the time to end it is NOW and calls for our urgent attention.”

Bazian, who drafted the NCIC statement and will speak at the Oakland Jumma, told RNS his faith

is “founded upon a command to uphold justice.” Being Muslim requires working to end every form of racism and discrimination, he said, particularly one that impacts a “sizable segment of our community.” Black Muslims comprise 20% of America’s Muslim population, with Arabs and South Asians making up the majority of non-black Muslims. Most non-black U.S. Muslim communities have long advocated for human rights for Palestinians, Kashmiris, Rohingyas and other vulnerable Muslim communities internationally. But the often immigrant-led mosques have been reluctant to publicly align themselves with other causes that have resonance in black Muslim communities, such as bail reform, the imprisonment of Imam Jamil al-Amin and the police killing of Imam Luqman Abdullah. Instead, many have attempted to rehabilitate Muslims’ image by building positive relationships with local police and elected officials.

<https://religionnews.com/2020/06/05/mosques-across-america-dedicate-friday-sermons-to-confronting-racism-police-brutality/> ❀❀❀

## Bonfire of Trump's Vanity

By Maureen Dowd

WASHINGTON — My mom always spelled out I Street as Eye Street when she addressed mail there, so it wouldn’t be confusing.

Last Saturday night, the eyes of the world were on Eye Street, where The Times’s office is located, as the street became a hellscape of American pain, going up in flames during protests fanning out from the White House. Ivanka Trump carried her Bible-size handbag to hide a prop for her father to use at a photo op in front of St. John’s Church after peaceful protesters were gassed to clear his path. Credit...Doug Mills/The New York Times I kept thinking about the small yellow church around the corner, known as the “Church of Presidents,”



where Madison paid the rent and Lincoln sat in a pew in the back. It was just a few years ago that Barack Obama and his family sometimes attended church there. A week ago, there was

a towering bonfire in front of the church and then a fire in the basement. How could we possibly, in a brief stretch, have gone from the euphoria of our first black president to the desolation of racial strife ripping apart the country?

I was so happy the day of Obama’s inauguration because it was the first time I had seen my hometown truly integrated. Armed with a bag of croissants and a bottle of Champagne, I made my groggy houseguests get up at 4 a.m. the next day, so

we could watch the new era dawn at the Lincoln Memorial.

Beyoncé's security turned us away — the singer had performed the night before and the guards were still there — but it didn't matter. We caught a glimpse of Abe in the pink light as the Obama family settled into their new home.

I've always cherished Washington's luminous monuments. So it was excruciating this past week to see the chucklehead who has waged war on our institutions, undermined our laws and values, stoked division at every turn, blundering around defiling the monuments that symbolize the best about America.

After the country was rocked to its soul by the sight of a handcuffed black man dying while being held down by a police officer as those around begged for mercy, Trump could hardly summon a shred of empathy. His only move was to grab a can of kerosene and cry "Domination!"

Turning the American military against Americans was a scalding tableau that was a nadir even for the former military school bully. The creepy William Barr, who gets to be called "General," had troops clear out mostly peaceful protesters so Trump could walk through Lafayette Park, preening as a fake tough guy, and pose in front of St. John's. Ivanka went into her luxe purse to hand him his prop, a Bible, which he held up awkwardly. It's a wonder his hand did not burst into flames.

That night, the sound of summer in Washington was a Black Hawk helicopter shadowing the protesters.

This misuse of the military and the sight of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mark Milley, walking in camouflage while protesters were blasted with chemicals, at long last spurred Jim Mattis to push back. Mattis wrote to The Atlantic that he was "angry and appalled" at Trump for making "a mockery of our Constitution." He suggested that we all just move beyond the depraved divider if we are to have any hope of uniting the country.

The brutish scene conjured Tuesday at the

Lincoln Memorial, with National Guard troops in rows on the steps below the Great Emancipator, was unconscionable. Soldiers ominously stood on the hallowed ground where Marian Anderson sang in 1939 when the Daughters of the American Revolution would not let her perform at Constitution Hall because she was black, and where Martin Luther King Jr. made his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963. Trump tweeted Wednesday that he had done more for black Americans than any president "with the possible exception of "Lincoln.

Lincoln gave his life trying to stop a clash of civilizations, "with malice toward none," while Trump spends his presidency ginning up a clash of civilizations, with malice toward all.

That afternoon, as protesters in front of St. John's danced to Sister Sledge's "We Are Family," the president threw racial chum in the Potomac. He tweeted that Drew Brees "should not have taken back his original stance on honoring our magnificent American Flag. OLD GLORY is to be revered ... NOKNEELING!"

He called Muriel Bowser, the poised black mayor of D.C. who wanted the federal troops out of the capital, "incompetent" and then upgraded her to "grossly incompetent." Friday night, he retweeted someone who posted that "Barack Obama put a target on the back of every cop in this country."

