

BOMB BLASTS IN MUMBAI : CROSSING THE LIMITS

It was indeed terrible Tuesday (11/7/06) when innocent commuters going back home after hard day's work were targeted with bomb blast from Matunga to Bhayandar on western suburban trains in Mumbai. So far the death toll is more than 200 and about 700 people injured, many of them quite severely. No words are enough to condemn such horrible crime against humanity. No one who has even elementary sense of being human will commit such dastardly act.

Same day in the morning eight persons lost their lives in Srinagar, five of them tourists from West Bengal. Grenades were thrown at the tourist bus proceeding towards Pahalgam. Why these killings? Who is behind it? Earlier violence was mostly confined to Kashmir Valley. Now this has spread to various cities of North India, Delhi, Varanasi, Ayodhya and Mumbai. Mumbai witnessed such horrifying bomb blasts second time, first time in March 1993 in which more than 250 innocent people lost their lives.

Some people think, as many Kashmiris thought in 1989, that violence is the only way out and if they take to guns, *azadi* will be near at hand. Now after loosing 80 thousand people they have realised what repercussions use of violence has. 'Azadi' is as far away as it ever was for Kashmiris and all they have gained is violence and more violence. Peace now is as elusive as *azadi* itself.

We can very well realise the wisdom of Gandhiji's insistence on non-violence for attaining freedom for India from clutches of British imperialism. No one believed Gandhiji when he talked of achieving India's freedom through non-violence.

Even Churchill, the then Prime Minister of Britain, talked of Gandhiji with scorn and said what this 'naked faqir' can do to mighty British empire on whom sun does not set.

The world saw that the naked faqir and his non-violence shook the British Empire and got freedom for India. Generally people think that oppressed are justified in using violence and secondly that without using violence one cannot achieve liberation from the oppressors. However, one forgets that while violence is physical, non-violence is moral and spiritual. While the oppressed may not be able to match violence of the oppressor, non-violence gives the oppressed moral superiority and puts the oppressor to shame.

However, it is not easy to practice non-violence for an ordinary person. It requires tremendous inner discipline. Thus in Gandhiji's theory of non-violence there is equally important concept of what he called *satyagraha* (insistence on truth) and this requires tremendous patience. Thus non-violence, insistence on truth and patience, all go together and this has appeal of its own and if practiced honestly, it can achieve tremendous results as Gandhiji showed.

Interestingly, Gandhiji's concept comes very close to the Qur'anic teaching of truth and patience (*haq* and *sabr*) as enshrined in chapter 103. It is great shame that the so called 'jihadis are committing such dastardly acts of violence in the name of Islam. Nothing can be more un-Islamic than these horrifying inhuman acts. This game is being played for power and pelf by the section of Pakistani army. These terrorists cannot carry on such powerful blasts without the support of ISI of Pakistan. Lashkar-I-Tayyiba, which is suspected to be behind such acts cannot sustain itself without active help from ISI. Though Lashkar-I-Taiyyibah has not claimed responsibility for bombing on trains on Tuesday neither police has reached any decisive conclusion but all available indications point in that direction.

Nawaz Sharif, the Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan has said in his recently published biography that ISI is not under

government control and has been trying to de-stabilise India and Bangla Desh. He is certainly in know of things in Pakistan and what he says cannot be lightly dismissed.

It is such a matter of shame that Pakistan, which claims to be an Islamic state is bringing shame and disgrace to Islam. No other Islamic country is home to so many terrorists as Pakistan is. Pakistan also has become a front state for all American designs, which further fuels violence and creates more terrorists. In fact if Pakistan is true to Islam than it should have been heaven of peace. The prophet of Islam made peace central to Islamic teachings.

He accepted peace treaty of Hudaibiyah, which was thought to be humiliating by most of his close companions and yet the Prophet (PBUH) insisted on accepting the treaty as it led to establishing peace. What better noble example than this? But these terrorists feel no pang of conscience in killing innocent citizens. Even according to the rules of Shari'ah, non-combatants cannot be killed. These rules are precursors to the Geneva Agreement, which was drawn up hundreds of years after these Shari'ah rule.

