

C. M. Naim

## Will Justice Katju Please Take Note?

Consider the following, excerpted from an article that appeared on the editorial page of the *Sahāfat* (Delhi), dated August 8, 2012. The author is someone named Maulana Ali Haidar Ghazi Qummi, which implies that he is a Shi'ah scholar educated at Qumm—a real heavyweight as Maulanas go. The article bears the title: "World Community's Silence on the Massacre in Burma." The translation is almost *verbatim*, but badly fails to produce the rhythmic rhetorical force of the original.

I am stunned. The massacre of Burmese Muslims has become so common, and so shamelessly bold, that it is hard to find a parallel to it in human history, even after much searching. This game of hatred is not being played for the first time. Repeatedly the Muslims in that country have been made the target of the tyranny and oppression of the Buddhists. The news appears in the papers, then disappears. But this time the Muslims have been slaughtered on such a scale, so ruthlessly, and in such an organized manner that we can only say: God save us.

It seems that the Buddhists are not human; they are like wild animals, and their nature contains nothing but barbarism and a thirst for blood. Why are the Buddhists so wrathful toward the Muslims? Did the Muslims take away their properties? Did the Muslims extinguish the lamps in their homes? Did they destroy the watering channels to their fields? Did they cast lustful eyes on their women? Did they beat them up for no cause, or harmed them in any other way? Did they inflict tyranny of any sort on them?

The answer to all the above is only one: No. No, absolutely not. Then for what uncommitted crime were the Muslims punished? Why were they burnt alive? Why was their blood used to color the robes of mankind? Is there a jungle Raj in Burma even today? Is it still ruled by kings? Is there nothing called Liberty there? Has Democracy not come their way? Why is it that England and America, who are the *thekedars* of human rights across the world, have not heard of the killing of more than two thousand Muslims? Has England shown any concern about it?

You, the organizations concerned with human rights across the world, do you not recognize Burmese Muslims as human beings? In your list of countries does not Burma find a place as a human habitat? Why have you not taken any concrete steps in response to this obscene crime?

It is said that this province of Burma—where men and women, young and old were only recently cruelly tortured and then killed—was once a part of Bangladesh. A king who ruled Burma attacked and took control of it. That is why it today borders Bangladesh. When the Buddhists made life impossible for the Muslims the latter were compelled to save their lives by performing *hijrat* to Bangladesh. In the beginning they found shelter there. But then

Bangladesh put a closure to it, fearful of an endless immigration. When the refugees did not stop coming, the army of Bangladesh stopped them with bullets. Now where can they go? They have no place on earth, nor any in the sky. We feel they have become a burden on earth ... [and bring to mind] the words of the last Mughal Emperor when he was imprisoned in Rangoon. "Where should I live? Where should I go? No one is happy with me. I am a burden on the earth, and an object of the heavens' wrath."

Today the Muslims in Burma face the same situation. The Buddhists have made life impossible for them in Burma, and in Bangladesh the state refuses to give them shelter. Where can these oppressed people go? To whom can they appeal? Of the two thousand slaughtered Burmese Muslims not all were young men, whom one might imagine to have instigated a fight with the Buddhists. What fight did the children start? What guns did the women fire? What sticks did the old and the decrepit use to strike? But look at the sheer willfulness of the Buddhists. They first herded together all the people of the locality—male and female, old and young—then threatened and abused them. Cast aspersions on Islam. Created an air of terror. And then, after slashing their victims' bodies threw them alive into fire to burn to ashes.

They felt no shame or regret for their inhuman action; on the contrary, they took pride in it. And the proof for it is the video made available on the Internet....

Whether a Muslim understands or not, a crusade is now on, and everywhere its strategy is different. One place it is won by pitting the Shi'ahs against the Sunnis; another place it is waged by raising the banners of Bareilvi, Deobandi, and Wahhabi; and at a third place it is started by encouraging, for no reason, the difference [among the Shi'ahs] between the Akhbari and the Nasiri. And on every front it is winning....

Listen Muslim, when will you come awake from this sleep of neglect? When will you take an account of your own deeds? When will you get ready to safeguard your honor and your family? Is it not incumbent upon you to protect from harm your life and your property, your name and your honor? How long will you continue to live this life of infamy? Will you always only shed tears of blood? Have you taken a vow to stay away from knowledge and action? If you have really closed your eyes to all that surrounds you then it does not matter. I have no complaint. But if there is even an iota of left in you, if your conscience is alive even a tiny bit, and if you have even the most ordinary understanding of things, then you should stand up. Stand up and look at the events that are happening around you. Understand the times, examine the ways of the world, then put into action your resolution and shake the foundations of every house of tyranny. Otherwise you will be erased from the face of the earth; not even a story about you will remain.

In addition to the above, the article contains similarly accusatory and hortatory paragraphs on the failure of the Arab countries, in particular Saudi Arabia and Qatar, concerning the alleged war of proxy being waged by the United States in Syria. There is also a color photograph printed in the middle, showing heaps of naked corpses amid which stand any number of Buddhist monks in ochre robes.