It's sad to see the tall black fences going up around the White House, turning the "People's House" into an outpost as dark as the psyche of the man who lives within. But Bowser offered the best troll on the First Troller when she had the words "Black Lives Matter" painted in yellow in front of the White House and St. John's. She tweeted that she was renaming the area "Black Lives Matter Plaza."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/06/opinion/trump-washington-monuments-george-floyd-protests.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>





# Rescue on the Sea – story of a coastal village



By Zeenat Hakimjee

Very little has been written about the ancient coastal people of Lyari – the irrepressible Makranis – who take their name from the Makran coast of Sindh and, Balochistan, which also indicates a common history of the two provinces; the Makran coast constitutes the South-East of Iran and the South-West of Pakistan; a 1,000 km stretch along the Gulf of Oman from RA's (cape) Al-Kuh, Iran (West of Jask), to the Lasbela District of Pakistan (near Karachi). The Makran coast is on the Arabian Sea, to the North-West of Quetta in Balochistan. The following is a story of one such coastal village:

Children on bare-back camels, watch the sea, its vastness spanning even beyond the grasp of their eyes. Fishermen on the beach watch the sky, like the city dwellers read their newspapers first thing in the morning. Through the knots of their nets hanging on the line, they seem to predict the weather. This exercise determines whether they should take a boat out or not on the deep sea, for their daily expedition to catch fish. The air is filled with the smell of rancid water that is due to the deposits of oil, resulting in decayed and dead sea-life. Music, which is a part of their lives, plays in the background. The sounds are a fusion of musical cultures from the Middle East, Indo-Pakistan and Africa. The shells on the beach look like the abandoned toenails of the old fishermen, and they are more beautiful there, than on the foot. The broken wings, the sand-logged crabs, a woman's lonely shoe, a rusty toy damaged beyond recognition, the plank or sail from a doomed boat, all lay sprawled on the beach, each with a story

behind it, cleansed and sterilized by the salt and iodine in the great hospital of the sea. In the night, the light from the tower was but a spot against the background of the sky and spectacular cliffs.

The weather beaten villager's munched dates from the interior while watching holidaymakers trying to teach their children to swim, like fish to water, amidst the shouts and screams of the children who are already submerged in the waters. The steps of the ladies faltered as they approached the sea, clad in shalwar kameezes filled with the wind, the Shalwar Kameez itself a deterrent for swimming. The story told here is that of a villager who because of his sharp sense of hearing helped in the rescue of a drowning man. The villager was alone and as he had no family to fend for, hence he had no responsibilities to drain his energy. Somehow he had also preserved his youth, which he owed to mother nature. Religion that usually comes into the house with the presence of a woman was lacking in his and he was quite oblivious of it. One evening when it was well after ten and the moon was full with black clouds scudding in ordered masses across the sky, he was still sitting on his wall, all alone. A cool wind suddenly sighed from an unexpected quarter and in its wake was a noise like that from a distant cavalry charge. His razor sharp ears picked up the sound. His brow creased up as his eyes searched the distance. He hobbled to his neighbours house and banged on the door of his traditional mud-hut – the two men, though natural life-guards, knew thoroughly all that was written in the books about rescue on the seas. The coastal blacks were descendants of imported slaves – the fishermen being known as the Meds and the seamen as the Koras – when there was no response; he banged on the door again. A groggy fellow soon appeared. He pointed towards the horizon and mumbled something in the Makranic dialect. The man's eyes tried to see beyond the direction of the location being pointed at. A boat in trouble, he



thought aloud. Without wasting any time they woke the other men. A rule of the sea states, that half the purchase price of the vessel of the sea is given to the rescue party. This prize money was quite a temptation, but since it was always dangerous the case required to be argued, all hands knew that the proposed journey was perilous. The village women all having gathered on the beach, saw their men disappear, reappear, disappear, reappear and finally disappear into the darkness. They were now a tiny speck in the vast vista of the sea – the ocean that is open to all and merciful to none, that which threatens even when it seems to yield, pitiless always to weakness.

Embroidery gave them a distinct 'folk' touch, separating them from the typical Karachiites. The skirt-like look, with its wide circumference, and the loose shalwar could be compared to the costumes of the pathan and Kabuli women.

The men in the rescue boat changed sides, so as not to tip the balance of the boat as the surf sprayed them from head to toe. The taste of salt lingered in their mouths during the voyage. They were not bothered by their appearance. On the contrary, they felt no different from when they started out dry. Suddenly, a dark object was thrown at them on the crest of a wave. It was a man. They held on to the poor fellow and eventually succeeded in dragging him aboard. Nobody felt sorry that this time, there was no prize. They rowed back to their village. Couples fought with each other to offer hospitality to this half dead man; and they almost came to blows in their struggle for this visa to heaven. They fetched a doctor from a nearby village, while the women sat all around him wearing their beads. The doctor was a Karachiite who had been sent to the village to serve them. The doctor prompted the man to speak. The man said, "Mahganj" very faintly. Repeated attempts, received the same response. The diagnosis stated that he was a victim of a traumatic shock and was suffering from amnesia, which meant a loss of memory, if only temporarily. The Priest, who was also a member of the village council, was also summoned, as was the case in other similar incidents. "What's going on here?" he asked one of the ladies. "A miracle" said all the ladies together.

The Makrani women are predominantly Muslim. The Priest was briefed about the rescue and what followed. Being an elderly fellow, he recalled that a girl by the name of 'Mahganj' had been registered in the mosque some eighteen years ago. Now, it was easy to put two and two together. The man they found was associated with Mahganj and was discovered as belonging to the same village as her's. He was also supposed to marry her. Mahganj was the granddaughter of the village tailor. Thus it was decided that the man be taken back to the same village that he originated from. Similar surroundings would help to revive his memory, it was hoped. A therapist was hired from the city and surely, slowly though, his memory came back in bits and pieces. Mahganj's presence always evoked a response in the man, so strong was the bond of love. His memory did eventually return, which in turn led to their marriage. They led a happy married life.