However, it is these Muslims who are openly defying these Shari'ah rules in the name of Islam. What could be more condemnable? Also how can one say that one needs jihad for taking Kashmir? Jihad is not meant for conquering territory it is for defending oneself, if attacked and for controlling ones evil desires. The Qur'an specifically prohibits any war of aggression. It clearly says, "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you. Do not commit aggression; Allah does not love aggressors." (2:190)

And in throwing bombs and killing innocent people they are doubly guilty: they are aggressing against those who are not aggressors and over and above that they are killing non-combatants. Thus they are violating every injunction of Islam and ironically in the name of Islam. They have named their armed groups as "Lashkar-I-Tayyiba" (Holy Army) and "Jaish-I-Mohammad" (the Army of Mohammad, peace be upon him).

How can an army which kills innocent people be a holy army or army of Holy Prophet. Those who commit such inhuman deeds can never deserve to be called holy army or army of Mohammad (PBUH).

And as for jihad, it has never been used in the sense of war in the Qur'an. There are other words like *qital* and *harb* for war. The Prophet (PBUH) when asked what is jihad he is reported to have said that best form of jihad is speaking truth in the face of tyrannical ruler. Here so called jihadis themselves are tyrannical and it is needed to speak plain truth in the face. They need to be told that what they are doing is tyranny against innocent people.

It is such dastardly acts, which has brought bad name to Islam in popular imagination. We claim that Islam is a religion of peace but such acts convince people that Islam has nothing to do with peace but with violence and terrorism. It is in fact duty of Muslims to project themselves as model for peaceful behaviour. We cannot expect common people to discern and discriminate between handful of aggressors and large mass of Muslims living in peace with others and sticking to the Islamic teaching of peace.

It is believed that one of the intentions of throwing bomb on innocent people is to start communal violence in India. They threw bombs in Ayodhya, in a temple in Varanasi and earlier in a market place in Delhi last October. But people of India are mature enough not to fall prey to such dirty game. When bomb was thrown at a temple in Varanasi it was feared that it would trigger off communal riots. But not only Muslim leaders and intellectuals but also the chief mufti of Varanasi issued a fatwa decrying that attack on temple quoting the Qur'anic verse that to kill one innocent human being amounts to killing the whole humanity (5:32).

The chief mufti and chief priest of the temple in Varanasi came together and expressed solidarity thus completely frustrating the designs of those who wanted to ignite Hindu-Muslim riots. When a bomb was thrown at Ayodhya it was feared

in the same way that it might trigger off violence between Hindus and Muslims and nothing happened. We must salute maturity of Indian people.

This time around also all important Muslim leaders have condemned this cowardly attack on innocent people. Jamiat-I-Ulama-i-Hind, Muslim League, Jamat-e-Islami-Hind, all of them spare no words in condemning this heinous crime against humanity. No saner person will ever condone such ghastly killings. The Hindus and Muslims in Mumbai rose to the occasion and helped all those who were injured and removed dead bodies to hospitals.

It seems India will have to live with such attacks for sometime to come. It is therefore, necessary to be ever alert. What happened on terrible Tuesday is also partly an intelligence failure. Though it is very difficult to predict when and where terrorists will choose to attack, it becomes all the more necessary to be very very alert. It is the duty of the Government of India to protect the lives of people against such attacks.

Also, it appears there was lack of alertness and disaster management. The police and other authorities took long time to reach spots of disaster. Time and again it has been stressed by the NGOs and other activists that India woefully lacks in disaster management. It has been proved once again that India needs to work hard to provide for emergency situations.

People themselves were, it appears, more prepared than the authorities. Such major disaster man-made or natural, are bound to take place time and again and so government should work in all seriousness to evolve sooner than later the disaster management plan.