

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 06, 2015

Delayed Discovery of 31 Hazara Abductees Raises Apprehensions

Man most probably is created, getting the world transformed from a desolate land into a bejeweled and well designed dreamland where his fellowman could be provided with very elements of peace, harmony, undying adoration and an immortal bond of affection synchronized in global human society. The selfless efforts of some individuals crystallized by the end of the day letting us closer to the warehouse substantiated with every necessity that could effectively be used bridging the physical distance between far stretched man beings. The countless endeavors of those individuals bore fruit and turned the world into global village where the agonies, miseries, pains of individuals could be unaffectedly felt by fellow individuals and likely would be done away with.

Notwithstanding, the individuals driven by evil motives, forged ideologies and severe repression put them in the black race of domination, overthrow leading to formation of a human society we witness at the moment, characterized by rule of violence, aggression, characterized by innumerable bloodshed, abduction and ruthless killings of fellowmen.

Earlier a carriage was intercepted on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, by a group of militants uniformed in black from top to toe, separated 31 ill-fated Hazara due to get to home, were taken away to an unknown location after recognition of their identity. There is no tangible clue to whereabouts of those abductees. The government seemingly is making efforts to ensure their safe release, yet no major breakthrough has materialized. Abduction is another weapon the militants have resorted to, formerly. Mass abduction has always been used either for financial gains or furtherance of political cause. In case of Hazara abductees both propositions apply.

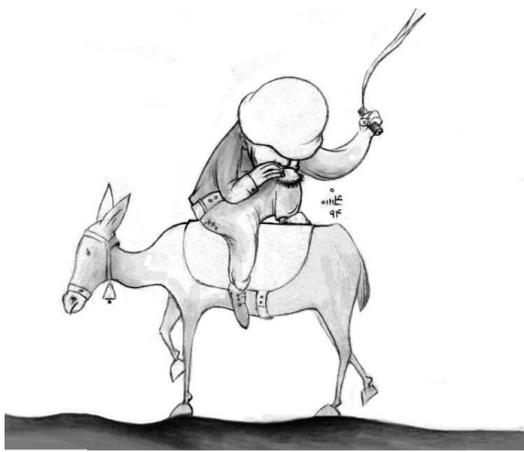
Hazara Shiite are great often have rendered prey to sectarian violence at the hands of extremists in Afghanistan. An exception was a large-scale sectarian attack in Afghanistan in 2011 in which dozens of Shiite worshippers were killed in a suicide bombing in Kabul. Hazara were persecuted during the 1990s when the Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan, and so does it now. During the wars, thousands of Hazaras were killed in Bamyan, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul by Taliban. Moreover, they were discriminated badly due to their ethnicity. In similar fashion, Daesh also considers Shias as infidels and the cruelties and killings they have carried out against Shias and certain other sects in Iraq and Syria are not hidden from anyone.

Eventually, this clearly shows the level of insecurity in the country. Moreover, the interception of a passenger vehicles and abduction of fatless passengers, in a bright day light without fearing apprehension marks enlarging security threat given security checks are found functional on all entries. And the most unfortunate fact is that there are no confirmed reports about who abducted them and where they are at the moment. Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, a prominent Hazara Leader and second deputy to Chief Executive officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, has confirmed that the 31 Hazaras have been kidnapped by militants belonging to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militants. He said two former Taliban leaders - Mullah Abdullah Kaka and his deputy Mullah Mansur Dadullah, who pledged allegiance to ISIS terrorist group, were responsible for the abduction of 31 members of the Hazara tribe. According to Mohaqiq the hostages are still alive and are being held in different areas by the militants who have slipped them up into three or four groups. This is the first time an Afghan leader has confirmed Islamic State group involvement in the kidnappings.

Despite the government's assurances that everything possible is being done to secure the release of the Hazara hostages, no progress has been made known, and, overall, the process has been cloaked in secrecy. As the day advances the government coming up empty promises earns intensified criticism by civil society, the poor masses and relatives of affected families. While some have moved on from the news of the kidnappings, the families of those still missing grieve day in and day out. They are passionate about hearing good news from security officials rendering successful in setting free their dear ones.

The government officials and authorities claim that efforts are underway and certain teams of tribal elders have been assigned as negotiators who are in dialogue with the culprits and there are hopes that the victims will be released. This stance is confirmed by recent local reports add based on the returns of the tribal negotiators from the particular location where the caged are taken, saying that they could hardly persuade the community elders for the talk about the missing people. Some of the community elders did not even show interest for their release and that is not sure whether it is due to unhealthy circumstances being posed by the kidnapers or they are not willing to be involved in the matter, according to reports.

