

# The Mulla

2019

## **A top cleric paid from public funds promotes religious intolerance**

*Lahore:* Hafiz Tahir Mahmud Ashrafi is president of Pakistan Ulama Council and also Chairman of the Punjab's Mutahiddah Ulama Board. Even as a controversial figure in the realm of religion on various grounds, he is close to high official circles in Islamabad, while in his latter capacity, he would be on the pay roll of the Punjab Government.

Ashrafi knows how to move in corridors of power and say the right thing at the right occasion. In his opinion to spit hate against Ahmadis at this time is the right thing to do even if that goes against his own utterings on religious harmony. This may appear hypocritical, but not many clerics take that too seriously these days. Let's see.

In a video on <https://youtu.be/rGTeEG3or7k> he is seen in an open multi-religious meeting asserting the following (extracts—translation):

“... I am not willing to accept them (Ahmadis) in this country. ...

“The one who does not recognize the constitution we do not recognize him. (*Ahmadis' disagreement with constitutional definition of a Muslim is labeled by Ashrafi as revolt against the Constitution. Ed.*)

“I am speaking of Qadianis here. They are full of mischief; they carry out fraud. They are misleading the humanity by using the name of Muslims....

“To speak against the Qadianis is Religious Harmony, because the first claim of Mirza Qadiani is to be Allah and to be Allah's wife. Even today he claims to be the Messiah; does our Christian community accept him to be the Messiah? And similarly we do not recognize Mirza Qadiani as a Muslim, we do not recognize Qadianis as Muslims, we consider Mirza Qadiani anti-Christ, we consider him to be a liar.....

“Inter-religion talk is a great thing. Inter-sect talk is also a great thing. But remember, Qadianiat is neither a religion nor a sect. It is an evil, created by the British. It is an evil created to attack Islam, Quran and Jihad; and it is created to attack the Khatme Nabuwat of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). We are ready to sacrifice our lives for non-Muslims, because they are our Pakistani brothers; but those who do not recognize the constitution of Pakistan, the country acquired in the name of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), do not recognize the Holy Prophet as the final Prophet (pbuh) we cannot recognize them. If this is called inter-religion talk that Qadianis should be accepted, then we cannot accept that. This type of inter-religion (harmony) we have not seen in history; this cannot be done and will never be done.”

It is anomalous that a cleric who is paid from funds that are collected through the tax burden including Ahmadis, should refuse to ‘recognize’ them, not accept them in this country, nor even sit with them in meetings on inter-religious harmony and dialogue. Has he gone berserk?

To justify his fat pay cheque he does pay lip service to religious harmony and rights of minorities. For example in a recent *Istehkam Pakistan Conference* under his chair, it was declared in headlines: “**Non-Muslims enjoy religious freedom through Pakistan's Constitution**” (*The daily Ausaf; July 29, 2019*). Also, “**Minorities in Pakistan enjoy all rights—(Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi)**” (*The News; July 23, 2019*), etc.

What is amazing is his ability to grab public-funded jobs, and still oppose public policy in the open. It is indeed difficult to report adequately and candidly on a cleric like Ashrafi; we stop here.

## **State-supported mulla-led *Istehkam e Pakistan* Conference**

## **A flawed and delayed effort to right the wrongs committed by the state and society**

*Lahore, July 28, 2019:* The vernacular press reported proceedings of an *Istehkam* (Solidarity of) *Pakistan Conference* in Lahore. It was a major event, as 1500 Ulama and *Mashaikh* reportedly attended it. It was chaired by Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, the Chairman of the Mutahiddah Ulama Board, Punjab and the Pakistan Ulama Council. It can be safely assumed that the conference was promoted and funded by powerful and rich sponsors.

There is nothing wrong with seeking Ulama's support in government's rational policies. However public money should be spent with due care through the right people in the right manner.

What was stated and agreed upon by the Ulama in the conference calls for critical analysis and lessons learnt, in retrospect.

