

## TAMASHA-E-HINDUSTAN – INDIA’S STATE OF AFFAIRS

*(The magician enters the village playing his drum rattle. Bambe-bho is following him.)*

Both : Eenie meenie miney mo,  
Catch a tiger by the toe,  
If he hollers let him go,  
Eenie meenie miney mo.

*(Runs around the village reciting this poem.)*

Magician : Bambe-bho.  
Bambe-bho : Yes master.  
Magician : Start the show.  
Bambe-bho : Master, I am not in the mood.  
Magician : What happened to your mood?  
Bambe-bho : Master, I have incurred a loss.  
Magician : Has your horse died?  
Bambe-bho : No, in fact she is galloping around just like Mirza’s<sup>1</sup> buggy.  
Magician : Has your bitch died?  
Bambe-bho : No, she is barking hale and hearty just like the fakir’s<sup>2</sup> bitch.  
Magician : Has your buffalo died?  
Bambe-bho : No, she has happily given birth to a calf.  
Magician : Then what happened?  
Bambe-bho : Master, my house has collapsed.  
Magician : Then construct a new one.  
Bambe-bho : Master, there is no cement.  
Magician : Buy the cement from the market.  
Bambe-bho : It’s only available in the black market.  
Magician : Buy it in black.  
Bambe-bho : Master, I don’t have money for it.  
Magician : Apply for a loan from the government.  
Bambe-bho : Master, who will stand guarantor for me?  
Magician : I will.  
Bambe-bho : What’s your credibility?  
Magician : I am the member of the municipal corporation.  
Bambe-bho : What is that?  
Magician : He is a big shot.  
Bambe-bho : What does he do?  
Magician : Gets the neighbourhood cleaned of dirt in sight,  
Replace bulbs of broken streetlight,  
Plays peacemaker if there is a fight.  
Bambe-bho : That’s why the neighbourhood has a foul smell,  
Broken streetlight bulbs do a story tell,  
Everyday fight is a common sight as well.  
Magician : What did you say?  
Bambe-bho : I said that member municipal corporation is a big deal.  
Magician : Yes he is a big deal.  
Bambe-bho : *(Whispers)* Smart ass actually *(Loudly)* So Master should I make an application?

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<sup>1</sup> Mirza is a word of Persian origin denoting a title for a Prince or a nobleman.

<sup>2</sup> Fakir – a religious ascetic living on alms given by others.

Magician : Yes do it.  
Bambe-bho : *(Makes an action to write an application)* Master, sign it.  
Magician : *(Makes an action to sign)* I have signed it.  
Bambe-bho : So Master, should I go?  
Magician : Yes go.

*(Bambe-bho makes an action to go.)*

Magician : *(To the audience)* So dear audience, my Bambe-bho's house has collapsed. He needs cement now. Let's see if he gets cement or not....so now enters an officer of the government department and his clerk. Eenie meenie miney mo...

*(Recites 'Eenie meenie miney mo' fully and during this time the officer and the clerk take up their respective seats. The Magician goes out. The officer and the clerk silently act as if they are busy in their files. Bambe-bho first goes to the clerk who directs him to the officer. When he goes to the officer, he turns him back to the clerk. A couple of times he shunts between the two like a shuttlecock. All this is happening in mime. When he goes to the officer a third time, the officer makes an action of flipping a coin implying to bring money. Bambe-bho runs to the other end of the stage to meet the Magician to ask for money. The Magician gives him two bags – one bigger than the other. All this is also happening in mime.)*

Officer & clerk : *(Together)* To buy cement he came,  
A smart sidekick of a guru with fame,  
Not a penny with him O what a shame,  
Came here as if playing a game!

*(Bambe-bho goes to the officer again. The officer shoos him off. But when Bambe-bho dangles the bigger bag in front of him, the officer's expression changes. Bambe-bho continues to dangle the bag in front of him and the officer's eyes goes up and down in greed along with its movement. The officer snatches the bag and puts in his pocket. Now with respect he takes the application from Bambe-bho and signs it. Bambe-bho asks him to put his official seal on it. The officer gestures to him that this will be done by the clerk. Bambe-bho then goes to the clerk. The clerk shoos him off but changes when he sees the bag being dangled in front of him. The clerk snatches the bag and very quickly puts the official seal on the application. All this is happening in mime. Bambe-bho puts the application in his pocket.)*

Officer & clerk : *(Together)* Bring in bags full of dough,  
Take the cement bags and there you go.  
Bambe-bho : That's very smart of you, Bambe-bho.  
Magician : Eenie meenie miney mo.