#### **About the author:**

I inherited the art of writing from my late father Ahmed Jivanjee who told me to write my first article on the problems of young parents since I was one at that time. He got it published for me in The Muslim a newspaper owned by Mr. AGHA Murtaza Pooya. I think I enjoyed the fame and it kept me busy. As they say an empty mind is a devil's workshop. Being a successful writer my father used to visit the offices of The Dawn and The News. He told me whom to meet when I went there. I became quite good at writing fiction and wrote children's stories also. I had a knack for writing I think that comes from inheritance. My passion was the medical profession but I didn't manage to get a seat in one of the good medical colleges. Since I was educated, my parents believed in education being an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity, writing was the next best thing to do. My family had a lot of faith in me, my husband and children and that led me want to do something for them and not solely for me only which was writing for fame. Hence I started writing recipes and tried to settle in the slot of a grandma although achievement in writing does bring a sparkle to my eyes.



# Honor Killings Sanctioned by Law Take New Toll on Iranian Women

By Farnaz Fassihi



L-Reyhaneh Ameri, 22, was killed on June 15 by her father with an ax for coming home late. R-Fatemeh Barihi, 19, was beheaded by her husband on June 13.

Only three weeks after the harrowing murder of Romina Ashrafi, 13, who was beheaded in her sleep by her own father, two young women are murdered by their family members. The tragic deaths of Fatemeh Barihi, 19 and Reyhaneh Ameri, 22, who were murdered by their husband and father respectively, reinitiated the bitter debate over the savage honor killings in Iran sanctioned and institutionalized by the laws of the clerical regime. Reyhaneh Ameri, 22, was killed on June 15 by her father with an ax for coming home late. Reyhaneh had returned home at around 11:30 pm the night before and had a quarrel with her father.

The so-called honor killing of a 14-year-old girl in Iran has shaken the country and forced an examination of its failure to protect women and children. Before he beheaded his 14-year-old daughter with a farming sickle, Reza Ashrafi called a lawyer. His daughter, Romina, was going to dishonor the family by running off with her 29-year-old boyfriend, he said. What kind of punishment, he asked the lawyer, would he get for killing her?

The lawyer assured him that as the girl's guardian he would not face capital punishment but at most

3 to 10 years in jail, Mr. Ashrafi's relatives told an Iranian newspaper. Three weeks later, Mr. Ashrafi, a 37-year-old farmer, marched into the bedroom where the girl was sleeping and decapitated her. The so-called honor killing last month May 2020, in a small village in the rolling green hills of northern Iran, has shaken the country and set off a nationwide debate over the rights of women and children and the failure of the country's social, religious and legal systems to protect them. It has also prompted a me-too moment on social media of women pouring out their own stories of abuse at the hands of male relatives in hopes of shedding light on a problem that is usually kept quiet. Minoo, a 49-year-old mother of two in Tehran, said her husband had beaten their 17-year-old daughter when he spotted her with a male friend in the street.

"There are thousands of Rominas who have no protection in this country," tweeted Kimia Abodlahzadeh. In many ways, women in Iran are better off than those in many other Middle Eastern countries. Iranian women work as lawyers, doctors, pilots, film directors and truck drivers. They hold 60 percent of university seats and constitute 50 percent of the work force. They



can run for office, and they hold seats in the Parliament and cabinet. But there are restrictions. Women must cover their hair, arms and curves in public, and they need the permission of a male relative to leave the country, ask for a divorce or work outside the home.

Honor killings are thought to be rare but that may be because they are usually hushed up. A 2019 report by a research center affiliated with Iran's armed forces found that nearly 30 percent of all murder cases in Iran were honor killings of women and girls. The number is unknown, however, as Iran does not publicly release crime statistics.

Horror over the killing of Romina Ashrafi, a round-faced high school student with a bright smile, was nearly universal, condemned by liberals and conservatives alike. Her father is in jail awaiting trial. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called for "harsh punishment" for any man who abuses women in what appeared to be a reference to Romina's case. But the question of what to do about it broke along familiar lines. "Everyone is infuriated and shocked because it's a reminder that these laws are abnormal, these laws need to change," said Shadi Sadr, a prominent women's rights lawyer living in exile in London. "These laws were not meant for a woman or a child to be killed."

Conservatives defended the existing laws and blamed Romina for promiscuity and disobeying religious and cultural strictures.

"The laws for violence against women are enough," Mousa Ghazanfarabadi, a conservative cleric and lawmaker, told local media. "We cannot execute Romina's father because it's against Islamic law."

President Hassan Rouhani asked Parliament last week to fast-track legislation to protect women. The bill, which has been pending in Parliament for eight years, would criminalize emotional, sexual and physical abuse and impose jail time for violators. "How is it possible that a father kills and he is not held accountable and he does not face capital punishment?" Faezeh Hashemi, a prominent women's rights activist and former



**Romina Ashrafi**

lawmaker, told local media. "If we want to approach this issue with logic, wisdom and justice, the father needs to face retaliation punishment multiple times over."

He confiscated Romina's phone, kept her at home and began to threaten and terrorize her, Ms. Dashti told an Iranian magazine. One evening he came home with rat poison and rope, she said, encouraging Romina to commit suicide so he wouldn't have to kill her. "Baba you wanted to kill me," it said, addressing her father. "If anyone asks you where Romina is, tell them I am dead."

The struggle for women's rights has a long history in Iran but has suffered setbacks since the 1979 Islamic revolution. The women's movement was finally dismantled as an organized effort in 2009, criminalized on grounds that it threatened national security.