Now consider the following from the same Delhi journal, dated August 16, 2012, under the heading: “An appeal issued to boycott Bodh Market in Delhi.” It is bylined the “*Sahāfat* Bureau,” and is accompanied by a picture of a shop manned by a Tibetan.

Humanity is ashamed of the massacre of the Muslims in Burma, but the silence of the United Nations and the Bodh leader Dalai Lama is most surprising, as is the failure of the Myanmar government in providing any sort of protection to the Muslims. The entire Muslim world is filled with anger and grief on account of the mass killing of innocent Muslims in Myanmar, and the entire world is condemning it. In India too protests were made against the killing and destruction inflicted on the Muslims by the Bodh people in Myanmar, but the Bodh government of Myanmar, whose leader is Dalai Lama, took no action against the Bodh terrorists who burned Muslims alive and also ruthlessly slaughtered them. Due to it, there is in the Indian Muslims a strong feeling of grief, anger, and anxiety. There is on the one hand an open massacre of Muslims in Burma, and then there is in Assam a massacre of innocent Muslims, whose homes are being burned down and who are being compelled to live in refugee camps. And yet nothing is being done against the Bodo terrorists. That too is causing much anxiety in Indian masses. In response to the targeting of the Muslims, by the Bodh in Myanmar and by the Bodo in Assam, the youth of Delhi are requesting each other, via SMS, not to do any shopping on the occasion of the Eid at the Monastery Market built on Majnun Ka Tila, and to boycott all Bodh people. The Muslim youth of Delhi say that the government in Myanmar is Bodh, and it is the Bodh who are mercilessly killing the Muslims, and because the religious head of the Bodh of Myanmar and the Bodh of Tibet is Dalai Lama, who has remained silent at the horrible killing of the Muslims—not even once has he asked the Myanmar government to take some action against the Bodh terrorists for their pillage and tyranny—therefore the Muslims of Delhi have decided not to buy anything from the Monastery Market of the Tibetan Bodh, and to boycott all Bodh people. Instructions are being issued via SMS to people, telling them not to buy anything from the Bodh. In this manner a message should reach the Dalai Lama from the peace-loving and shelter-giving Muslims of India. In view of the above appeal police squads have been detailed to the Monastery Market.

O.K. perhaps the learned Maulana and the underpaid minion at *Sahāfat* had no occasion to study History, Geography, and Buddhism. That is understandable, and not criminal. But let us return to the picture accompanying the Maulana’s article, for that was an editorial decision. It shows hundreds of naked corpses, arranged in rows on racks, with scores of orange-clad Buddhist monks standing amidst them.

بمزمین کے سر پہ بیچہ ہوں، عین قاف کے ہم جی قال ہیں، مروز زبردگی ایٹ آباد میں ڈرون طیاروں سے تازیلوڑکنے



آخر بچوں نے کونسی لڑائی لڑی،  
عورتوں نے کونسی اسلحہ چلائی،  
بوڑھوں، ناتوانوں اور کمزوروں نے کس پر  
لٹہ برسائی کہ انہیں خاک و خون میں  
تڑپا دیا گیا اور دیدہ لیری تو دیکھتے کہ  
پہلے یہاں مرد، عورت، بوڑھے، جوان اور  
بچوں کو یکجا کیا گیا، انہیں ڈرایا دھمکایا  
برا بھلا کہا اور اسلام پرنا روفتے کسے،  
دہشت کا ماحول بنا یا، خوف و ہراس  
پیدا کیا گیا اور پھر ایک ایک کو زخمی کر کر  
کے زندہ آگ میں ڈال کر جلا دیا گیا۔

آج کے دن کے سر پہ بیچہ ہوں، عین قاف کے ہم جی قال ہیں، مروز زبردگی ایٹ آباد میں ڈرون طیاروں سے تازیلوڑکنے

The bold-lettered text accompanying it is an excerpt from the article. It reads: “What fight did the children start? What guns did the women fire? What sticks did the old and the decrepit use to strike? But look at the sheer willfulness of the Buddhists. They first herded together all the people of the locality—male and female, old and young—then threatened and abused them. Cast aspersions on Islam. Created an air of terror. And then, after slashing their victims threw them alive into fire to burn to ashes.” A heart-rending picture, and an enraging caption. Except that *the picture is actually two years old, and shows the corpses of the Tibetan victims of the terrible earthquake of 2010 as they were being arranged by Buddhist monks into a massive pyre for proper cremation.*

Would the people at *Sahāfat* acknowledge the fraud they perpetrated? Would they confess to their intentions? Would any of the so-called Muslim leaders in Delhi—the “Shahi” Imam, the Mushawarat savants, the Madani cousins—take notice of the matter, and demand criminal proceedings against the newspaper? Would Mr. Markandaya Katju take notice of it? I strongly doubt it. Why? Because this sort of thing has been going on in much of the Urdu press in Delhi and Hyderabad for a long time, and has always been ignored by the Anglophone media and its participants and patrons. They alone matter in their own eyes.

May one hope, after the recent threats to public peace, they would give the Urdu press the same scrutiny they give to the English press?