

# NOT SO HOLY

Arjun Prasad\*

The TV news just started. The big story read ‘Police fires teargas shells to disperse protesters who were demonstrating against the Israeli attack on Gaza in Jammu & Kashmir.’

‘Oh, Lord!’ exclaimed Maria, what is happening in Gaza? I do not know anything about the issue, even though this problem has been continuing for a while. Who is right and how can this sort of conflict be prolonged in this manner....who ever be right how the killing of innocent people can be justified’.

Anirudh sitting opposite to Maria heard what she said and replied that before taking sides she should primarily be aware of what the background of this conflict was. Anirudh gave her a book titled ‘NOT SO HOLY’ by a well-known academician Arun Choudary.

In fact Maria was not ready to read the book as she had lots of work to do and her semester examination timetable was out. Reluctantly, she took the book and turned the pages. The quote on the first page struck Maria. It was as follows.

*Whether the blood is one’s own or of others*

*It is the blood of Adam’s race*

*Whether the war rages in east or west*

*It is the blood of the peace of*

*The world*

-Sahir Ludhiyanan

Maria’s curiosity to read it brewed. She began to open the pages, read every line it told her.

## The Story of Jews and formation of Israel

The myth of Mosses marks the story of the Jews or Israel. Moses points to a vast land, which was fertile and called it the place where honey and milk flows. Later this land came to be known as Canaan. According to the Jewish religious text, this land was rewarded to Abraham (their ancestor).

There are biblical references about canon reason lies in the present Israel Palestinian region. It is believed that it from the twelve sons of Yakub, the son of Abraham the twelve Jewish tribes originated. Jews considered Palestine as their homeland, but they were driven out of Palestine about 2000 years also by the Roman emperor. Thus, the Jews were forced out of their homeland and they were scattered and settled in different parts of the world.

---

\* The author is a second year student of MA in Developmental Policy Planning and Praticce at theTata Institute of Social Sciences, Tuljapur, Maharashtra. He could be contacted at arjun.prasad51@gmail.com

In the initial stages, the Jews were granted political rights but gradually the situation changed. Propaganda that Jews were Actual agents for the trouble became popular among the natives of many European countries. This led to the massacre of thousands of Jews for centuries.

It was during the sixteenth century that this situation began to end and many countries showed humanitarian attitude towards Jews. The United States of America became the first country to grant complete political freedom and privileges to the Jews. Following this, England and Italy nullified the laws against the Jews but this was not the case of entire Europe. The migrated Jews mingled with other European communities causing no hindrance to their religious practices. Unfortunately, the Jews became the victims of hatred when they emerged very successful in society.

The Anti-Jewish propaganda popularised the notion that the Jews should be destroyed forever; for the betterment of humanity. It was in this scenario that Hitler emerged as the furour of Germany and the rest is history. For torturing and killing of Jews, concentration camps were built. The official statistics reveal that Hitler and the Nazis have massacred around 57 lakhs of Jews during the second World War.

The defeat of Germany during the second World War led to the liberation of the remaining Jews from the horrific concentration camps.

## **Israel's Formation**

The Zionist movement which was formed by Theodore Hersel, aimed at the creation of a Jewish state for meeting large scale migration, organisational and financial arrangement was needed. To meet this purpose a Jewish National fund was set up to purchase land which was to be occupied by the settlers.

Palestine became a British territory in 1919 and Jews started migrate to this region. The British did not handover power with any clear demarcation of power between the Jews and the Arabs. After the liberation of the Jews from the concentration camps more Jews migrated to Palestine. In 1947 a conflict started between the Jews, the British and the Arabs. Hotel Camp David was blasted and UN. General Assembly voted in favour of the partition of Palestine .The proposal of UN was to give by half of the territory to create Israel. Jerusalem and Bethlehem became administrative units. The proposal was rejected by the Arabs and welcomed by the Jews but they did not recognise the legitimacy of the Arab territory.

On May 14, 1948 the British withdrew the troops without handing over power either to the Jews or the Arabs. On the day of the British withdrawal the state of Israel was proclaimed by Ben Gurion, the then Prime Minister and Weizeman the then president of Israel respectively. Thus 2000 years of the Jewish dream of a homeland came to be fulfilled.

The Arabs created an extensive empire in the seventh century A D in Palestine and considered it as their home. The Migration of Jews initially was not considered as a threat to the Arabs. Both Arabs and

Jews considered Palestine as their homeland therefore the ...clash was not only religious but it was a clash of two different and aggressive nationalisms. From 1904-1921 around 76000 Jews went to Palestine. From 1947-1999 around 4 lakh people migrated to Palestine. The Middle-East countries did not recognise the Jewish state.

The modern Palestinian problem – which burns west Asia – started in 1948 with the sudden withdrawal of British without proper consensus between Arabs and Jews. The irony was that the same Britain was able to do it in the case of Indian and Pakistan. The Jews took advantage of this situation and declare their Jewish state.