*(The Magician and Bambe-bho recite 'Eenie meenie miney mo' fully and during this time the officer and the clerk exit.)*

Magician : *(To the audience)* So dear audience, my Bambe-bho has got cement. But it is not known whether he could build his house or not because as yet we do not know if the bags had cement or ash supply, that only God can testify. *(Addressing Bambe-bho)* Bambe-bho...

Bambe-bho : Yes Master.

Magician : Start the second show.  
 Bambe-bho : Master, I cannot do it.  
 Magician : Why, what new trouble ails you?  
 Bambe-bho : Master, I have a stomach ache.  
 Magician : it's the audience who is laughing and you have a stomach ache?  
 Bambe-bho : Master, I have a stone in my stomach.  
 Magician : What kind of stone?  
 Bambe-bho : The usual kind of stone.  
 Magician : Is it the stone used to lay foundations?  
 Bambe-bho : Master, I am not a minister to have that kind of stone in my stomach.  
 Magician : Is it a milestone?  
 Bambe-bho : I am not a poet to roam around with a milestone.  
 Magician : Is it marble stone?  
 Bambe-bho : Master, that has all been used up to decorate the house of Gods!  
 Magician : It is red stone?  
 Bambe-bho : *(Irritated)* This is my stomach, not Red Fort!  
 Magician : Then what kind of stone is this?  
 Bambe-bho : It's a stone like the kidney stone.  
 Magician : Then to a hospital you will have to go.  
 Bambe-bho : Will have to go.  
 Magician : An operation you will need, you know.  
 Bambe-bho : Yes I know.  
 Magician : So then off you go to the hospital.  
 Bambe-bho : *(In the action of walking)* Done.  
 Magician : Lie down on the operation table.  
 Bambe-bho : *(In the action of lying down)* Done.  
 Magician : Inhale the chloroform.  
 Bambe-bho : Done.  
 Magician : Become unconscious.  
 Bambe-bho : Done.  
 Magician : So dear audience, Bambe-bho has a stone in his stomach and he is admitted to a government hospital. Come let's see if the stone is taken out of his stomach or not. So now enter the doctor and the compounder.

*(Recites 'Eenie meenie miney mo' fully and during this time the doctor and the compounder enter. The Magician goes out.)*

Doctor : Compounder, is this the patient with a stone in his stomach?  
 Compounder : Yes he is the patient.  
 Doctor : He will be operated upon. Do we have glucose?  
 Compounder : Sir, that finished last month.  
 Doctor : Have you arranged blood from the blood bank?  
 Compounder : it finished with the transfusion of the minister's son.  
 Doctor : Heck, the minister sucks the blood of the people and his son that of the hospital....do we have injections?  
 Compounder : Sir, that is out of stock.  
 Doctor : Does the patient have any dependents?  
 Compounder : Sir, his master is standing outside.  
 Doctor : Call him.

*(The compounder calls the Magician.)*

Doctor : Is he your Bambe-bho?  
 Magician : Yes sir, he is my Bambe-bho.  
 Doctor : He has a stone in his stomach.  
 Magician : I know.  
 Doctor : He will be operated upon.  
 Magician : That's why we have come to the hospital.  
 Doctor : The operation will require blood, glucose and injections. Do you have arrangements for them?  
 Magician : Sir, this is a government hospital everything should be free here.  
 Doctor : Hey, this is Indian government's government hospital...here everything is free but nothing is available. It seems that the patient has a stone in his stomach and you in your brain...you can't even understand such a small thing! You stand outside and bring anything that will be needed for the operation.  
 Magician : Right sir.  
 Doctor : *(To the compounder)* Please get his signature on the declaration that the government, hospital or its staff will be not liable for anything untoward happening to the patient due to the operation.

