ISLAM BEHIND BARS

FAITH IN THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX
Syed Saladdin Ahmed 
Supreme Commander, 
Hizbul Mujahideen, 
Kashmir Chairman, 
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When India literally and forcibly launched its forces on the 27 October 1947 on the territory of Kashmir, there was at that time resistance, and the people of Kashmir rose up against this invasion. They launched an armed struggle, and as a result of it, a major part of the Indian invasion forces (now known as Assed (If) was re-routed from the Indian forces. Since that time until now, the resistance forces have been engaged in the battle against the Indian occupation forces. Today, we are fighting for the self-determination. They have been suppressed, oppressed, confined to concentration camps, subject to torture and physical pain, and women and burnng of property. Despite the destruction and devastation, the resistance forces have continued to fight, and in the last 50 years, they have not surrendered and did not accept even for a fraction of a second the order to turn their multitudes into swarms of captives. The Indian occupation forces have suppressed all types of resistance forces. The struggle of freedom has remained constitutional and democratic, and political and military levels. Since 1989, when the people of Kashmir and Hizbul Mujahideen - the youth and the leadership - got convinced that it is really impossible to get freedom from Indian occupation by these peaceful and constitutional means. Under these conditions, after thorough scientific analysis of the prevailing situation, the decision was taken to have a recourse to armed struggle. The well-planned armed struggle against Indian occupation forces was launched in 1989. The struggle has now gone into its eight year.

The Message, October 1997

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public is being simultaneously subjected to mass killing, gang-rape of women and devastation of property. These three items have become a common-day phenomenon. The basic purpose of these human-rights violations and atrocities is to drive and force the Kashmiri mujahideen to the point that they will withdraw from this path of jihad. But by the very nature of the same suppression and oppression of the Indian forces, the greater is the hatred of the Kashmiri people for the system of domination. The conflict situations and actions of the mujahideen against the occupation forces. At present, face-to-face confrontation is going on with the Indian forces in one corner of the occupied Kashmir. The most successful and destructive actions are going on in India against the UN and the occupation army troops, including the regular army, infantry, black-cat commandos, mountainous divisions and the border-security forces. By the Grace of Allah, the tempo of actions of the mujahideen is increasing day by day, both in its quality and in its quantity.

Are you any conclusion to your struggle in the near future?

Yes, Inshallah, we are very hopeful that India will not sustain the total loss of 200,000 troops in India, including four big generals, four to five brigadier-cavalry, and more than 150 other officers in the Indian army. In addition to this manual loss, there has been the loss of millions of dollars in India due to the loss of arms, machines, and other equipment. The Indian army is now engaged in the battle with the mujahideen and has no chance of victory.

Are you ready for discussions with Indian authorities should the opportuni ty arise?

Yes, we are ready to have bilateral talks subject to two conditions: that they will first accept Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed area, and secondly, that all political parties are to participate in the talks. - India, Pakistan, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. These are the two crucial points that we are ready to be a party to any talks.

What are your comments on the hostage-taking situation that has emerged in Kashmir at the hands of the unknown group al-Qa'ida?

Syed Saluddin: I have made it clear, the political leadership of Kashmir has reached the conclusion that the combined strength of Kashmiri mujahideen (United Jihad Council) has also made it repeatedly clear that all political and military policy is designed by the Indian RAW (Indian espionage agency) in order to deprive this Kashmiri freedom struggle from the way of sympathy which has been munching in Western circles and secondly, to designate a label of terrorism on this just and holy cause of the liberation of Kashmir. By the Grace of Allah, this situation has itself entangled India, and it is not in a position to act against it. The Western countries know that by kidnapping Western visitors or killing them, there was little benefit to the Kashmiri mujahideen. If there is any benefit at all from this action, it is for the Indian government. One advantage to the Kashmiri movement from Western sympathy and secondly, to level a charge of terrorism on this movement, which the Western states know that it was all done and designed by the Indian RAW. The Kashmiri mujahideen are creating a problem of huge benefit to India and has observed so many Western members, and protests and calls against this wrong action.

What is your relationship with other groups involved in the Kashmiri struggle, such as Lashkar-at-Tayiba and Hararakat ul-Mujahideen?

Syed Saluddin: All Kashmiri groups, small or big, actively involved in the on-going Kashmiri struggle have been brought together under the umbrella of the United Jihad Council, of which I am presently the chairman. There is mutual understanding, cooperation, unification and designing of action plans, and a common strategy against the common enemy. All camaraderie, there is a complete atmosphere of mutual brotherhood, mutual understanding and mutual cooperation by the grace of Allah.

Can a situation like Afghanistan ever arise in Kashmir?

