[**Wilful fratricide**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1747407/wilful-fratricide)

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SHOULD a Muslim living in India envy his fellow Muslim living in Pakistan? Is the grass greener on this side of the border?

It is an invidious choice — between incipient insecurity and state-sponsored victimisation in India, or living with inequality and state-sponsored injustice in Pakistan.

Pakistan, even after 76 years, is still an unsolved Rubik’s cube. None of its components — ethnic, political, social, or sectarian — fit into a coherent pattern. One or the other facet is always out of sync.

Our communities fray dangerously at their edges. Our politicians bristle like scorpions in the same parliamentary pot. Brother judges in our judiciary are locked in a Cain vs Abel struggle. Our national policies are the raw material for comic books.

We should reacquaint ourselves with the writings of Gandhi & Golwalkar.

Worse still, we have become a nation practising fratricide in its worst form — the sort (in the words of a Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel) that “reaches deeper into ugliness, cruelty, and absurdity”.

India, after 76 years, finally has a government that represents its saffron majority. It is, however, led by a cabal of avowed vegetarians who from time to time lapse into cannibalism.

In 1948, M.K. Gandhi was murdered by a fellow Hindu Nathuram Godse. Today, Gandhi’s ashes are mud while Godse is lauded as a patriot. In 2009, Jaswant Singh (former finance minister of India and its external affairs minister) published a balanced biography of M.A. Jinnah. He was expelled for indiscipline by the BJP bigwig L.K. Advani, who in 1990, had led a rath yatra from Somnath across India. It culminated in the infamous destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.

In 2005, L.K. Advani during a sentimental visit to Karachi (his birthplace), expres­sed remorse at the demolition of the Babri Masjid. He said it was “the saddest day” of his life. Even sadder for him would be when, after visiting the mausoleum of the Quaid in Karachi, he lauded Jinnah as a mahapurusha or ‘great leader’ and a secularist.

He paid the price for such objectivity (anathema in BJP politics). Eight years later, he was coerced into resigning from all the main organisations of the BJP party that he had helped co-found. Worse, he — a former deputy prime minister — forfeited the Indian premiership to his nemesis Narendra Modi.

In 2017, a Congress stalwart Mani Shankar Aiyar described PM Modi as a ‘neech admi’. Despite his clarification — “Yes, I called Modi ‘neech’ but did not mean it as a low-born; I meant it as low” — Mani was suspended from the Congress party until restored by Rahul Gandhi in 2018.

In April 2019, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a campaign speech taunted Modi with the question: “Why do all these thieves have Modi as their surname? Nirav Modi [a fugitive diamond merchant], Lalit Modi [a cricketing chief banned for life], Narendra Modi.”

Despite Rahul Gandhi’s protestations that “he made the comment to highlight corruption and it was not directed against any community”, PM Modi had the jibe disinterred after four years and brought it to court as a criminal defamation case. The court obligingly sentenced Gandhi to two years in jail. The biting punishment was Gandhi’s removal from the Lok Sabha.

It was not enough for Pandit J.N. Nehru’s name and reputation to be dragged through the mire of RSS revisionism. Nehru’s great-grandson Rahul Gandhi had to be declared fair game.

PM Modi — no more Mr Nice Guy — has shown that he has learned less from his RSS models V.D. Savarkar and M.S Gowalkar than from Hitler, Stalin, Idi Amin, et alia. Clearly, courageous detractors of PM Modi including the doyen of Indian history Romila Thapar, the TV journalist Karan Thapar and the actor Naseer­ud­din Shah critici­­se at their peril.

They speak out against what they can foresee as a 21st-cent­u­­ry saffron Holo­caust. They be­­l­i­eve as Elie Wi­­esel did: “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

Those in the 1930s who neglected to read Hitler’s Mein Kampf were made to live out its fratricidal philosophy. He set Germans against Germans, inhumanity against humans.

We who live in both past time and present space should reacquaint ourselves with the writings of M.K. Gandhi and M.S. Golwalkar. Gandhi warned against the “sentiments of prejudice and superstition” that motivate “the custodians of Hinduism”. Golwalkar warned non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan that if they wanted to stay in the country, they could do so “wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen’s rights”.

For Pakistani Muslims, monotheism is a credo. For the Indian Muslim, it is an inadequate shield against the spread of Modi-theism.

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