*(The compounder gets the signatures done. The Magician goes out. The operation starts. First the stomach is cut open and the stone is taken out. The compounder stitches up the wound. All this is happening in exaggerated actions in mime. Blood, glucose and injections are asked for in a chaotic manner. The patient groans. The last injection is used but the patient dies. The dead body is covered with a white sheet. All this happens with the casualness of the hospital staff which is very apparent in the way the whole operation was conducted. The Magician enters and the doctor with crocodile tears shows false sympathy with him.)*

Doctor : Master....I share your sorrow, I am sorry. It was his fate.

*(The doctor and the compounder recite 'Eenie meenie miney mo' fully in a sorrowful tone and exit.)*

Magician : *(To the audience)* And my Bambe-bho went to a government hospital for an operation to remove stone but eventually became stone dead. But he cannot remain like a stone...he will have to live for the sake of his hungry stomach. *(In a loud voice)* Bambe-bho.

Bambe-bho : *(Getting up)* Yes Master.

Magician : Start the next show.

Bambe-bho : *(In a crying voice)* I cannot do it.

Magician : What happened now?

Bambe-bho : Master, I have been robbed.

Magician : What did you have that got robbed?

Bambe-bho : I have got those things which is not there with others.

Magician : Has your car been stolen?

Bambe-bho : Am I a rich man to own a car!

Magician : Has your book been stolen?

Bambe-bho : Am I a professor to own a book!

Magician : Have your utensils been stolen?

Bambe-bho : I am no cook to own utensils which can get stolen!

Magician : Then what have you been robbed of?

Bambe-bho : I have lost my shanti<sup>3</sup>, my peace of heart.  
 Magician : How did your peace of heart get stolen?  
 Bambe-bho : Just like that.  
 Magician : Even then, tell me how?  
 Bambe-bho : When you go home and do not find flour to eat. When you go to the ration shop to buy flour and shoving and jostling with the crowd there rips your shirt apart, throws your turban off your head. When this happens then assume that you have robbed of your peace of heart.  
 Magician : When the peace of heart is robbed then what happens?  
 Bambe-bho : Then everything becomes topsy turvy.  
 Magician : How?  
 Bambe-bho : One becomes irritated.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : He takes out his irritation on his wife.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : The wife beats up her kids.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : The kids cry.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : The kids are beaten up even more.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : The kids cry even more, more beating follows...crying, beating continues.  
 Magician : Then?  
 Bambe-bho : Then....then....everything becomes topsy turvy.  
 Magician : This is a very serious matter.  
 Bambe-bho : Yes Master, this is a very serious matter.  
 Magician : You have been robbed.  
 Bambe-bho : Yes Master, I have been robbed.  
 Magician : If there is a robbery then one should go to the police station.  
 Bambe-bho : No Master, I will not go to the police station.  
 Magician : Why?  
 Bambe-bho : What if they beat me up?  
 Magician : Then it will create a scene and show and tell is our job.  
 Bambe-bho : So then Master should I go to the police station?  
 Magician : Yes, go.

*(Bambe-bho goes to the police station in a mute action.)*

Magician : So dear audience, my Bambe-bho has been robbed and he has gone to the police station to file a report. A police station is that place where the truth is turned into a lie and vice versa. All vulgar abuses prevalent today in our society are born in this pious place. The bigger the abuse the higher the promotion. The vulgar the abuse the bigger the officer.  
 Police officer : *(Enters)* The fatter the paunch, the bigger the police officer....beat him up!

*(The policeman starts beating a man. As is common in police stations, beating up someone is a regular routine to keep up the fear quotient.)*

Police officer : *(Addressing Bambe-bho)* Who are you, bum?  
 Bambe-bho : Sir, I have been robbed.

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<sup>3</sup> Shanti – this a hindi word meaning peace.

Police officer : (*Pointing towards the person lying down on the floor*) That's what we are trying to get out of him, the stolen things....beat him up!

(*'Beat him up' will be used as his catchphrase.*)

Bambe-bho : But sir he has not robbed me.

Police officer : Oye, how come you are speaking up for him? Beat him up too!

Bambe-bho : Sir, don't beat me up. As is I have lost everything.

Police officer : Oye, that's what we are trying to get out of him, the stolen things....beat him up!...and what have you lost, what has been stolen from you?

Bambe-bho : Sir, my shanti<sup>4</sup> has been stolen.

Police officer : (*Impressed*) Oye stop Dullia (*policeman's name*) this is an interesting case involving Shanti...Oye did you ever beat her up?

Bambe-bho : No sir, I used to love her very much.