Syed Saluddin: No, Inshallah, because no such action or cause seems to be present in Kashmir. The situation in Kashmir is directly opposite to that of Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the pri

The Message, October 1997

vate built organizations were, firstly, political, ideological, national and regional. In Kashmir, there are no separate linguistic, regional, national and political organizations. Big and small, and are like the different regions of one state. Secondly, in Afghanistan, the possession of particular land areas used as a base by those organizations, and every organization used to have a great potential of arms and ammunition in its possession. While in Kashmir, not even a single inch of land is in occupation by any political organization, and there any store of arms and ammunitions in possession of any military organization.
Syed Salahuddin: My reaction against those people is very bitter, and rather unbearable. They must know that when the oppressed stand up against their oppressors, this itself is jihad. The people of Kashmir have been subject to slavery, illegal occupation, humiliation and deprivation of all kinds of human rights by Indian imperialism for the last 50 years by the dent of force. So why is this not jihad? Especially when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has categorically stated that Allah has made hell haram (forbidden) for two groups of people: one group which will support Isa (Jesus) when he will reappear in the world, and the second, the group which will fight against Indian imperialism. There is a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra in which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has given glad tidings to those people who will fight with their life and their property against Indian forces. And Abu Hurayra aspires to be alive at that time and to participate in that jihad with his life and property. He says, “If I am killed in that jihad, then I will be the best of martyrs, and if I return (alive), then I will be Abu Hurayra Muharrar (Abu Hurayra with a certificate of salvation from hell).”

And there are many other ahadith in which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has specifically mentioned the name of Hind (India), making it crystal clear that fighting the Indian forces is one of the most virtuous jihads. Now an imperialistic power subjugating an innocent nation into slavery and depriving them of all kinds of human rights—moral, political, social—subjugating them to cultural aggression, and dismantling their Islamic identity, if this isn’t an aggressor or zulim then who is an aggressor or zulim? And to rise up against that aggressor and fight against his aggression, if that is not jihad then what is jihad? The people whose view is that the Kashmiri situation is not a jihad are fully mistaken.

TM: Tell us something about your personal background, education, family, why you joined the struggle, etc.

Syed Salahuddin: My name is Salahuddin, date of birth Jan 1948. I have completed my post-graduation in 1970 from Kashmir University, and during this academic era, I got much impressed and influenced by the work of the Islamic movement. The Islamic movement through its schools, by the circulation of its literature, and by its preachings educated the Kashmiris about their Islamic identity, their Islamic culture, their Islamic future and against India’s illegal and barbaric occupation. I was very much stricken when I saw how the Indian occupation forces are humiliating the Kashmiris. The miserable condition of Kashmiris, their helplessness, their deprived status of life, their economic backwardness, their educational backwardness, their political deprivation, and all other related things, opened my eyes, stimulated my feelings, and prepared me—rather, compelled me— to join this struggle, and not only to join, but to prepare the youth of Kashmir for this heroic armed struggle.

By the grace of Allah, before joining this armed struggle, I have for years preached in the mosques, in public congregations, rallies and gatherings. I have been confined three times to concentration cells under the Public Safety act by Indian army authorities and interrogated so many times. My family, my relatives, my big brother, my parents were time and again repeatedly beaten, subject to physical torture, and compelled to migrate from one place to another. I have joined this movement with the full of my conscience and wisdom because the miserable condition of my suppressed nation has stricken the depth of my heart.

TM: Is there any work being done on your behalf in America?

Syed Salahuddin: No. I don’t have any organizational contacts, but there are brothers who belong to the subcontinent, Kashmir and Pakistan as well as brothers from the rest of the Ummah who have sympathy with the suppressed Kashmiris. They wish to support us, but unfortunately, they are living in such a system that they are not allowed to give any concrete material support to our heroic struggle. Their moral and diplomatic support continues to be with us, but they are not in a position to exert it on an international level in a manner which can bring any relief or rescue to our people. But, organizationally we don’t have any branch in the United States or any such link.

TM: Finally, do you have any message for the Muslims in America?

Syed Salahuddin: Our message for the brothers in America and the outside world is in terms of the Holy Qur’an: “And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who being weak are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men and women and children whose cry is: “Our Lord! rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect; and raise for us from Thee one who will help!” (4:75)

About 750,000 Indian troops have started killing en masse, gang-raping, engaging in massive destruction, human rights violation, and unprecedented atrocities in the paradise of Kashmir. The world community, the Muslims especially, are morally and legally bound to take notice of it and do the best they can to stop it. I think the Muslims in America have the privilege to be the citizens of a highly developed state that claims to be the sole super power of the world. They can garner the attention of the American authorities and human rights institutions and can gain and win the public feeling in favor of Kashmiri. At the same time, in the name of relief, they can raise a massive movement for the mobilization of resources for the relief and rehabilitation of the devastated people of Kashmir. Thousands of families are homeless, suffering for a mouthful, thousands of orphans, thousands of disabled people, thousands of widows are at present in need of support in the name of relief.