Who is responsible for the incident must be sought out quickly and efforts should be hastened to uncover the poor victims. It is the responsibility of a government within a state to ensure peace and security of its citizens within the country whose dears' ones are anxiously waiting their safe return. The government seems to be determined doing away the worries of masses by extending improved governance. The government must learn following the security threats the people have greatly restricted their governments within the country which has equally impacted passengers, the poor wagers and transporters alike.



Afghanistan's Smooth Walk Towards Information and Enlightenment!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

Last month, small news came into the media but it was quickly concealed before it attracted much attention. A parliamentarian hit a person with his car and left the spot, leaving behind the bleeding person to die. One of the people standing there took photos of this sad incident and posted it on Facebook. The photo got viral and soon the said parliamentarian was under severe criticism of public. However, it was not good enough to move our government officials and after the circulation of this incident in social networking sites for a few days, the matter died itself and no further action was taken against the powerful and influential Member of Parliament.

More or less was the case of Farkhunda. Treatment of women like Farkhunda is sad but it is not much out of routine for Afghan society where the blood, body and dignity of woman is not given much value. Even today, there are still present some people who think that unnecessary hue and cry was made for a lady, ignoring the fact if she was involved in the blasphemy of Holy Koran or not.

In rural areas, the general public perception about women is both saddening and frightening. They are taken to be like animals and hence treated accordingly. It is the reason why, their torture and mistreatment are not taken to be out of routine. Due to this mentality, large number of women fall victim to mistreatment and discrimination at different stages of their lives. The only difference in the case of Farkhunda was its exposure. When this innocent woman was being dragged, stoned, beaten and burnt, a number of people present on the spot made her videos on their mobile phones and soon these videos and photos started circulating on a number of websites. The day when this incident happened, it was a simple incident. A woman did an evil deed and an angry crowd punished her. This explanation is quite justified for our society. However, later at night, when the videos were uploaded on Facebook and Youtube and a number of other social networking sites, the videos got viral and attracted more and more public attention. The videos were so shocking that people started raising questions if everything was fine or not. Fierce public criticism did not remain limited to these sites only. They soon reached to the media outlets, inside and outside the country. Due to increasing public and media interest, government could no longer stand indifferent to this and the machinery of government came into action. Later on arrests were made and the fact-finding committee found that Farkhunda was innocent and she had become victim of a number of criminal-minded people who had used the name of religion to hide their crime.

With technological advancement and easy and affordable access of public to internet and other means of communication, more and more people are getting benefitted from the easy and affordable means of communication. When the internet started spreading in the country, it was feared that its side effects would be more than its benefits. Even today, we cannot ignore the hazardous effects of internet on a number of social groups especially the illiterate and students who use it only to waste their time and energy and sexually enticing material is also easily available. But this dark picture of internet is not strong enough to ignore its good effects. The biggest change came in the form of ease of people to access different information and news in the world without any influence of government or a strong dictating party in the country. Due to this fact, now people are more aware of the national and international

issues and they are in better position to see the true picture. In the same way, they are now more aware of a number of national and international issues and have developed sound and reasonable understanding about them. Due to these facts, cheating or deceiving today's person has become more difficult. Moreover, this unique quality is the first and foremost requirement of the successful implementation and practice of democracy. In past, the totalitarian governments and dictators were much afraid of the open and free access of people to the news. They were also afraid of the increasing public awareness about different social, political, economic and religious issues. They used to keep the people silent by using their ignorance. However, today's increasing access to sources of information has broadened the minds and thoughts of people and now they cannot be easily cheated. This fact becomes especially important in countries like Afghanistan where democratic institutions are not strong and well-established and public awareness about different political processes and their rights and responsibilities is not clear. In such circumstances, access of people to sources of information is acting as an agent to transform their understanding about democratic practices. In this way, they would soon be able to reach to a certain level of political maturity needed to run a successful democratic system of government. Democracy is a good system but it can only work efficiently if it is practiced and implemented with its necessary conditions and this can happen only when public is aware of its rights and responsibilities and understands the true spirit of democracy.

Apart from political enlightenment, internet and other social networking sites are also bringing religious maturity in public. Many of the issues that were considered sacred and thus forbidden for general discussion are now openly discussed on these websites. Instead of relying on the true or false information of religious scholars, people are now getting direct access to genuine and direct sources to understand religion. In the same way, people are now getting knowledge about religion not only from the local scholars but also from a number of international scholars. It is a fact that religion may have come under extreme and unnecessary influence of local traditions, customs and cultural issues but when the religion is studied from a global perspective, keeping aside the cultural and traditional impacts, people get better picture of religion. In this way, they are not only able to understand religion with its true spirit but they also practice it with more enthusiasm and sense of responsibility when they own the religion and its teachings.