In this conference, the final declaration mentioned:

- To call a Muslim, a *Qadiani* or *Kafir*, is a Great Sin.
- We reject non-Shariah edicts issued in the name of Quran and *Sunnah*.
- No Muslim sect should be declared *Kafir* (non-Muslim).
- Hateful, provocative and outrageous slogans should be completely shunned.
- Proliferation of malicious and provocative pamphlets and writings should be stopped.
- No Muslim or Non-Muslim should be declared *Wajib ul Qatl*, except on judicial verdict.
- The authorities should deal firmly with those who defile non-Muslims' holy sites and (threaten their) lives and properties.
- Every Muslim is guardian of belief in End of Prophethood and Honour of the Prophet. Those who violate the teachings of Quran and *Sunnah* and indulge in foul language and issuance of edicts (*fatwa bazi*) weaken the campaign to safeguard the belief in Khatme Nabuwat. No group or party shall be permitted to promote its politics through belief in End of Prophethood or Honour of the Prophet.
- No incitement (*shar angezi*) of any kind against Pakistan and Saudi Arabia shall be tolerated.

*(The daily Ausaf; Lahore, July 29, 2019)*

The above calls for appraisal. All the evils pointed out above have been kosher for decades against Ahmadis, and remain so to-date. However, now that powers that be are subjected to similar onslaughts, the authorities have realized that these must be condemned and thrown out. Good idea, but still the mulla holds on to his tools of power in the form of chosen beliefs. State-supported clerics like Ashrafi and Muneeb ur Rahman pay lip service to tolerance and national unity but insist on making exceptions and sticking to their reservations. This is hypocrisy which will not allow such conferences bear the desired fruit. Hafiz Ashrafi, who presided over this mammoth event, was emphatic only recently on the Ahmadiyya issue:

- I am not willing to accept them (Ahmadis) in this country.
- To speak against Qadianis is Religious Harmony.
- We consider Mirza Qadiani anti-Christ (*Dajjal*).
- Those who do not recognize the Holy Prophet as the final Prophet (pbuh), we cannot recognize them.
- Inter-religion talk (with Qadianis)...this cannot be done and never will be done.

What is the probability level of success of such Solidarity of Pakistan conference that is presided by a cleric like Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, is anybody's guess. It may not make Pakistan solid, but it surely appears to solidify Ashrafi's position in halls of power.

## **Present day Mullaism in Pakistan – a sample for archives**



issues of national, societal and religious significance to the country. Here, we quote, very briefly, the Court's remarks on the conduct of Majlis Ahrar Islam:

"The conduct of the Ahrar calls for the strongest comment and is especially reprehensible. We can use no milder word for the reason that they debased a religious issue by pressing it into service for a temporal purpose and exploited religious susceptibilities and sentiments of the people for personal ends." p.259

Anyway, as stated above the Ahrar leadership went underground after this great misadventure and took refuge under the dome of the Khatme Nabuwat organization. In the following decades, the Khatme Nabuwat organization matured and performed its sectarian role quite successfully, and became a cover organization for all types of mullas including those who were committed to extremism and terrorism.

On the other hand Majlis Ahrar Islam revived itself some years later and was independent but fraternal with the KN organization. This unworthy arrangement is generally awarded a security grading of 'restricted' because of the ignoble past of the Ahrar; the beans, however, do spill out occasionally.

We translate below the headlines and the bold lines of the above ad, leaving aside the five mentions in fine print:

**In order to safeguard the belief in End of Prophethood and Honour of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) Respected Ulama, Religious Leaders and the great Sermon Imams of all Schools are strongly appealed to hold Protest Day Today, July 26, 2019, shed light on the following situation in the Friday Sermons and get these Resolutions passed:**

.....

**From: Joint Movement Khatme Nabuwat Liaison Committee Pakistan**

**Liaison: Office Majlis Ahrar Islam Pakistan**

**69-C; New Muslim Town (Wahdat Road) Lahore – Phone 042-45912644, 03006939453**

Note: The above ad shows clearly the strong mutual bond between these two packs. Their policy of exploiting religion for their political and personal gains is also apparent to any keen observer. History is repeating itself, despite the clear statement and warning of the great judges in 1954.