Today its most prominent faces, including the Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi and the feminist lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, are either in exile or in jail. Even Ms. Hashemi, whose father was president and a founding father of the revolution, was jailed.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/07/world/middleeast/honor-killing-iran-women.html>





# Israel, S Arabia working to repel Turkish influence in Jerusalem

Saudi Arabia, Israel and Jordan are working together in a bid to repel Turkey's growing influence in Jerusalem, an Israeli newspaper revealed.

Secret communications have been ongoing between Israel and Saudi Arabia focused on giving the kingdom a pivotal role in the management of Islamic endowments in occupied Jerusalem, an Israeli newspaper revealed, though authorities quickly refuted the allegations.

The Riyadh-Tel Aviv meetings included "sensitive calls that were carried out in secret through diplomats and high level security parties from Israel, the United States and Saudi Arabia, as part of efforts to advance the deal of the century deal," the Israel Hume newspaper reported, citing high-level Saudi diplomats.

The report also revealed Jordan's initial vehement opposition to any changes in the Islamic Endowments Council in Al-Aqsa Mosque, which has now changed due to the ongoing "intensive" Turkish role in the holy site.

According to the newspaper, the Jordanian party stopped objecting to the expansion of the Islamic Endowments Council and agreed, in an exceptional step and contrary to the Oslo agreements, to include Palestinian representatives in the council following the events of the Bab al-Rahma unrest last year and the metal detector crisis in 2017.

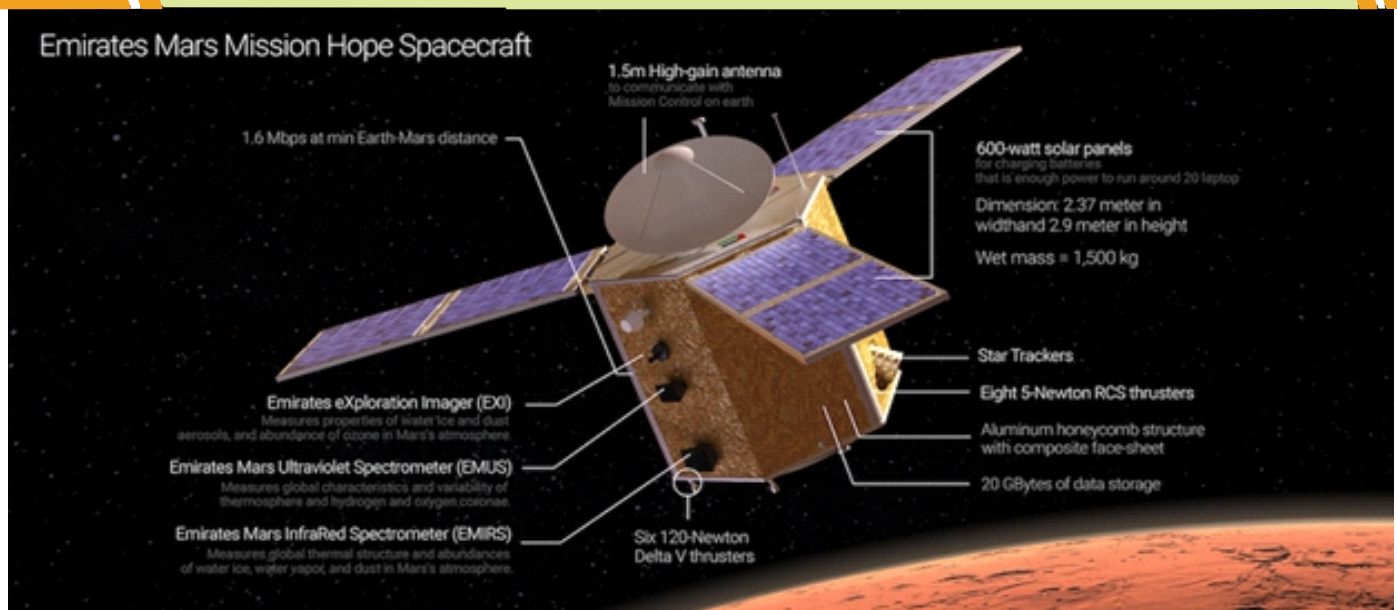
The report also accused Palestinian delegates, through their membership in the council, of



paving the way for "Iranian and Turkish elements" to establish a foothold in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, through various associations that received tens of millions of dollars in funding from the Turkish government based on alleged "clear orders from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan



# UAE Mars mission aiming to bring Hope to the Arab world



LONDON: In just 40 days, the UAE will become the first Arab country to send a mission to Mars, part of a wider regional effort to build knowledge and create opportunities, particularly for young people. "This mission is not just about the UAE it's about the region, it's about the Arab issue," Omran Sharaf, the mission's project manager at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC), said. The region is going through tough times and we do need good news and we need the youth in the region to really start looking inwards, building their own nations and putting differences aside to co-exist with people with different faiths and backgrounds and work together."