Police officer : Loved her very much...Oye did you curse her side of the family?

Bambe-bho : Sir, she did not have a family.

Police officer : Then why did she run away?

Bambe-bho : Sir, she did not run away but was stolen.

Police officer : Oye, women always run away while men think that they have been stolen.

Bambe-bho : Sir, she is not a woman.

Police officer : Oye if not a woman was she a man,  
If not a girl was she a maiden then!  
Beat him up! Whom do you suspect?

Bambe-bho : Sir, I suspect some big people.

Police officer : Oye, why would big people have interest in your Shanti. They have many beautiful Shantis in places like Delhi and Chandigarh....beat him up!

Bambe-bho : Sir, you have misunderstood.

Police officer : Oye, I have misunderstood? I have turned black trying to hide the black deeds of these big people. Aged beyond 70 years and still they salivate for such Shantis. And you say I have misunderstood...beat him up!

Bambe-bho : Sir, my shanti is not the one that you are thinking about.

Police officer : Then which Shanti has been stolen?

Bambe-bho : My peace of heart has been stolen.

Police officer : (*To Dullia*) Then go to the hospital, have you come here to buy mangoes?

Bambe-bho : Sir, this is a case of theft.

Police officer : Then file a case.

Bambe-bho : Sir, this is a long story.

Police officer : Tell it in brief.

Bambe-bho : Sir, when I returned from work I found there is no flour at home.

Police officer : There was no flour? Beat him up!

Bambe-bho : I picked up a drum and reached the ration shop but my shirt was torn in the mob.

Police officer : Thank your stars that your turban was safe.

Bambe-bho : That too was not saved!

Police officer : That too was not saved? Beat him up!

Bambe-bho : I reached home, opened the tap but there was no water.

Police officer : No water? Beat him up!

Bambe-bho : I thought let me rest a while, I switched on the fan but there was no electricity.

Police officer : No electricity? Beat him up!

Bambe-bho : Sir, then I got very angry.

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<sup>4</sup> Shanti – while the word means peace, it is also a girl's name in India. The following conversation is based on this confusion.

Police officer : Very angry?  
Bambe-bho : Sir, then I hurled abuses....oye your sisters, your mothers...all you people running the government.  
Police officer : Oye stop...stop...you abused the government?  
Bambe-bho : Sir, I had to abuse.  
Police officer : Why did you have to abuse?  
Bambe bho : Sir, a country which is blessed by a green revolution but people do not have food to eat, a country which has a dam like Bhakra but people do not have electricity, no water then one is forced to abuse. And I point my accusing finger towards the people who run the government.  
Police officer : Oye, you point a finger? We will cut those accusing fingers. For nothing we are here with our batons. Oye Dullia, beat him up! *(To the person already on the floor)* Oye get up!

*(The first person is made to do sit ups. The policeman lines up Bambe-bho.)*

Police officer : *(To the first person)* From now on send the protection money on the first of every month.  
Bambe-bho : Sir don't beat me....I am Bambe-bho.  
Police officer : Dullia, show him the real Bambe-bho.  
Bambe-bho : *(Creating a ruckus)* Sir, can I ask a question?  
Police officer : Ask.  
Bambe-bho : Are you a police officer or a butcher?  
Police officer : Oye, me a butcher? Slaughter him like a lamb...and see if there is anyone else with him.  
Bambe-bho : Sir, my Master is with me.

*(Hearing a commotion the Magician enters.)*

Police officer : Oye, is he your Bambe-bho?  
Magician : Yes sir, he is my Bambe-bho.  
Police officer : He abuses the government.  
Magician : Yes sir, he does.  
Police officer : He does....beat him up too!

*(The Magician is also beaten up. The first person is still doing sit ups. The police officer is standing conceitedly.)*

Police officer : *(After a few moments)* This is Bambe-bho... Eenie meenie miney mo.  
Magician : *(Getting up)* Eenie meenie miney mo,  
Catch a tiger by the toe,  
If he hollers let him go,  
Eenie meenie miney mo.

*(In its swing, all exit. Only the Magician stays back.)*

Magician : And dear audience, you witnessed the state of affairs that you deal with routinely in government offices, hospitals and police stations. Would you remain a mute spectator to all this or you will come forward to put a stop to it? This is a question which you will have to answer.