### **A leading mulla, claimant to commitment to end of prophethood, found involved in extensive money laundering, support to terrorism etc.**

*Islamabad; August 8, 2019:* Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi is an influential mulla who is Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council and also head of the Punjab Mutahiddah Ulama Board. In the latter capacity he is on the pay roll of the provincial government. He is a master of mixing politics and religion to wield unfitting influence in halls of power. Thus he often employs the issue of End of Prophethood for personal gain. He declared in public regarding Ahmadis, "I am not willing to accept them in this country...Inter-religion talk is a great thing, inter-sect talk is also great; but remember, Qadianiat is neither a religion nor a sect; it is an evil, created by the British. It is an evil created to attack Islam, Quran and Jihad, and it is created to attack the Khatme Nabuwat of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)...." In August there was a news item in the press and on TV about him and we reproduce it here to show how he and his type 'debase a religious issue by pressing it into service for a temporal purpose and exploit religious susceptibilities and sentiments of the people for their personal ends,' as brought out by worthy judges in the 1954 Munir Enquiry Report on Punjab Disturbances. The following is translation of three column news from the daily *Jahan e Pakistan* of August 8, 2019:

**Police case against Tahir Ashrafi on Money Laundering and Assistance to Terrorism**

Chairman Ulama Council received Rs 22.508300 million from a foreign NGO and Rs 4.344516 million from Germany.

**Money used for illegal purposes; involvement in financial support to terrorists; charges proved in investigation: FIA**

*Islamabad (Agencies, Monitoring Desk)...*

### **Ulama Council vows to launch campaign against extremism!**

*Islamabad; April 15, 2019:* The daily *Dawn* published a report with the above headline. We reproduce below extracts of the same for record and follow-up:

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) announced on Sunday that it will launch a countrywide campaign for eradication of terrorism, extremism and sectarian violence while the fourth International Message of Islam Conference urged the government to ensure implementation on the National Action Plan against terrorism in letter and spirit.

The conference was organized by the PUC in the honour of visiting Imam-i-Ka'aba Sheikh Abdullah Awad Al Juhany and presided over by President Arif Alvi.

A resolution adopted at the conference underlined that no organization or individual would be allowed to do politics on the issue of finality of Prophethood.

The conference pointed out that Islam is a religion of peace, tolerance and forbearance which has nothing to do with terrorism, extremism and sectarian violence. "Elements responsible for fanning these evils are enemies of Islam and Muslims."

The conference condemned events in Europe and the US relating to hatred against Muslims and Islam and feared that the attacks on mosques in the US, UK and other European countries would sabotage the efforts for interfaith dialogue and harmony.

It praised the role of New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and hoped that the world leadership would learn from her and eradicate terrorism and extremism from the globe.

President Arif Alvi said the world community should realize that no community or followers of any religion could be suppressed for a long time. "The day is not far off when people of Kashmir and Palestine will get rid of atrocities of Israel and India," he added.

The above are fine words and remind one of the need to note and ameliorate the plight of Ahmadis in Pakistan. Sound principles and policies do not make exceptions; fair ideas should be applied across the board to make an impact. Let's see if the observations made by the Ulama Karam in the presence of the Imam Ka'aba and the President of Pakistan are brought to bear on the situation of religiously marginalized groups in the country.

### **A national solidarity conference—mulla style**

*Alipur Saidan, District Narowal; May 12, 2019:* The daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* of Lahore published a lengthy press report on a conference held at a Barelvi tomb (*Darbar*) at Alipur Saidan at the occasion of its *Urs* (anniversary) under the supervision of Pir Munawwar Hussain Shah, the incumbent spiritual superior (*Sajjadah Nashin*). The report claims attendance in thousands of followers and a long list of Barelvi ulama as speakers, so it would be appropriate to reproduce here a summary of this press report to place on record the style and substance of such conferences these days in Pakistan in the Ahmadiyya context.

The conference's title is significant: *Aalami Khatme Nabuwwat, Tahaffuz Namus Risalat, Istehkam Pakistan Conference* (Worldwide End of Prophethood, Defense of the Honour of

Prophethood, Solidarity of Pakistan Conference). The political significance of the choice of the three themes for the rally is noteworthy.

The report highlights the fact that this *Darbar* is currently the heir to the great Pir Jamaat Ali Shah who at the time of the Partition supported the Muslim League and the Quaid-i-Azam. This is indeed laudable as few Ulama supported the Pakistan Movement. However, the claim that in 1946, Pir Jamaat Ali led more than 5000 Ulama and Sheikhs to the All India Sunni Conference is sham. To call all the commoners Ulama and Sheikh is rather phony. Their numbers also should be verified.