The Hope Mars Mission will start its journey on July 14 and is expected to reach the planet by February, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the UAE. The project has been planned, managed and implemented by an Emirati team overseen and funded by the UAE Space Agency. The MBRSC has developed the probe in cooperation with international partners, including the Universities of Colorado, Berkeley and Arizona. Speaking at a webinar on the mission on Monday, Sarah Al-Amiri, the UAE's Minister of State for Advanced Sciences, outlined why the project was so important to the Emirates. "Today

the UAE is an economy based on services, logistics, and oil and gas, and within the region it is considered a diversified economy, but if we project that down the line, the importance of knowledge-intensive sectors becomes more and more prominent for the country, as well as creating new knowledge-intensive organizations," she said. Developing talent, creating opportunities for engineers, scientists, and researchers working in natural sciences are the next important endeavours for the country, the minister added. "Mars provided us with the necessary challenge to rigorously develop talent in engineering, it gave us an appetite for risk and being able to circumvent the risk and push forward with the mission for development. It allows us to start integrating and creating new opportunities for scientists within the UAE and those that are studying the natural sciences," Al-Amiri said. Since the project was launched in 2014, the team has designed, developed and assembled the spacecraft, and repeatedly tested it through the harsh conditions it is expected to encounter. As the UAE does not have a launch pad, the spacecraft was shipped to Japan in April. It was moved three weeks ahead of schedule, due to the increasing travel restrictions being imposed to combat the spread of COVID-19.



“Nothing about this mission has been easy, since day one the timeframe has been challenging, the budget itself has been a bit challenging, there were very strict requirements when we came to the budget and it was limited and then the COVID-19 situation came into place on top of all the other challenges,” Sharaf said. He added that the details of the budget would be announced at a later stage

“When it comes to these projects, the public understands the importance for the UAE,” Sharaf said. “It’s about addressing our national challenges and building capabilities. We live in a region with

geographical challenges, when it comes to water, food and clean energy and everybody is quite excited about this mission because they understand the value it brings.”

Al-Amiri said the data from the mission

would be publicly available from two months after the spacecraft starts to orbit Mars between August and September next year;

Any scientist would be able to use the information and analyze the figures, she said. “We are looking at and studying a planet that has indications that it was very similar to our own planet and that has undergone some form of change and has gone into a point where it can’t have one of the major building blocks of life, as we humans know it and as we have defined it. “Understanding the reasons for the loss of hydrogen and oxygen, the building blocks of water from the atmosphere of Mars and understanding what role does Mars itself play.”

The team would also be studying the weather on

Mars throughout an entire year

“We are the very first weather satellites of Mars,” Al-Amiri said. “Prior to this we have been studying the weather on that planet and understanding better the climate of Mars by sporadically sampling various areas around the planet but not understanding the changes that happened throughout an entire day.”

However, Sharaf said “the UAE has always had plans for the future and we are definitely not going to stop with Mars. The UAE space program is more of a mean or a tool to build our knowledge

economy, so reaching Mars is not the objective and whatever the next phase is will be focused more on transferring that knowledge to the different sectors that we have in the UAE.”

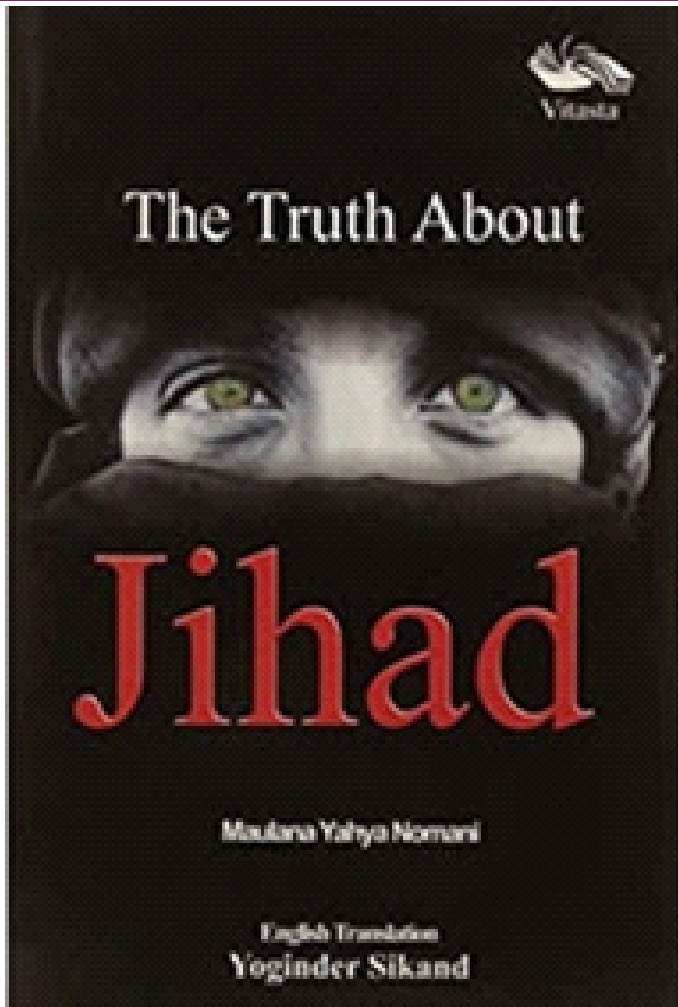
Over the last 60 years, only

six countries have sent missions to the Red Planet. “Space travel has by and large been in the group of a small select number of superpowers, so this is a great opportunity for the UAE to go beyond that and to go into something different,” Alistair Burt, Chairman of the Emirates Society, which hosted the webinar from London, said. The Emirates has already launched two satellites and sent an astronaut to the International Space Station and it has vowed to build a human settlement on Mars by 2117.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1686851/middle-east>







been abused by one and all ranging from rulers to clandestine cults to justify and legitimize their actions all in the name of Jihad, and observing commandments of Islam. The mainstream corporate media has used it to reinforce the stereotypical image of Muslims as violent people for whom still the sword is the dominant force.

