

CONSTRUCTING TERROR CAPSULES ROLE OF RELIGION

During the last three decades, post globalization, there appears to be a strident resurgence of religious identities. This process has given fillip to the assertion of religion as a phenomenon particularly in different parts of the world. It has resulted in a complex tangle in which religious dogmas and parallel processes of modernization have created irreconcilable situations. One of the frequent results has been violent social and political eruptions posing a grave challenge to world peace.

History is replete with the instances in which religion has been used as a weapon for social solidarity, political supremacy and even a tool for subjugation of different varieties. However, with the expanding civic consciousness, religion has been gradually relegated to the background in the conduct of social and political affairs of societies. This consciousness has seeped even in societies and states, although discreetly, which claim and assert their prominence in the name of religion.

Post Cold War Scenario

The end of cold war brought forth a new and novel phenomenon of utilization of religion as a diplomatic manoeuvre to settle scores among the rival states. And this is what we are witnessing in different zones of conflict in present day world. Incidentally most of these zones are located in the Muslim world. It may be noted that these violent regions did not spring out of blue. There was a method which resulted in the emergence of this madness and which in some cases is now assuming the form of a smoldering volcano. The credit for constructing an Islamic capsule to be used for indoctrination and a tool for cognitive transformation goes to

the US which got it developed and used it in Afghanistan to drive out the Soviets (the then USSR) from that country. The doctrinal inputs were provided by Saudi-Pakistani experts for the same. A close dissection of this device reveals the gross misinterpretation of Islamic texts and even distortions of its translations. The latest information and transmission technologies were used to disseminate these contents globally and it is still available on US Websites.

The Muslim ideologues who used this device to the hilt are aghast that it has deviated from the larger objective of establishing an Islamic *Caliphate* as perceived by them after achieving the results in Afghanistan. This fantasy is guiding the groups of young people in creating mayhem and barbarities in South, Southeast and West Asia. The producers of this barbarous theatre of conflict continue to stoke the fire through the means available to them. In this connection, the latest sermon of the chief ideologue of Al-Qaeda, Sheikh (Sheikh) Ayman al-Zawahri, disseminated by As-Sahab Media titled as '*Don't Forget Kashmir*' is quite revealing.

Ayman al- Zawahri's Guiding Principles

According to him "Arab Mujahideen wanted to head to Kashmir after expelling the Russians from Afghanistan. However, the Pakistani government and Army- the toadies of America-were lying in wait for them". Ayman al-Zawahiri's lament is that after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the state was not allowed to establish itself as an Islamic Emirate. According to him "The policy of the Pakistani government and its disgraceful Army regarding the Kashmiri Mujahideen is no different from its policy earlier regarding the Arab Mujahideen after the Russian withdrawal, and later vis-a vis the Islamic Emirate and its Mujahideen and Emigrants." These observations of an ideologue of Islamic Jihad provide insightful exposures as well. The al-Zawahri points out : "All the Pakistan Army and Government are interested in is

exploiting the Mujahideen for *specific political objectives* (emphasis added), only to dump or prosecute them later; the beneficiaries in the end being a bunch of traitors who fill their pockets with bribes and illegitimate wealth." Incidentally, the noted Pakistani journalist and analyst, Najam Sethi, in an interview provides details of how the Pakistan army used the so called Mujahideen during Kargil war in 1999 and ultimately left them to die on the barren hills of Kargil mountains.

Ayman-al-Zawahiri maintains that the (Pakistan) army that carried out 'massacres of Muslims in Baluchistan and expelled the residents of Waziristan and Swat from their homes is not an army that can be entrusted with the defense of Muslims anywhere'. Thus, al-Zawahiri advises that "the first vital step to turn the Jihad in Kashmir into a Jihad for the sake of Allah, and not Jihad for the sake of international criminals, is to liberate the Kashmiri Jihad from the clutches of Pakistan's intelligence agencies". He advises that "the Mujahideen in Kashmir must benefit from the Jihadi awakening in the different theatres of Jihad. They must communicate with the Mujahideen in different parts of the world, and ensure that their voice reaches them, so that the Kashmir issue is raised at the popular level within the *Ummah* and its development are continuously brought to light." The project of al-Zawahiri is based on his specific ideas about *Shariah* (Islamic system). He avers that even after seventy years the '*Shariah* remains totally absent from the legal and commercial domains, and that the constitution of Pakistan and its legal system is loaded with clear-cut contradictions of the *Shariah*. And then he appeals scholars to "explain to the masses that Islam shall never be victorious except by Jihad and *Dawah* (invitation), and not by sham democratic games that have only distanced the Ummah from the teachings of the *Shariah*." It is interesting to note that Ayman-al-Zawahiri has mapped the areas-the independent sovereign states, exhorting for Jihad in these countries. He concludes that :

“You must clearly state that supporting the Jihad in Kashmir, the Philippines, Chechnya, Central Asia, Iraq, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia, the Islamic Maghreb and Turkistan is an individual obligation on all Muslims, until sufficient strength is achieved to defeat America, its allies and its agents.”