The only drawback in this regard is the negative usage of internet for promoting ethnic, sectarian and other differences. Our nation went through decades' long bloodshed due to such factors, dividing the country based on ethnicity and sects. We can no more afford to bring drift in the national solidarity and risk the peace and stability of the country.

The recent awareness and enlightenment in general public about different issues is pleasing. Having a look at the present positive scenario, we are sure that coming days would be brighter in this regard and we would be able to emerge as a nation that is driven by facts and not by emotions and others harmful sentiments.

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Women's Identity - Cradle, Kitchen and Grave

By Hujjatullah Zia

Woman, the social and historical pariah of human society, lives a noisome life. She is doomed to suffer overwhelming pain and anguish in one way or another. Her beauty is deemed suitable for advertisement gimmicks and amorous films, her modesty is tainted and her rights and dignity are trampled upon. Her dulcet voice and strong emotional character are used to embellish lucrative and sentimental movies. Her feminine charms and fetishes are used to tantalize the viewers in movie theaters. Her tears roll down her cheeks either in romantic films or under the fists of a cruel man. Her blood is shed not by the villains in movies but by the vicious characters on the surface of earth.

Her heartrending sobs and theatrical scene, however, reflect her real life. She plays the doleful role of a mother saddened by the mortal wounds inflicted on her daughter, the role of a lover tortured for falling in love, the role of a spouse suffers her husband's fractious attitudes under the same roof or the role of a daughter - who is livid with pain and anguish for being restrained within the four walls.

In traditional society like Afghanistan, women's freedoms and social role are restricted within the cultural frames. In another item, they encounter manifold socio-cultural barriers to take active role in social issues. A woman is considered as a productive creature to give birth and to feed and train her children. She is chained in cradle at birth, bound to suffer within the four walls of the kitchen and finally buried in an unmarked grave or her ashes will melt away - she takes all her dreams to the grave with her. This is her role she plays in a traditional community.

Roya, an Afghan girl, states the household chores of Afghan women very nicely as, "My identity is hiding somewhere in the kitchen, where destiny told me to be. I don't know where it is. If you look for it, maybe you could find it. On my father's favorite plate? In my brother's soup bowl? On the shelf covered with salt? In the morning, I am the broom eating dust. At 10 o'clock, it is time to cook the bread in the wood-fired oven. Eleven is time to cook lunch. Then I wash the dishes. After that, the cow calls me 'Come on, milk, milk.' Then back to the kitchen, more cooking and washing. I wait till the moon appears in the sky. I greet her as I go to my bed in the yard. I look at the moon, I understand nothing. In my dreams, I see myself big. I go to school, books in my hands. I see a nice office with a computer and my favorite clothes, a pink handbag. But nothing comes true. It is always the same. I am without dreams. There is empty space in my soul. The kitchen is my past and future. I am

Afghan woman."

The conservative frames of mind add insult to the injury. Women are supposed to live under the dominance of archaic stereotypes. The women's nobleness lies in abiding by the cultural norms rule in their areas. A girl should live her whole life under the same roof with no rights to objection, not with a man of her choice, but with the one chosen by her parents. A single girl who dares talk about her future life-partner, especially in villages, will be labeled 'brazen' among her neighbors and family members. In short, a girl is deemed modest if her timidity outweighs her temerity. Therefore, they suffer under the guise of cultural norms - originates in traditional mindset.

After all, it is not all the pains she endures in her austere life. She falls prey to violence and honor killings, treated as anathema, sustains humiliation and vitriol, and mental and physical tortures - especially in domestic and conjugal life. She plays a tragic role not only in films but in her daily life. Her rights, dignity, reputation and blood are not valued enough. The appalling stories of girls and women make the national and international headlines on the newspapers.

Moreover, the history of Afghan women's struggle for social recognition and equality chronicles Afghanistan's physical and cultural devastation. Following the Soviet Invasion (1979-89), the Afghan Civil War (1994-96) and the dictatorial regime of Taliban (1996-2001) women's access to education, security and jobs has been minimal. Today, in the post-Taliban era, the Western "liberation" and Islamic fundamentalism each impose their own values on Afghan society as political models. Westernization, with regards to gender equality, does not take into account the traditional concept of family in Islamic or Afghan culture and tends to negotiate the rights of Afghan women outside their community and family.

Constitutionally, men and women are considered equal and the rights and dignity of women must be valued. Likewise, discrimination and distinction on the grounds of belief, race, color, sex, etc. are condemned. The natural rights, especially the rights to life, liberty and estate, are recognized by the law. The identity of an Afghan woman must not be sought in the kitchen and she must not be precluded from playing social, cultural, political and economic role in the society. It should be noted that men and women are born with inalienable and immutable rights and dignity - which are supposed to be protected and respected.

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