The imperialists and neo colonialists under the garb of spreading Democracy in the world as well as carrying the civilizing mission of Globalization to every nook and corner of the world have intervened in each such country directly or secretly where some cults claim to be carrying 'Jihad' and they intervene to carry out the greater Jihad and free people from the obtrusive activities of these 'Jihadis' resulting in greater violation of rights of the common masses. Thus as a result the world has become a violent place to live in.

The present book under review deals with the sensitive issue of Jihad, where striking balance midst the claims and counter claims seems quite an uphill and difficult task though the author a young scholar, Yahya Noamani is able to come out quite successful in his maiden attempt, which clearly is a great feat. The book originally in Urdu has been rendered in English by the versatile scholar and prolific writer Yoginder Sikand.

In his Preface to the book Sikand writes, "This book struck me quite distinct. Written by a young scholar trained in a traditional madrasa, it seemed to appeal to Muslims as well as Non-Muslims alike. It was equally critical of portrayals of Jihad by Islamophobic scholars as being alleged akin to terrorism as it was of radical self-styled Islamists, who believe it to be a license for indiscriminate slaughter of Non-Muslims as well as Muslims who do not subscribe to their vision of Islam". The book keeps the promise which Sikand enumerates.

In his Foreword, the author Yahya Noamani, opening the gates of Ijtihad regarding Jihad writes, "The changing times and conditions of the world and the transformation of global scenario have created the urgent need for fresh interpretations of the concept of Jihad and to formulation of new regulations covering its crucial aspects. Many rules governing jihad depend on the prevailing international context and the conditions of human civilization.

The views about Jihad of many classical Islamic jurists or fuqaha and the Muslim Caliphs may have been appropriate for their own particular historical context, but today when the entire structure, international relations and global scenario have undergone tremendous changes; it has become difficult to understand those rules in today's context. I hope this book will be considered a balanced contribution in this regard".

It is the essence of this need which many rigid theologians, jurists and scholars don't understand and try to impose those medieval Muslim connotations and rules of Jurists of that period and society to our present one which results in Clash and makes Muslims seem violent, exclusive and reluctant to accept the realities of changed circumstances and Times.

The book is divided into seven chapters, and a section of the book is devoted to reforming the contemporary extremist ideology regarding Jihad. This author rebuts the wrong notion of Clash of Civilizations as well as rebuffs the erroneous claim that the Muslim World should be at war with the rest of the world, though this erroneous belief is reinforced by the ongoing imperialist and neo colonial offensives of the Western Powers.

Defining Jihad Noamani writes that "It must be remembered, mere fighting in defense against oppression does not constitute legitimate Jihad. Rather, jihad must be governed by a host of spiritual and moral principles and laws, observing which alone can qualify it to be truly called struggle in Allah's path or Jihad fi sabil Allah". (P-19) This aspect is frequently neglected by those who claim to be Allah's soldiers. Noamani breaks fresh grounds in Jihad studies, which were a part of pristine Islam but were neglected and shaded in oblivion like making distinction among the oppressed on basis of religion and community, hence confining Jihad to Muslims only while Islam being universal in spirit, Jihad too is meant for the liberation of all, not only Muslims.

Continuing in the same vein, Noamani deliberates about the Offensive Jihad, abiding treaties with people of different faiths and now in the present context between different countries, and his novel exposition of the related things to Jihad like Maal e Ghanimat (spoils of War), Prisoners of War (POW) and making POW's slaves, and he critically rebuts the offensive Jihad unless there is no severe persecution of people at the hands of State or other community, and explains that No Pre emptive attack is legal and legitimate in the eyes of Islam.

Noamani vociferously maintains that Jihad is only meant for putting an end to the persecution (Fitna), and not for gaining wealth, material assets, land and expanding or maintaining hegemony or Supremacy of a Nation and deliberates that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Caliphs never indulged in Jihad for these petty vested interests, but later on Muslim rulers exploited the connotation of Jihad for serving their own selfish interests at the cost of Islam and Jihad. Noamani also criticizes the actions of some Muslims who indulge in killing of people who abuse Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through their writings or caricatures and incriminate against Islam, because they label these individual attempts of murder as Jihad though they break all the conventions of Jihad during their heinous murderous acts.

Noamani also speaks against those exclusivist Ulema who are incumbent on their stance of describing and inculcating hate of Non-Muslims as an essential part of Muslim belief, and describes these acts of spreading hatred against Non-Muslims, as a heinous crime which is against the very spirit of Islam, which seeks to build a Peaceful world inculcating love, fraternity and harmony among all the creatures of the universe, and writes, "It is thus obvious and needs no explanation that a Non-Muslim of good character is much better to have as a friend than a person who is Muslim in name alone and is actually a hypocrite and an opportunist". (P-124)

Overall, the book is a welcome and rare addition to the burning topic of Jihad and helps clear various stereotypes and myths associated with Jihad. The author deserves our appreciation for bringing out such a unique and novel book on the most misunderstood term of Jihad. The book is a must read for anyone who wishes to understand the application and implementation of Jihad in present context and distinguish Non-Jihad from Jihad. The translation is lucid and the book is available in attractive Paperback with no printing or grammatical errors.