This sermon or declaration draws battle lines in the name of Islamic *Ummah* and *Shariah*. The young, gullible and directionless minds are fed the distorted, biased and politically oriented variants of Islam to engage and use them as foot soldiers. A well structured mechanism has been evolved and erected to keep the theatres of conflict alive. The dream of an *Ummah* (community) needs to be deciphered. The present day conflicts going on in West Asia have strong ethno-tribal dimension. The experiences of Iraq, Libya and ongoing conflict in Syria brings forth this dimension clearly. The interpretations and literature produced by Muslim institutions big or small, needs to be revisited.

It is equally interesting to note that ‘Kashmir’ is the latest addition in the map of al-Zawahiri and for the people of Kashmir he has only thing to offer, “*Dua*” (Prayer). In his reckoning death, devastation and mayhem is their fate. It provides a moment of thought for the people of Kashmir. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS REGIME CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

In its long odyssey, International Human Rights regime has established itself as a lighthouse in providing directions in upholding and strengthening these rights in building a humane world order based on equality, fraternity and rule of law. One of the significant contribution of the regime has been prodding States in establishing effective institutions and devising mechanisms to address human rights issues. These institutions are obliged to ensure that the basic human rights are respected and enforced. The mechanisms evolved by the UN Council on Human Rights as the chief organ of protection and promotion of human rights monitors the country situations relating to protection of human rights globally. This process has, by and large, resulted in effectively ensuring the observance of human rights in societies.

The spectrum of human rights in terms of themes and issues is very wide. Moreover, a huge legal corpus on the framework and enforceability of human rights is available now. Over the decades, UN Council has been making efforts to address the new and emerging challenges pertaining to human rights. The special Rapporteurs of the Council have been regularly reflecting on thematic issues. In terms of the mandate of the Council, Special Rapporteurs have also been visiting places whenever or wherever the concerns of violation of rights have been raised.

Terrorism

During the last about more than three decades, particularly with the demise of cold war, human rights regime has been facing new and serious challenges. One of the challenges has emerged in the form of *terrorism*. The Council had to make an extra effort in convincing the experts about the relevance of dealing with the menace in relation to human rights. In fact many an expert had averred that the subject

should not be brought within the framework of human rights due to various technical reasons. However, the realization of threat to human rights from *terrorism* prompted the Council to include it within the scope of their scrutiny. Be *that* as it may, the Human Rights regime appears to have ignored the challenge of state sponsored and state controlled terrorist activities in different parts of the world. It may be recognized that in view of the nuclearized world, the eventualities of conventional wars have diminished. Hence, many a state have found it expedient to resort to this tactics to settle scores with the rival states. The consequent desecration of human rights is conveniently overlooked in this nefarious stratagem.

Terror Entrepreneurship

In a straight jacket response, the emphasis has been generally laid on military security ignoring the crucial aspect of human security by states including human rights regime. In reporting the human rights violations in terrorism inflicted zones the sponsorship and organization of terrorism is generally ignored. The states are rightly ordained to observe human rights while dealing with terrorism. However, there is an urgency to locate the actual trajectory of terror machines operating in societies. In this vein, there is equally an urgency in identifying and dealing with state sponsored terrorism which has acquired a pace over the years. There should not be selectivity in this identification and it is incumbent upon the international community to accept this challenge and devise appropriate mechanisms to deal with it. It has been observed that rival states are making a diplomatic use of reports from terrorism inflicted situations. It is unfortunate that these reports are sometimes rejected by the concerned states for the reason of their being one sided and also due to lack of drawing a holistic picture of situations. The Special Rapporteurs of UNCHR should be sensitized to this state of affairs.

