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IMAM'S HATEFUL TALK HURTS HINDUS

By RON BANERJEE

Multicultural Canada is about to welcome British imam Sheik Riyadh ul Haq as a visitor so he can speak at a Toronto conference of Muslim youth this weekend. This Islamic cleric has made headlines for comments vilifying Jews and Hindus, among others, calling Hindus in particular the "chief idolators."

Islamist fanatics have used this type of reasoning to justify atrocities against Buddhists and Hindus through the ages. According to American historian William Durant, South Asia from 700 AD onwards suffered the worst genocide in history at the hands of Muslim invaders, with an estimated 80 million people slaughtered over seven centuries. This invasion was marked by the systematic destruction of an estimated 50,000 Hindu temples, as well as the enslavement and conversion of millions to Islam.

Conquerors used Hadith scripture, where Mohammed is quoted as saying that Allah shall protect the conquerors of India, as justification.

Clearly, unscrupulous usage of Koranic verses has been used to justify heinous acts. For example, Hindus use idols (as symbols) in worship; Islamic fanatics denounce this practice as "sinful idolatry" and use it to stir up hate.

Since 1947, the Islamic state of Pakistan has steadily reduced its Buddhist and Hindu minorities from 15% to less than 1% of the population. U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy in 1971 described the genocide of Hindus by Pakistani troops in East Pakistan: An estimated 2.4 million were slaughtered in one year.

Recently, Pakistan-backed Islamist terrorists in the Indian state of Kashmir have driven 400,000 Kashmiri Hindus into exile in refugee camps in other parts of India. This ethnic cleansing is being perpetrated by religious Islamic terrorist groups such as the LeT. These groups base their recruitment on Pakistani religious madrassas, where imams use scripture as a basis to stir anti-Hindu hate.

In Canada, news reports indicate that the 17 terrorist suspects arrested recently were allegedly using images of Hindu gods as target practice. In 1991, three members of the Pakistan-based group al-Fuqra were arrested while crossing from the U.S., allegedly planning to bomb Hindu temples in Toronto.

Hindus have been the community hardest hit by terrorism in Canada to date. Most of the casualties in the Air India terrorist bombing were Hindu. This attack, the worst in Canada's history, resulted in part from the indifference of Canadian authorities towards hate-spewing extremists entering the country.

The local Muslim community has asked for government funding to attempt to divert Canadian Muslim youth from the path of terrorism. It seems ironic that at the same time that this request is being made, Haq has been invited to address a youth conference hosted by the Islamic Foundation of Toronto.

As Canadians, we ought to consider whether we should allow Haq, who appears to support the same venomous ideology against Hindus that has historically inspired numerous atrocities, to enter our country. This should be viewed in the context of the record of oppression and genocide against Hindus in South Asia, past terrorist outrages against Hindus in Canada, as well as the current danger to Canadian Hindus.

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