

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



April 18, 2017

Privileges Follow Responsibilities

It can be observed in our society that mostly people talk about their rights and complain that they are not given their due rights by the society or the system; however, they mostly ignore the responsibilities that they have towards the society. They, undoubtedly, have the right to talk about their rights and raise their voices when there are discrimination or violation of their rights; nonetheless, they must not forget the fact that they have to fulfill certain responsibilities as well before they get in the position where they question about their due rights.

It should not be forgotten that mostly once responsibilities satisfy others rights in a society. If policemen, for example, fulfill their responsibilities, the citizens get an environment free of crime and insecurity and the rights of the people to have secure and peaceful lives are automatically safeguarded. In a similar fashion, if every individual takes care of cleanliness around them and keep their surroundings tidy, all the people will have their right of having a hygienic environment satisfied. There is a very close link and interdependence between the rights and responsibilities and it is imperative for the citizens of a country to understand this link.

It can be argued that societies and systems are created for the people and not the vice versa; therefore, the society and systems must ensure that the rights of the inhabitants are met.

It is true to a certain extent but it is only one side of the picture. The other side of the picture reveals that in every society there are inhabitants that have their particular roles and positions, which demand a particular set of obligations and responsibilities that have to be performed by them. Moreover, in a collective life, there are rules and regulations that are required to be followed and practiced and these rules and regulations basically ensure harmony within the society. The citizens are required to respect these rules and regulations and are responsible to practice them. Having performed those responsibilities there can be an environment where the rights are protected and peace and tranquility are maintained.

Within a family it can be observed that if the parents perform their responsibilities properly and guard the rights of their children, the children in return would be responsible beings. They would then protect the rights of their parents. It is weird if the parents themselves do not perform their responsibilities but expect the children to be aware enough to safeguard the rights of others.

It, however, should be noted that the awareness regarding their rights and responsibilities should be inculcated within the individuals by the society and its institutions. A society that is well-managed and properly ruled does have the mechanism that ensures that the citizens are vigilant enough to have basic and necessary understanding of their rights and obligations. They are first taught these concepts in their families and then their schools, colleges, universities and other social and political institutions play a major role in making citizens civilized enough to practice their responsibilities and demand their due privileges.

The problem with Afghan society is that most of the people do not have proper understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the necessary connection between them. From a common man to the country's leaders, there are only few who properly fulfill their responsibilities. The citizens expect the government to provide them all the facilities, while the authoritative people and the leaders consider that they have their positions so as to satisfy their own motives and goals.

They forget that they have to provide different services to the people and defend their rights. The institutions on the other hand do not have proper management and leadership and thus they are not in the position that they should guide their members and the people so as to become better citizens. Most of the families do not have enough facilities, education and awareness to nourish their children properly and turn them into responsible citizens. The social institutions are dominated by the people who consider wealth, influence and family status as replacements for merit. Therefore, they do not consider themselves answerable to others and, therefore, are not responsible to them.

Same is the case with the political institutions. They are not developed and advance enough to promulgate democratic norms and culture and, as a result, are unable to nurture the politicians properly and make them more vigilant towards their rights and duties. It is a crying need of time that the whole society goes through a process of transformation. From individual to the collective life, people must understand their rights and duties and make efforts to fulfill their duties and demand their due rights. Most importantly, there should be awareness campaigns launched wherein the people are given the basic understanding of civic life. The institutions must have effective rules and regulations that are properly communicated to the people and their worth is clarified for them so that they get the motivation to follow them and as a result get trained to pursue the similar kind of civilized life within the society, as well.

They require to understand that the responsibilities that they perform, in fact, guarantee others' rights.



A Few Questions to the ever-Present Witness

By Mohammad Orzgni

Following the statements of Afghan former President Hamid Karzai as a backlash against the "Mother Of All Bombs", his National Security advisor Dr. Rangan Dadfar Spanta sought to justify his sarcastic statements in a commentary written in a local Newspaper. Since I am familiar with his writings to some extent, I deem his recent article the weakest one during his political and educational lifetime. Not only the syntax but also the contents and logic of the article were highly complicated.

In his commentary entitled "Silence is Betrayal I Protest" Dr. Spanta said, "Whatever the reason behind the use of this bomb is, there is no moral, political and military logic for using this horrific weapon in our country from the perspective of Afghan people. Afghans have the right to raise their voice through a strong and widespread reaction against this act of the US and its complicit Afghan government and all those who support this criminal act and I protest."

His words are full of paradox. When he justifies his objection based on Frankfurt School and citation of Bertolt Brecht and calls the supporter of the offensive against the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fool, it reflects the fact that if he had a critical mind, he would honor the people exhausted from the war waged by ISIS. It is surprising to see that no other bodies have expressed strong reaction in this regard other than Mr. Spanta, Hamid Karzai, the Taliban.

All individuals - including the national media, civil organizations, simple citizens and officials - have supported this act in one way or another and showed satisfaction for the destruction of the one of the ISIS's key stronghold. However, Spanta counts one person equal to "Afghan people".

Now Spanta's commentary reminds one of the well-known sentence "Spanta is the witness" which was used as a fun in public conversations. This sentence was changed into a public satire when the former President pointed to Spanta, in a news conference, several times for the accuracy of his claims and constantly called him witness.

Following the harsh statements of Afghanistan's former President, Dr. Spanta became a witness once more and showed that he is always the witness for Karzai's acts, attitudes and even words.

Now that Spanta himself has stepped to the ground and witnessed the accuracy of Karzai's words, let us ask him

about the strategy of previous administration regarding counter-insurgency, the nation's tragedy as a result of suicide and terrorist attacks and the conflict of that administration with its international allies.