The UN proposal of dividing Palestine and handing over half of it for the creation of Israel was nothing short of humiliation and unacceptable for the Arabs. This led to the war between the Arabs and the Jews. The Arabs got support from the neighbouring countries and the armies of Egypt Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. They attacked Israel and gained 21 percent more land of Palestine than the propose plan in the partition by the UN. A cold war ensued between the two countries under the leadership of the two blocks that is the capitalist – United States of America (USA) block and the socialist United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) block. These nations sides for their own vested interests to have control and strategic importance in West and Middle-East Asia. The USA supported Israel while the USSR supported the Arabs.

The West Asian countries rallied once again against Israel in 1967. Egypt closed the Gulf of Aquah, which was the only access for Israel to Red sea. Israel was able to wage a powerful air strike against the Egyptian Air force and it defeated the Air force in the ground itself. This in turn made the situation of Arabs more vulnerable. Israel captured Gaza Strip and Sinai from Egypt, East Jerusalem and west bank from Jordan and Golan Heights from Syria. Israel thus accepted 28000 sq.km; thrice the size of its own territory. This has made the condition of Arabs in these regions also vulnerable and seven lakh people become refugees in other neighbouring countries. Following this, the Arab countries were not willing to fight against Israel. An umbrella organisation which stood for the case of Palestinian liberation was formed, named Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964. From 1969 this organisation was led by Yasser Arafat. He was successful in bringing the international attention and support to the Palestine issue. The rest of the Arab countries with effective oil politics pressurised Europe and gained sentiments for Palestine and Japan reversed its policy towards Israel.

A faction of the PLO – Black September made Israeli Olympic team hostile in Munich Olympics in 1972. In the firing to rescue the hostiles, terrorist as well as the hostiles were killed. This attack gave the Israelis an advantage and enabled them to corner PLO and they were able to strike PLO and its centres.

The decision of Yassar Arafath to support Iraq during the Kuwait invasion shocked the entire Arab world. Iraq was defeated. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who supported PLO stopped their co-operation.

Many attempts were made to find out a solution to bring peace in the region .The Oslo treaty was a historic step for achieving this aim. The Israeli Prime Minister Yetzack Rebbin and Yasser Arafat met in Oslo .For the first time Israel agreed to recognise Arafat's leadership. Gaza strip and West bank were granted autonomy, in return Jews of these areas were allowed to resettle. Thus Oslo treaty was an important diplomatic exercise in smoothening the relationship of the two countries.

The Oslo treaty paved the way for a short lived peace.. During this period many groups separated from PLO, Hamas thought Oslo treaty was against the interest of Palestine people. They wanted to break this and thus turned more radical. Many terrorist attacks were conducted by them and assassinated Rahim Sevi, the then foreign Minister in 2003. Following this Arafat was held under house arrest by Israel and in 2004 he died (allegations are there that Israel has poisoned him). Ever since that there did not emerge a leader who can guide and lead the Palestinian cause.

UNESCO and UN General Assembly have recognised Palestine and gave membership. The current scenario is that Israel is attacking the Palestine people on Gaza breaking all humanitarian consideration and without any botheration of the international community. Now the battle is like that of David and Goliath. Israel became a strong nation with possession of powerful weapons, the world's most efficient spy network Mossad and the support of US whereas Palestine possess only a few weapons and even stones are used as weapons to counter the firing from the machine gun. For restoring peace the neighbouring countries with permanent members of the Security Council and national community should stand up and find a solution.

Maria closed the book and she started watching news channel, she saw a flash news that Israel has bombed the rehabilitation centre for the physically challenged. She was shocked and wondered why countries like India were not reacting against this? Her father replied that we cannot comment or condemn it as both countries are our friends. Maria was not satisfied with her dad's reply. She knew that the main objective of our foreign policy was strengthening of the independence of the country and elimination of all forms of imperialism, colonialism, and racialism and thereby uphold world peace through mutual cooperation. Maria asked herself about the relevance of NAM. Maria's mom asked why is that even innocent kids are not spared? Maria replied that the most ironical thing is that the race which once subjected to cruel torturing and killings and forced migration are, doing the same to others.

Anirudh called Maria and asked whether she liked the book. She thanked him and replied 'everything is fair in war but even in the deadliest battles of history did follow some rules...'

## **Epilogue**

The Indian parliament did not pass any resolution against the Israel attack on Gaza... Hold on! Fine, it is an international issue, then what about Mussafarnagar riots??? Did anyone condemn it, rather than using it for polarising the voters on communal lines? Whether in Gaza or Mussafarnagar 'the majority' is not affected by it so it is obvious that why 'civil society' hesitate to take stand.

The efforts to bring down the violence have finally succeeded. It was under India's mediatorship the issue was solved... Hamas and other organisations have agreed for the peaceful settlement and Israel assured that she would not interfere in the affairs of Gaza. This effort of India was appreciated by other nations and got a permanent seat in UN Security Council.

Finally.....

The phone rang, and Maria woke up from a deep sleep