

Review: Riley K. Smith, *Pakistan: An Enduring Witness, Living Sacrifice* Book Co., Bartlesville, OK, 2011

Pages:

Islamic Land of Severe Persecution

From its beginning in 1947, Pakistan has been under the dark cloud of Islam, which has only grown with horrific cases of blasphemy cases and the trampling of minority rights, mainly Christians.

Sadly, the situation seems hopeless as the combination of internal jihad and humiliation and external apathy on the 'freedom-loving' West combine to make a vice crushing victims.

Pakistan is a case study in what will happen in a country which adopts Islam, that any promises of equality before law are only ever realisable if the law is Shariah!

In 1947, India gained independence from Britain, and Qamar's family immigrated with thousands of other Muslims to the new country of Pakistan. She became a Christian and changed her name to Esther John (name changes are customary with religion changes in Pakistan).

On 2/2/1960, Esther was found murdered in her bed; her skull had been crushed. Some believed it was one of her brothers as punishment for apostasy and spreading Christianity. She is the first recorded martyr in Pakistan.

Christians had a difficult choice after independence, migrate to Islamic Pakistan, or remain and be persecuted in Hindu India.

The Acts of Thomas recount the reluctant disciple going to meet King Gondolphares who reigned over parts of Persia and modern-day Pakistan. He hires Thomas to build a palace but Thomas gives the money to the poor

and is sentenced to death, which was commuted. Under King Misdaeus he is put to death.

Numismatics shows evidence of King Gondolphares.

Another story states one of the wise men, Melchior, was a Pakistani scholar from Taxila university who visited the child Jesus.

Catholicism arrived in the 15th and 16thC.

In AD711, Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sind via jihad.

In 1001, Turk Mahmud of Gazni attacked northern India, and by 1202 Islam had reached Bengal.

Turkish dominion in India was interrupted by the Mongols (Mughals); Tamerlane in the 14thC, then Babur in 1525.

In 1556, Akbar was ruling as a Muslim, and till Aurangzib in 1707 Islam was the dominant force on the subcontinent.

Tipu Sultan was a violent Muslim ruler of the 18thC, persecuting Hindus and Christians.

19thC missionaries tried to help new converts, but unfortunately this was counter productive by creating financial dependencies.

Under the Hindu caste system, the lowest Chudras worked by removing and skinning dead animal carcasses, and cleaning toilets.

Protestant missionaries arrived in 1833.

In 1933, students coined the name "Pakistan" from the Muslim areas of: Punjab, Afghania, Kashmir, Sind, and Balukistan.

In 1919, British General Amritsar ordered troops to open fire in a crowd Punjab, killing 300.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah led the Muslim League and is considered Pakistan's founder. Jinnah (1947): "You are free; you are free to go to

your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place ... in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State ... We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another ... we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.” [pp43-4]

Jinnah died in 1948, and in 1949 the Objectives Resolution was passed, relegating Christians to second-class status.

President Muhammad Ayub Khan ran a military coup in 1958 and changed the constitution in 1962, renaming the country to the “Republic of Pakistan”.

In 1973, President Z. A. Bhutto codified that, “Islam was to be the state religion”. He began to nationalise industries.

In 1977, General Zia ul-Haq took control, enacting martial law and introducing Shariah benches. This included the “Hudood Ordinances”, which are Islamic punishments such as stoning.

Under Pakistan’s Blasphemy Laws, the accused has everything to lose, but the accuser nothing.

In 1860, the British created the Indian Penal Code 1860, Chapter XV read, “every man should be suffered to profess his own religion, and no man should be suffered to insult the religion of another”.

In the 20thC, when a Hindu writer offended India’s Muslims, the British added s295a for “deliberate and malicious” intent.

In 1982, wilful defiling of the Quran was made punishable by life in prison (s295b).

In 1986, s295c added insulting Muhammad. In 1991, Christian Gul Masih was the first one prosecuted under this law and sentenced to death, only acquitted by the Lahore High Court in 1994. Gul had to flee to Europe for safety.

In July 2009, Christian Imran Masih was charged under s295 for burning pages of the Quran along with some rubbish. He was given life in prison.

In June 2009, Asia Bibi was arrested for blasphemy and sentenced to death. She eventually fled to Canada where she lives in poverty.

Ramida or *ar-ramad* means “extreme heat”. During Ramadan Muslims break fast at sunset with an *iftar* meal.

The Taliban use kidnappings to raise funds. This, and rape are common in rural areas.

Zina is adultery.

The white in Pakistan’s flag supposedly represents minorities.