# Honor killing rampant in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and spreading to the West



By Radhika Singh

Afghanistan's Elimination of Violence Against Women Law criminalizes physical, mental, and emotional abuse, along with other facets of exploitation, namely forcing a woman into self-harm or offering a woman in marriage as a peace treaty between two parties. The futility of the law, however, came to the fore last month, when police

Two teenage sisters, 16 and 18 years old, were shot dead by their brother and father in a remote tribal region of North Waziristan in Pakistan, after video of them with a man surfaced online. They were killed to save the "honor" of their families. The accused have been arrested, say Pakistan's police, drawing commendations from the women's rights activists there, but the detention of such murderers does not bring an end to honor-based crimes. Back in December 2019, an 11-year-old girl was stoned to death in Pakistan's Sindh province, in what is known as the practice of "Karo-Kari." Originating in rural and tribal areas of Sindh, the homicidal act of Karo-Kari is primarily committed against girls and women who are thought to have brought "dishonor to their families" by engaging in "illicit" relationships. In order to restore the lost honor, a male member of the family must kill the accused female. Refusing an arranged marriage, being in romantic involvements despite the family's disapproval, having sex outside or before marriage, behaving in an "inappropriate" way, and at times even becoming a victim of rape could lead to one being "honor" killed. In Pakistan, 460 cases of honor killing were reported in 2017 alone; 194 victims were male and 376 female. 253 killings were sparked by the disapproval of love affairs, and 73 were for marriage choice. Love, you can now infer, plays a vital role in getting people killed in the name of honor in that country. The situation was quite harrowing just two years ago, when nearly 1,100 women were slain to save their families from "disgrace." A large number of such incidents go unreported, and only a few cases are brought before the courts each year. Pakistan's good neighbor Afghanistan seems to be giving a healthy competition to the Pakistanis in this area.

reported on an 18-year-old woman who was throttled with an electric wire and then stabbed to death by her brother — an Afghan soldier — for refusing a marriage arranged by her family. Badakhshan activist Asifa Karimi revealed that the victim wanted to marry a man she loved, and after rejecting the family proposal, handed herself to the police for protection. The police returned her to the family; her brother took her home and killed her within an hour. "Women in Afghanistan are still the most vulnerable part of society, not only under the Taliban-controlled areas," asserted Karimi. Despite suffering one of the most horrific crimes against women, rape survivors in Afghanistan remain at risk of reprisals for "dishonoring" the family by getting raped. In May 2014, when 10-year-old Brishna was raped by Mullah Mohammad Amin, her male relatives were heard hatching a plan to "kill her and dump her in the river." Though her father along with other male members of her family was compelled to submit written guarantees against harming her, the child was pulled out of school. A similar written guarantee was acquiesced to by the family of 18-year-old Amina, who had run away to escape marriage with someone to whom she had been forcibly betrothed. Only after the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Baghlan Province had video-recorded promises from her father and brother was she returned to the family. However, Amina never reached home; she was shot dead by a gang of gunmen on the way. Activists maintain that the attack was a staged "honor killing." A lawyer for a coalition of women's advocacy groups, Rubina Hamdard, presents an estimate of 150 such cases occurring annually in Afghanistan, while the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission



claims that there were 406 recorded cases of honor killings and rapes there in the years 2011-13. Though several apologists acquit Bangladesh of this practice, human rights groups say that killings of women in the name of religion take place in Bangladesh as well. On 10 January 1993, 21-year-old Noorjahan Begum was publicly stoned to death in Bangladesh's Sylhet district for participating in an illicit affair. Iran, at this moment, is rocked by the petrifying beheading of 14-year-old Romina by her 37-year-old father, Reza Ashrafi. This entire incident is hideously entangled and disturbing on multiple levels, given the fact that the 14-year-old had eloped with a 29-year-old man who claimed to have loved her for five years. The maths of it unfolds that this "lover man," at 24, was in "love" with a 9-year-old. It gets complicated all the more because he, at 29, could have wedded the 14-year-old, had the father granted them his blessing instead of beheading the daughter. The legal age to marry there is 13. Again, countless Kurdish women in the adjoining nation, Iraq, have been strangled, stabbed, or burned by relatives in the name of honor after they commit immoral acts. These deaths have subsequently been dismissed as suicides. "Honor

killings" is seen not only in Islamic countries, but in the diaspora, as Muslims have carried the practice of honor-based assaults even to the Western countries to which they have moved. The 20-year-old Iraqi-American Noor Almaleki was killed in 2009 after her father rammed his car into hers because of her choice of clothes, lifestyle and partner. Amina and Sarah Said were killed by their father in Texas for having non-Muslim boyfriends. The number of such crimes is soaring in the UK, without British authorities even appearing to realize what is happening; many of the victims are British citizens. Banaz Mahmood strangled by her father and uncle in 2006, Shafiea Ahmed murdered in 2013, and Samaira Nazir stabbed to death in 2015. All are victims of honor abuse. All lost their lives in the UK. Natasha Rattu, executive director of British charity Karma Nirvana, states that her foundation gets 800 messages from concerned citizens every month. "The summer holidays approaching is just the busiest time of year for us because we have victims of forced marriage who are very concerned that they're going to be taken out of the country and forced into marriages," she asserts.



## In Shameful Surrender, Government Appeases Abdul Aziz

By: Ayesha Mir in Islamabad



The controversial Maulana Abdul Aziz of Lal Masjid fame is firmly back in the spotlight as the government has reached an agreement with him whereby, he and his family have vacated Lal Masjid G-6 today (8th June 2020) and moved to the madrassah Jamia Hafsa in G-7, linked to the Lal Masjid. Both the mosque and seminary in G-6 are government-owned property. According to the recent negotiations, Maulana Aziz and his family will also not be allowed to enter the mosque for two months. Today, Haroon Rasheed, son of Abdul Rashid Ghazi and son-in-law of Aziz, took over the administration of the Lal Masjid.

