

## Rohangiya Problem and Sikhism

A video where Khalsa Aid (a Sikh volunteers organisation based in UK) volunteers serving langar at a camp of Rohangiyas Muslim displaced from Myanmar due to violence has come to social media. What is this Rohangiyas problem requires an analysis.

Recently thousands of Rohangiyas Muslims fled from Myanmar (earstwhile Burma) and took refuge in Bangladesh and India, which started a verbal combat between the Hindu fundamentalists, Muslims and pseudo-secularist supporters of Rohangiyas. The Rohangiya, a people of South Asian origin, dwelled in an independent kingdom in Arakan, now known as Rakhine state in modern-day Myanmar since 800AD. If religious rivalry between local Buddhists and Rohangiya Muslims is the basic reason for this exodus than how for such a long time they were surviving in Myanmar? What is the reason of this conflict, requires rigorous analysis. In fact they were the original settlers of Arakan. Starting in the 8th century, Arab merchants began conducting missionary activities, and many locals converted to Islam. Burmese forces invaded the Rakhine cities in 1406. The Burmese invasion forced Rakhine rulers to seek help and refuge from Rohingya population is concentrated in the historical region of Arakan, an old coastal country of Southeast Asia and was part of Maurian Empire. It is not clear who m neighboring Bengal in the north. During British rule, their policy encouraged Bengali inhabitants from adjacent regions to migrate into the then lightly populated and fertile valleys of Arakan as farm laborers. Muslim majority state of Rankine wanted merger with east Pakistan after Britishers left this area, which some how did not materialized. Even now they were fighting for the same and started a armed rebellion against Myanmar government. Here reasons are same such as India is facing in J&K.

In fact religious rivalry is not limited to Myanmar only. It is existing in India too since generations. Mughals and before them Turks and Afghan invaders attacked India and converted local Hindus to Islam with sword and ultimately divided the country in three parts. And main cause of this rivalry and ultimately the division of the country was religion only.

Main cause of the conflict in Myanmar is the terrorist activities by Rohangiyas which involved killing of many Buddhist and Hindus and even attacks on security forces. Recent reports from Myanmar show

that Muslim Rohangiyas have not only attacked security forces but also killed thousands of Hindus and other non-Muslims living in that area. Even in camps in Bangladesh, Muslim Rohangiyas abducted Hindu women and forced them to convert to Islam. This community was reported to be involved in terrorist activities in India too. Now views have been raised by some pseudo-secularist and Muslims that these people should be given asylum in India on humanitarian grounds. On the other hand so called nationalist Hindu lobby is opposing it on the ground of their terrorist back ground. In the light of violence at Pakistan border with India and in J&K, it is justified that these people should not be given asylum in India, who is already suffering from Islamic terrorism and will be threat to Indian security. Also population explosion, poverty and unemployment are problems which are effecting the India's growth.

Question is, does religion teaches hatred amongst mankind. It has been reported in press that Sikhs have started langar (free food) in Bangladesh and Myanmar to help these displaced persons in camps. It is a good and human gesture but question arises, why have Sikhs only of all people, crossed into Bangladesh to feed thousands of Rohiangiya refugees?

It is known that Indian government has declared Rohangiya Muslims a "threat to National Security" and India, under the present dispensation, wants to deport them?

A question is being asked? Why reach out to Muslims, who committed the worst of atrocities on the Sikhs in the past? Has Sikh community forgotten the savage execution of two of their gurus - Guru Arjan Dev ji and Guru Teg Bahadur ji- under Mughal orders? Have they forgotten how young children of Guru Gobind Singh ji were walled up alive and thousands of soldiers of his Khalsa army brutally massacred?

Have Sikhs forgotten how Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durani had an estimated 25,000 Sikhs murdered in two days some 250 years ago?

Is it because of what is written in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the fountainhead of their strength that empowers them to swim against the tide.

Let us go through a tiny portion of the ocean of humanity that's embodied for eternity in Sri Guru Granth Sahib - collective writings of six of the ten gurus and of more than thirty other spiritual figures from various traditions and geographical boundaries or distinctions of castes,

languages and faiths.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is awash with calls to humanity to treat human race as one. Gurbani fiercely opposed state excesses. The gurus warned against them.

Now, let's also look at the worldview of Guru Gobind Singh, whose military campaigns against tyrant Islamists are often cited to promote a misleading narrative that the Sikhs were born to save and support only one race, community or group.

Guru Gobind Singh ji delivered a profound analysis of humanitarian approach in Akal Ustat, his ode to God. He wrote, *"Temples and mosques are the same, there is no difference between Hindu worship and Muslim prayer; all human beings are the same, they may just appear to be different."*

That leads us to believe humanity is not defined by press statements or rhetoric. You turn inward to discover it. The Rohangiyas have faced brutal assaults as did many of us - Hindus and Sikhs - in our own recent and distant histories. One should keep in mind, Sikhs were fighting to protect their own country from foreign invaders whereas Rohangiyas are fighting against the unity and integrity of their country where they were living since 800AD, just for religious fanaticism.

Just imagine what would have happened if Guru Teg Bahadur hadn't held the hand of Kashmiri Pandits. Just imagine if Guru Gobind Singh hadn't done what he did to fight off Mughal terror. And the Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere - wouldn't have been alive if fellow Hindus hadn't saved us from rampaging murderers in 1984.

Khalsa Aid, the charity registered in the UK, have sent its teams to the Cox's Bazar area in Bangladesh. But they should look after other aspects of violence and persons responsible for that and help accordingly. It is very important while rendering help to distinguish between tyrant and victim. What about Hindus in camps who were killed and forced to run by Rohangiya Muslims. How only on the basis of writings in Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh volunteers can close their eyes towards other aspects. Only poor and depressed people need help and not one involved in drug smuggling and terrorist activities. These fanatic Muslims (radicalised under *Wahabi* effect) have killed four to five lacs of their own Muslim brethren, who are not *wahabis* in Syria, Iraq and other countries. For what? because it is written in their religious doctrines

that all others, who do not believe in their doctrines are *kifirs* (apostat). Has any Muslim country accepted any Muslim refugees in their country. Even Bangladesh, which hosts many Rohangiya refugees, also refuses to recognise them as citizens. Why only European country and India only should accept them, because they are more humanitarian? India is already suffering from population boom, scarcity of food, poverty and change in demography problems. It is time that one should think rationally and not only on sentiments.