

NOTE

Beheading Islam in Peshwar

Shah Alam Khan writes :

The news of beheading of two Sikh youth in the Peshawar region of Pakistan has not come as a surprise to the world. What more can people expect from a rabid race of Talibanis, born and brought up on the fodder of hate and violence. The news in fact brings to light the hollow rhetoric of the Pakistani establishment when they claim to have contained the menace of Taliban.

What surprises the civic society is the eerie silence of the Muslim ulema in the subcontinent (particularly in India) in their condemnation of this cowardly act of appalling brutality. Where are those who leave no opportunity to condemn what is inconvenient to them, no matter how comfortable it might be to Islam in general and Muslims in particular? What happens to all those voices which grow louder at times of trivial issues which they think place Islam in danger? What more danger can await a religion than accusation of the kind which one sees, after such heinous atrocities? When can the Islamic ulemas realize that acts such as these are the ones which actually put Islam in danger.

The blood of innocents in Palestine is mourned. The brutalities of Narendra Modi's pogrom in Gujarat were mercilessly damned. Then what happens when it's time to condemn the most bigoted and rabid of Muslims? By being mum to the brutalities of Taliban the Muslim ulemas are giving voice to those who perpetrate violence. What message is passed on to those who stand and fight for the cause of underprivileged and minorities in this country? Shouldn't this usual tale of the 'victim becoming the perpetrator' be put to rest once and for all?

The threat from Taliban is not confined to Sikhs, Jews or Hindus. They are running amok with a real danger to the spirit of Islam. Non-Muslims across the globe can secure themselves against any Talibani attack. They can build fences, walls and iron shields. But what happens to the global Muslim community? What fence can stop the condemnation of Islam in global drawing rooms? What wall can prevent the filtration of pure hate against Islam and its proponents amongst Sikhs? There are many who argue that Taliban does not represent true Islam. Definitely yes, they do not represent the common Muslim of the subcontinent. But unfortunately they have been made to appear as the face of real Islam in this polarized world. They are the ones who get the media attention and most unfortunately they are the ones who think that THEY represent Islam in their own brutal way.

There is a war between moderation and fanaticism, between love and hate. The esoteric Islam of the subcontinent faces a monster in the new, cruel definition of the religion. Physical force, debate, condemnation, every weapon in the armamentarium should be used. The tacit support of the Pakistani and American establishment at one time has fed the Taliban strong. It requires real

commitment of the moderate Muslim forces in the region to come out and take the bull by its horns.

Jaspal Singh was murdered by a group of thugs who are the so-called torch bearers of Islam. It wasn't Jaspal Singh who was beheaded, it was Islam beheaded in Peshawar. □□□