The deal was brokered last week with the help of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat leader Maulana Ahmed

Ludhianvi, who was previously banned under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Both Maulana Abdul Aziz and Islamabad DC Hamza Shafqat have refused to talk further about this agreement, but Haroon Rasheed, the son-in-law of Maulana Aziz told journalist Sabookh Syed that Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi acted on behalf of the government of Pakistan as a guarantor of the deal. According to the agreement, Maulana Aziz will be free to travel all across Pakistan at his own will after two months. Earlier in February 2020, Maulana Aziz occupied the state-owned mosque Lal Masjid, claiming to be its rightful 'khateeb' ( orator). The move was ignored by the authorities, until later when approximately a hundred female students of Jamia Hafsa from G-7, broke into another sealed building of a seminary at H-11. It was then that the Islamabad administration approached Maulana Abdul Aziz to resolve the matter, but the fiery cleric insisted that a Federal Minister be engaged to negotiate with him. The maulana continued to deliver an aggressive Friday sermon against state authorities, saying that he would not abide by orders of a state that followed "international agenda". According to sources, the Interior Ministry said that it received orders from 'higher-ups' to resolve differences with Maulana

Aziz through talks rather than by force. Maulana Aziz's violation of lockdown orders was even raised in the NCOC (National Command and Operation Center) during which Interior Minister Ejaz Shah said that legal action will be taken against Maulana's provocative sermons. Two months later, instead of any action, the government has yet again decided to appease the Maulana. Even now it is not clear whether differences have been resolved or if the deadlock will linger as it has since 2007.

### How The Lal Masjid Debacle Began

The Lal Masjid dispute dates back to January 2007, when Jamia Hafsa's students illegally occupied a children's library to protest the demolition of some mosques that were declared illegal by the CDA. Matters soared when the Lal Masjid group kidnapped three Chinese women over accusations of being sex workers. This, alongside a number of violent and antagonistic incidents, led to a bloody confrontation between the army and militants, resulting in the death of several militants and personnel of the armed forces. This clash was preceded by Maulana Aziz's challenge to the Pakistani government's decree by calling for the implementation of his form of Sharia and an end to collaboration with the US after 9/11. "It must be noted that Abdul Rashid Ghazi who was killed in the Lal Masjid siege of 2007 was subsequently praised by Osama bin Laden as a "hero of Islam" in an audio message, according to media reports. Since then, Al Qaeda and many other militant groups have used the Lal Masjid bloodshed as a justification to revolt against the Pakistani government and military.

### Maulana Abdul Aziz Demands

Presently Maulana Aziz not only wants to be restored as the khateeb of Lal Masjid but also demands Rs. 250 million along with a large chunk of land to build Jamia Hafsa, as well as possession of the children's library adjacent to the mosque. In February, the Islamabad Capital Territory reached an agreement with Maulana Aziz to let him stay in the mosque as long as he does not deliver sermons in which he was openly encouraging people not to follow government advice on lockdown and social distancing. Maulana Aziz has also demanded that the building of Jamia Hafsa, which was previously demolished for being illegally constructed on government property, should be reconstructed adjacent to Lal Masjid. As a consequence of the military operation in 2007, the government and the mosque administration agreed for Jamia Hafsa to be reconstructed at an alternative site, to be provided by the CDA. However, in 2012, the Supreme Court

canceled the allocation of the 20-Kanal plot in H-11 that was issued to Maulana for the construction of the seminary. According to sources, Jamia Sumya (G-7) was renamed as Jamia Hafsa after the latter was demolished. After the 2007 operation, Maulana Aziz and his family moved to this expanded seminary in G-7.

It is also questionable why Maulana Ahmed Ludhianvi was invited to mediate these negotiations despite belonging to a banned sectarian outfit. The Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, formerly known as the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, was first banned in 2002, and again in 2012 for being involved in sectarian and terrorist activities. Despite the ban, the organization remained openly engaged in politics. The failure to take action against Maulana Ludhianvi was also noted by Justice Qazi Faez Isa's inquiry report into Quetta's Civil Hospital Attack on 9th August 2016. In the last 12 months, three cases have been filed against Maulana Aziz for flouting SOPS and violating lockdown orders under section 144 (placed to limit the spread of coronavirus), 270 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 188 (disobedience to public order duly promulgated by public servant). According to police officials, Aziz not only led the weekly congregational prayer without taking any precautionary measures but also openly displayed weapons. Ironically, on 5th June, PM Imran Khan appeared on national television and claimed that the Tiger Force has done commendable work to ensure the implementation of SOPs in mosques and that none of the coronavirus cases were traced back to mosques.

Analysts question why the current and previous governments have refrained from taking any strict action against Maulana Aziz. Sources say that despite the latest agreements, the conflict remains far from being resolved, and in fact, the recent deal could be interpreted as a shameful surrender, as the state officials seem to be on-board with the current government. Perhaps, the government is afraid of repeating the brutal clash of 10th July 2007 when a watershed operation between the army and Aziz's militants sparked widespread terrorism in Pakistan and abroad. Although Maulana Aziz was arrested as he attempted to flee the mosque disguised in a burqa, he was released on bail in 2009 despite numerous indictments against him. Ever since he blatantly continues to challenge the writ of the state while the government seems more willing to appease rather than arrest him. <https://voicepk.net/in-shameful-surrender-government-appeases-abdul-aziz/>







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