Let us ask him why Hamid Karzai called the terrorist "discontented brothers" and underlined that they were also Afghans and should have been given the chance to live in Afghanistan. The question is that was it Afghan people who denied them the chance of living or it was the Taliban who offered Afghans no chance of living? Was there an ear to listen to the public complaints when the Taliban were released from Afghanistan's prisons in group?

Despite being aware of terrorists' attacks being orchestrated in our neighboring country Pakistan, what was the reason behind Afghanistan's close relationship to Pakistan? Millions of dollars were spent generously under the pretext of peace negotiation and peace process with the Taliban, what was the result for the people of Afghanistan? Were there any fruitful results for the nation other than spending budgets, killing time and revitalizing the terrorists? In spite of the fact that the Taliban inflicted heavy casualties upon Afghan nation in many years and victimized thousands of people and destroyed the country's economic infrastructure, how many members of terrorist group were prosecuted or punished due to their acts in the past years?

Whenever the Taliban's hideouts were attacked in the past or being attacked now, Mr. Karzai raised his voice. However, several deadly attacks were carried out only in Kabul last year, did he show such a strong reaction? Why attacking on terrorists irritates Karzai; however, attacks on local and defenseless people are not frustrating for him? Currently, Afghanistan's relations have been developed with the world and with its allies and it has acquired a position in international politics, why should one hamper the recovery?

It is believed that he thinks about organizing regional and international supports for his campaigns in the next round presidential election. Don't you think that the time is not ripe for stoking such tensions in the country which is already full of turbulence?

The aforementioned queries are parts of questions that a simple citizen can have for Karzai's National Security advisor. Now will he have answers for these questions? Let us look forward to hearing from him.

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Outrageous Violence

By Hujjatullah Zia

Lack of tolerance seems to be one of the challenging issues in Islamic societies. Intolerance stems from parochial mindsets and results in violence which will be a serious threat to democracy. Based on democratic views, man is born with fundamental rights - i.e. rights to life, liberty and property. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states in article 1, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." People should be able to exercise their rights and freedoms, including freedom of thoughts and expressions, without illegal barriers regardless of their race, color and beliefs. When one is not able to tolerate the beliefs, race or simply the thoughts and words of others, they will resort to violence. Believe it or not, the two violent cases - the death of Farkhunda in Kabul on March 19, 2015 and the death of Mashal in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 13, 2017 - were out of intolerance.

In both cases, no evidence was found regarding blasphemy and they were lynched by angry mob based on rumor.

Regarding the recent death of the 23-year-old student Mashal at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AW-KUM), Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif issued a strongly-worded condemnation and said, "I am shocked and saddened by the senseless display of mob justice that resulted in the murder of a young student, Mashal Khan, at Wali Khan University, Mardan."

He added, "The state will never tolerate those who take the law in their own hands." Sharif also ordered action against those found involved in the incident, directing police to arrest those who were responsible. However, the prime minister's condemnation came two days after the episode, with Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader Imran Khan taking the lead in condemning the brutal episode a day earlier. Mashal's death provoked strong condemnation in and outside Pakistan. Pakistani Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai used strong words to criticize the murder.

"This is an incident filled with terror and fear," she cited as saying and added that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had never advised his followers to "be impatient and go around killing people." The US also condemned the case and asked Pakistan to bring the perpetrators to justice.

It is really outrageous to see that in democratic countries, be it Pakistan or Afghanistan, a number of people flagrantly lynch individuals without an iota of mercy.

Based on theory of "social contract", the public have submitted their authorities to the state to have their rights and liberty protected in return. People do not have the authority to implement the law, but it is the executive power to

enforce it through legal process.

It is believed that warring factions resort to violence and bloodshed out of religious intolerance, parochial mindsets and radical ideology. They excommunicate people based on their own limited knowledge. In short, if we do not practice tolerance and treat one another with the "spirit of brotherhood", we will have a perilous future ahead.

The rights and dignity of mankind is held in high value in national laws, international instruments and religious tenets. Nonetheless, life has turned so cheap and one's dignity is devalued in our era. For instance, tens of people lose their lives on day-to-day basis.

Streams of blood are shed and families are saddened by the death of their dears. Dignity carries no meaning since women are raped or harassed sexually or simply lynched by mob such as Farkhunda.

Since the Islamic societies are particularly left at the mercy of terrorist networks and their fundamental ideology, there is a crying need for exercising tolerance and promoting democratic bases. We fear Islamophobia in western countries. But the question is that who spread this panic? It is due to not practicing Islamic tenets properly. Just imagine killing a university student by students based on a rumor! Students are considered as future intellectuals to lead the society. When our would-be intellectuals resort to indescribable violence, what do you expect of simple individuals?

University text books should be adjusted if they pave the ground for radicalization. The contents of the books at schools/universities are highly significant. It is beyond doubt that books form the students' worldview and very especial heed must be paid in this regard. According to public belief, the teenagers who show tendency towards fundamental groups are trained in radical environments such as terrorists' hideouts.

Such tragic incidents reflect two negative facts. First, the state is not able to implement the law properly. In both the aforementioned cases, the police were not able to save the victims from the angry mob which is really disappointing. Secondly, a number of people show tendency towards violence. Decades of war in Afghanistan and unmitigated militancy in Pakistan have put adverse effect on the minds of people. The states will have to eliminate the grounds for violence and radicalization so as to protect the rights and dignity of citizens.

Incidents of such ilk are a stain on the collective conscience and it is hoped that states prevent from the repetition of these scenarios. Exercising tolerance and acting "towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" will play key role in minimizing violence.

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