The Availability of Mechanisms

It may be recognized that as we march forward in our struggle in ensuring due compliance of human rights, we have to be vigilant that there are effective mechanisms available for common citizens in societies toward observing the human rights. Since there is a widespread perception that in the so called first world these mechanisms are available the focus is on other states outside the first world to monitor their systems. However, the available data supports the observation that there are democratic states where these mechanisms are in place. These mechanisms are vigilant enough in ensuring that human rights are dully observed even during conflict situations. These examples deserve commendation; otherwise there is an apprehension that many a human rights report which are perceived as diplomatically motivated would shake the faith of people on the very efficacy of human rights mechanisms. This perception does not augur well for the credibility of human rights regime in future. ■

KASHMIR: A FRESH LAYOUT

On June 28, 2019 the Home Minister, Government of India while presenting an amendment Bill in Parliament (Lok Sabha) on reservation to people living on the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir made a passionate presentation on the state as a whole. In fact, the Home Minister's presentation was preceded by his earlier visit to Kashmir for two days to have an on the spot assessment of situation prevailing there. It is interesting to note that there were neither shut down calls from separatist groups nor was any *hartal* (shut down) observed to protest the visit of Home Minister in Kashmir.

Touching the Chord

The Home Minister touched the chord by emphasizing that 'Kashmir had suffered a great deal and we have to restore the confidence of people even if we have to go out of our way.' He stressed that the Government had taken the pledge to accord top most priority to Kashmir. He sarcastically observed that formal inaugurations of projects (in the past) were routinely held without heralding their completion. He asserted that during the last couple of years, 16 projects which were announced by this Government had been completed and made operational. He frankly observed that when promises which are made are not fulfilled, it results in disenchantment among people. He mentioned varied developmental initiatives and packages undertaken for the state, creation of employment opportunities, mainstreaming the youth of the state, issues relating to Ladakh etc.

Panchayat Raj System

One of the significant reference made by the Home Minister related to Panchayat Raj edifice in the state. This is the area which should assume priority in the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. The government at the center needs to be sensitized that political empowerment of people is at the core of many a problem in Jammu

and Kashmir particularly in Kashmir valley. The Home Minister sarcastically referred to the phenomenon of political power remaining in the hands of three specific families. Thus, there is a craving among masses for political space and Panchayat Raj system provides this space. The Home Minister mentioned that Panchayat Elections in the state were held peacefully which elected 40,000 '*Panchs*'. The empowerment of these *Panchs* and assigning an effective role to Panchayats holds the key to restore the confidence of people particularly in Kashmir in the system. Historically, the policy makers in the Union Government could ponder over the disenchantment of people in Kashmir after the abolition of feudal order and restoration of *land to tiller* in early Fifties. In fact, Jammu and Kashmir was the only state in entire South Asia where thousands of acres of land were restored to the tillers. However, this historical initiative was not followed by establishing an effective and participatory Panchayat Raj system. It created a situation where at one level rural population was economically empowered but at political level they felt marginalized. Over the years, this feeling of marginalization has been growing and it is high time that it should be addressed. In India there are states which provide illustrations of effective functioning of Panchayat Raj system.

The statement of the Home Minister briefly discussed above needs to be viewed from the responses of media as well as conventional political class in Kashmir. It is an irony that the local as well as national media ignored the positive aspects of this statement. It appears that sensational events in the state have become the forte of media headlines. The emphasis on strengthening the grass roots level mechanisms in the state has created an unease among the conventional political class in the state because power, in all its dimensions, has been their mainstay. It may be mentioned that preparations are being made to hold Block Level elections. These measures are building blocks in building a strong and participatory edifice of a democratic structure in the state. It needs to be recognized that many developments have denuded this structure of its values and virtues.

In conclusion, we may emphasize that accountability and transparency of the system hold the key to determine the credibility of the initiatives on Kashmir. We shall be utilizing these two mechanisms in gauging the effectiveness of the measurers of the Union Government toward Kashmir in future. Panchayat Raj system shall provide the basic structure of the mechanism of accountability and transparency.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue carries two articles on Islam. These articles, written by scholars from Kashmir, project the neglected aspects of Islamic faith. These issues which should be the mainstay in the discourses on Islam among Muslims find scant attention. One important issue which is discussed is the attempt of radical Islamists to confuse the protests against corrupt and inefficient regimes as urge for seeking Islamism in their societies. The issues of gender equality, new avenues of production and initiatives of scientific explorations and innovations are side tracked. In the same vein, the well researched article on conflict in Yemen brings forth the issue of struggle of tribal ascedancy and quest for power in West Asia. Ironically, all this is placed in the basket of Islam.

This issue has a special feature on Federal Framework and Organizational culture of the Indian Police. This scholarly analysis reflects on the role of Indian police in dealing with the internal situations within the Indian Constitutional framework. ■

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