

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



August 20, 2016

## Reiterating Commitments on Independence Day

During the past few days, people in Afghanistan celebrated 97th Independence Day, in different parts of country. There were different kinds of festivities and both the government officials and the common people expressed their joy and happiness in different ways. For Afghans the occasions of merriment and celebration are very sporadic, as the country is going through serious insecurity; therefore, these instances should be utilized in the best way possible. Nevertheless, during the celebrations and expression of affection for the country, both people and the leaders should have in their minds that they have responsibilities towards the country as well and taking advantage of the day they should reiterate their commitments towards their responsibilities and promise that they will accomplish them in every possible way.

It can be detected in our society that our people tend to evade the negative consequences both consciously and unconsciously. We like to hold to the positive impressions of an action but tend to circumvent the disapproving outcomes and even put throw it on others' shoulders. However, the question that demands an answer from us is that if someone enjoys the outcomes as a result of the actions, why not to face the adverse consequences on top? While we cry for our rights and relish while receiving them, why don't we realize that we need to perform some very important responsibilities as well.

If a businessman appreciates the profit in favorable days as return and in bad days he faces the loss and feels himself responsible for all the decisions that have led the company to loss, then what on earth has happened to our nation, particularly the politicians that they do not accept their mistakes, and often blunders? Why has this society been ruined in terms of responsibility? Every single man in the hierarchy of the society blames the other person and frees himself? Why on earth is the top hierarchy of the country not accountable to law? Why is it that the poor and the weaker are expected to be more responsible than the rich and the authoritative people? Can the poor perform better than the rich in contributing for the society and supporting the people in coming out of troubles and problems? The poor, themselves, are caught in the quagmire of troubles, how can they be more responsible to the society?

The politicians, on the other hand, are keeping themselves aloof of all the responsibilities. They are, in fact, practicing the blame game to score points because the political culture demands so. Rectifying the mistakes is a resolving step but arrives when someone admits the mistakes. The blame game turns to no point and there is no any win-win situation, we only have loss-loss situation in the game theory of the blame games. It is a debate of egos and the egos never surrender. Blame games, political conspiracies and personal self interest achievements have resulted to a huge damage to the country's economic and political development.

It can be experienced in our society that the children are not nourished with a sense of true responsibility. As they grow up, they do not seem to realize what their responsibilities are towards their fellow human beings and towards their society. Mostly, they are taught to fulfill certain responsibilities which are limited to their individual lives. They do not seem to realize how they fit within a society and what their responsibilities are as responsible citizens. Another observation is that mostly people expect the society to fulfill their rights, but they themselves do not want to be held responsible towards others. Every individual thinks others are responsible to take care of their rights but does not realize that thinking in such a way will divide the whole society in alienated individuals whose goals are to pursue their own motives. They seem to fear responsibility and that is one of the worst things to do as a social being.

It is important to remember that rights bring responsibility, and the responsibility makes you accountable and accountability sees no blame. Passing the buck would never solve the problem. The responsibility would keep on being transferred to others and would never reach to the stage of realization. The great nations of world have, as a matter of fact, realized this golden principle that they themselves have the responsibility of building their nations and solving their issues. And, that's why they can be easily differentiated as more prosperous and developed nations of the world. Certainly, all the members of the society must perform their responsibilities but the leaders of the nation must be the trend setters. They need to set examples for others by performing their responsibilities without any sort of negligence. The governments that realize their responsibilities and do not fall short of providing the people their rights are mostly appreciated and at the same time supported by their people. People, finding the governments and leaders, responsible citizens tend to do the same and thus lend a hand for the development of the country.

## Independency Depends to Leaders of Tomorrow

By Muhammad Zahir Akbari

Considering current economic, cultural and political conditions, it seems unanimously agreeable that Afghanistan is one of the most dependent countries in the world! Unfortunately, terms of independence neither as a general sense nor as a certain sense, such as economic or socio-political components, never seriously debated in the operating practices' literature in Afghanistan. The ambiguous concept of independence remained more likely to a wish or a motto rather than a serious public demand being autopsied and interpreted by sophisticated thinkers. The practical step of this desire will not implement unless nationally invest on new generation who may achieve these ancient honors by gaining advanced capabilities. In clearer terms, independency depends to educating and training of children who are supposed to be the leaders of tomorrow. The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.

Hence, Afghanistan is much weaker than it is to speak of independency; In terms of economy, it is the most dependent country in the world, in terms of human force and expertise, Afghanistan ranks 172th country in the world! Teachers, students and young generation who are supposed to lay the foundation of independency are the most humble class in this society. They are subjected to extreme poverty, violence, health and poor investment. Half the country's estimated around 30 million populations are below 15. Over a quarter of them die before their fifth birthday mostly from preventable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea. Afghanistan has some of the worst child malnourishment, stunting, mental retarded, underweighted and vitamin deficiency figures in the world. According to the World Food Program, 39% of children under the age of five are underweight. 78% of Afghan children lack access to safe water. Only 6% of children are registered at birth, leaving the vast majority without legal identity and protection. 1 in 8 Afghan women still die in childbirth. Girls are sometimes forced to marry at a very young age and they are most at risk from complication during pregnancy and labor. Some young university graduates are using tobacco, Naswar, and even opium to block pain; the pain of hunger, sickness, unemployment, physical and mental trauma. There are around two million addicts in this nation of about 30 million people, including 60,000 children under age 15, and about 13 percent are women and 7 percent are children. Most of the women are opium addicts desperate to blunt the trauma of endless war. Many are illiterate mothers with unemployed husbands. Most have a little in the way of job skills, and some became addicts while picking opium poppies to earn a living and support their families. All these are some of indicators that show that Afghanistan has taken no step towards independency.