As these days anti-Ahmadiyya theme is thought to provide greatest political dividends, this ‘solidarity conference’ indulged mostly in anti-Ahmadiyya rhetoric. Following is quoted from the Report:

- Qadianis are using Islam to promote their despicable designs.
  - Mirzais are great mischief (*fitna*); that is murderous poison for the country and nation.
  - We shall spare no sacrifice to defend the integrity of Pakistan and for the defense of the dogma of End of Prophethood.
  - Pir Jamaat Ali led the frontal troops against Mirza Qadiani who was burgling against the palace of End of Prophethood, and led him to his ignominious end.
  - Pakistan was realized through his (Pir Jamaat Ali’s) beneficence. In support of the End of Prophethood he made life unbearable (*nakon chaneey chabwaay*) for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, and it was his prophecy that dispatched Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to hell.
- Etc etc.

We should place on record some of the anti-Ahmadiyya demands made at this ‘religious’ conference:

- Pakistan should place ban on all the activities of Qadianis.
  - Qadianis’ mischief is flourishing here; the government should enact stringent laws to neutralize it.
  - End of Prophethood should be part of school syllabus, in all its details.
  - The government should establish End of Prophethood chairs in universities.
  - The ruling elite, following the footsteps of Amir Millat (Jamaat Ali Shah) and in loyalty to the Holy Prophet, should fire all Mirzais from senior ranks (sic). (There are none: Ed)
  - Services of Pir Syed Jamaat Ali Shah in the realm of Pakistan Movement and the safeguarding of End of Prophethood should be made part of school syllabus.
- Etc. Etc.

It seems that the speakers at the conference have not even heard of Freedom of Religion or Belief, Human Rights, Human Dignity, Religious Tolerance, Absolute Justice – and they call their conference Pakistan Solidarity Conference. Bareilvis had a reputation to be religiously mild and tolerant, but that was decades ago; now they can produce only mullas like Allama Rizvi, Pir Qadri and Pir Munawwar Hussain whom the report gives the bloated title of *Amir Millat* (The leader of Islamdom).

The report mentions that authorities DSP, DPO and SHO Qila Ahmadabad made excellent arrangements for security at the conference.

### **Inflammable mix of religion and politics**

**July 25, 2019:** Opposition parties are hell-bent on worsening the government. On July 25, 2019 they celebrated a Black Day in all the provincial and federal capitals. Maulana Fazlur Rahman’s party JUI (F) apparently decided as a policy to conscript religion in service of his politics. End of Prophethood and the Honour of the Prophet are the main themes of his campaign.

In Islamabad, JUI (F) took out a procession. It was reported on the social media with photos of the occasion. Anti-Ahmadi banners were conspicuous for all to see. A big banner carried the following (Translation):

“This day we all promise that whenever and wherever a denier of Khatme Nabuwwat raises his head, we shall spare no sacrifice, physical, emotional and financial to demolish and destroy that, and we shall fully safeguard the dogma of End of Prophethood. **Jamiat Ulamae Islam, Islamabad.**”



Also, pictures of the following banners can be seen on the social media:

“Always beware of the following three:

SATAN; SHEZAN, QADIAN”

“Support of Qadianis: Unacceptable – Unacceptable”

The opposition held a huge anti-government rally in Peshawar on the same day. They called it Protection of the Honour of the Prophet Million March. Fazlur Rahman (JUI) again indulged in sectarian hate speech against Ahmadis on the issue of Khatme Nabuwwat. The *Dawn* of July 26, 2019 quoted his political deceiving statements as follows, *inter alia*:

“He said Jewish lobby and a religious minority had organized the prime minister’s visit to the US.”

“Mr. Fazl alleged that instead of protecting national interests, the premier fought the case of Ahmadis in Washington.”

A huge political rally was also called out in Quetta and mulla Fazl called it Khatme Nabuwwat Million March.

This reminds one of the observations of the two worthy top judges of Lahore High Court, who in the 1953 Inquiry into anti-Ahmadiyya riots in Punjab wrote the following about the Majlis Ahrar Islam mullas, the primary instigators:

“The conduct of the Ahrar calls for the strongest comment and is especially reprehensible. We can use no milder words for the reason that they debased a religious issue by pressing it into service for a temporal purpose and exploited religious susceptibilities and sentiments of the people for their personal ends.”

Fazlur Rahman, half a century later, is proving himself to be a true heir of the infamous Ahrar.

### **Picks from proceedings of a Khatme Nabuwwat (KN) conference**

Jamaat Islami (JI) displays its true colours

**Lahore; September 26, 2019:** The daily *Islam* published a Special Report on the proceedings of an annual KN conference held in Lahore by Aalami Majlis Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat (AMTKN). It carried a list of demands made in the conference by the speakers, followed by a statement of Liaquat Baloch, the Deputy Amir of JI, and was concluded by disinformation and bogus assertions. We reproduce below the translation of these entries (extracts):

“AMTKN expressed its utmost anxiety and concern over Qadianis’ ever-increasing anti-Islam activities and demanded the government to take notice of unlawful activities of Qadianis and thus defend ideological frontiers of the country and uphold the Islamic provisions of the Constitution. They (Ahmadis) should be made to abide by the Constitution and not allowed to play with religious sentiments of Pakistanis and the basic ideology of Pakistan. Qadianis are busy in intrigues against Islam and Pakistan. They plot to enhance their effectiveness in government circles in order to meet their objects. It is essential that in the interest of defense of the country’s physical and ideological boundaries, Qadianis’ activities should be banned, and they should be removed from all key posts. Qadiani TV channel (MTA) spreads mischief and falsehood. It mocks at Muslims’ belief and thought. The authorities should ban its transmissions without delay. Also, Qadianis are spreading apostasy through social media; the government should put a stop to it.

“As per recommendations of the CII, Sharia penalty for apostasy (*death*) should be imposed. The KN tenet should be made a part of school syllabus so that the next generation becomes well aware of the issues of KN and the honour of Prophethood. Qadianis should be removed from all key posts of all civil and military services. Anti-Qadiani Ordinance should be effectively imposed, and Qadianis should be forbidden to use the title of Islam....

“The special guest of this session was Maulana Fazlur Rahman, the Central Amir of JUI (F) and the MMA.... He stated that if we are true inheritors of our elders, then we should strive to the utmost to crush this mischief (*of Qadianism*)....

“Mr. Liaquat Bloch, Deputy Amir of Jamaat Islami Pakistan stated that Qadianiat once again is active under the umbrella of international imperialism. They should know that it is not possible to make any amendment to Khatme Nabuwwat, Islamic and Blasphemy laws in Pakistan. You have tried it again and again. We are soldiers of Honour of Prophethood. We are united in faith in Khatme Nabuwwat. The rulers have made a deal concerning Kashmir, and they have turned away from Jihad. We are conscious of our duties. Qadianis’ activism is a cause of great concern.

“JUI (F)’s Secretary General Maulana Muhammad Amjad Khan said that Qadianis and their associates’ dangerous game is poison to national security; Qadianis’ political intimacy with Israel and India is a huge conspiracy against Pakistan and Millat Islamia....

“Maulana Abdul Naeem, the KN missionary in Lahore said that Qadianis’ posting in key civil and military positions is a huge risk to national security; their accountability is essential. Qadianis should be removed from all key posts.

“The entire Qadianis literature should be confiscated. We’ll definitely defend the laws on KN and blasphemy. A notice should be taken of Qadianis’ worldwide conspiracies against Pakistan. The government should ensure that anti-Ahmadi law of 1974 is meticulously applied.”

**Comments:** Whither all the laws and policies laid down in Pakistan to discourage intercommunal hate and strife! Do the authorities know to what end similar hateful propaganda by Nazis led the German nation who otherwise were a good people but allowed themselves to be misguided and exploited by racial bigots and thugs?

Lord Gautama Buddha, 'the enlightened one', is reported to have said about *man*: "Consumed by craving (the pig), enraged by hatred (the snake), blinded by delusion (the cock), overwhelmed and despairing, man contemplates his own downfall, that of others, and both together."