Reaching the dream of independency needs high attention to foundations of liberty on the top as educational services free of any traditional considerations but it is hampered by a shortage of qualified teachers, discriminations, negligence, poor facilities, lawlessness and threats posed by insurgents. Even so, over two-thirds of school-age children attend school. Girls, banned from school under the Taliban regime, are gradually returning to the classroom, but 70 percent are still not enrolled. The majority of girls still do not attend primary school. Only 11% of secondary-school-age girls are enrolled in grades 7-9 and 4% enroll in grades 10-12. Many university students discontinue Due to insecurity, unemployment and despair. Physical and mental Security is the most destructive and growing factors to make them leave schools and country for the purpose of reaching better abode. Educations target such as damaging or destruction of schools by arson, poisoning, grenades, mines and rockets; threats to teachers and officials are common practice; students, teachers and other educational staff have been killed and there has been looting.

Instead of going school or doing their homework, children compel to undertake all manner of jobs. They work as street vendors, shop assistants, as blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, domestics, auto mechanics, carpet weavers, and in brick factories. Some of them are as young as 5 or 6 years old. In the cities, children collect paper and scrap metal, shine shoes, and beg. In rural areas, many children work in agriculture. Because of limited family incomes, parents encourage their children to beg or work. Years of conflict have left many families parentless and with child-headed households. Thus, it is reported that children from Afghanistan are trafficked they are subjected to forced labor, child soldiers, forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, or debt bondage. In first years of Mr. Karzai government, there was a major flow of refugees returning to their home country but the flow has gradually decreased as a consequence of increasing social and political challenges. In 2015 with sixty-eight thousand refugees Afghanistan got the third place in the world! Most of these asylum seekers were young teenagers making the difficult and dangerous journey to Europe, unaccompanied by adults.

These children are very susceptible and often encounter dreadful conditions in the way of illegal human trafficking and after they reach the destinations. To end with, independency cannot be bestowed — it must be planned and achieved. It cannot be achieved unless by educating new generation, laying the foundation of economy and eliminating superstitious boundaries such as: castes, creeds, race and breaking chains of captivities. Wishing a day that tears come to my eye, and see our independent flag are waving high!

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## Afghanistan's Independence

By Hujjatullah Zia

Succeeding to the throne, Amanullah Khan declared independence in 1919 and pursued an independent foreign policy free from the influence of the British Rule and his rule was marked by dramatic political and social change. He channeled Afghanistan to democratization and fundamental reforms. Afghanistan's first Constitution was approved during Amanullah's reign by Jalalabad Loya Jirga (National Grand Assembly) and confirmed by Paghman Loya Jirga which included 1052 individuals from officers, clergy, tribal elders and Khans. He established constitutional monarchy and proclaimed equal rights for citizens regardless of their race, sex and sect.

Although the responsibilities and authorities of the king, ministers and many other institutions were determined in this constitution, and the "state council" was formed by appointed and selected members for offering consultation about legislation, the separation of powers and their independence were not stated and parliament, which is the beating heart of democracy, was not formed. However, it was a great step toward democracy.

Besides advancing a modern constitution that incorporated equal rights and individual freedoms with the guidance of his father-in-law and Foreign Minister Mahmud Tarzi, Amanullah used his influence to modernize the country. He created new cosmopolitan schools for both boys and girls in the region and overturned centuries-old traditions such as strict dress codes for women. He increased trade with Europe and Asia. His transforming social and educational reforms included: adopting the solar calendar, requiring Western dress in parts of Kabul and elsewhere, discouraging the veiling and seclusion of women, abolishing slavery and forced labor, introducing secular education for males and females, adult education classes and educating nomads. Many bylaws were approved during his reign, including the law of press which gave freedom of the press to the public and "Aman-Afghan Journal" was launched on August 12, 1919. Similarly, the first non-governmental journal "Anis" was published by Ghulam Mohyiddin Anis in 1926 and radio broadcasts were introduced to people. He worked to put in place progressive reforms in the country.

The role of Soraya, who was the daughter of a well-known and respected Afghan intellectual and poet, Sardar Mahmud Beg Tarzi, is highly worthy of mention. Soraya worked actively to liberate the women of Afghanistan, grant them their rights and encouraged them to participate in nation building. She set up the first women's hospital and girl's school in the country. As minister of education, she also arranged to send 18 young women to Turkey to seek higher education in 1928.

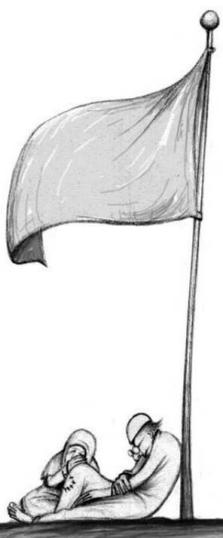
In one of her famous speeches she gave at the seventh anniversary of Afghanistan's independence from the British, she said, "It (independence) belongs to all of us and that is why we celebrate it. Do you think, however, that our nation from the outset needs only men to serve it? Women should also take their part as women did in the early years of our nation and Islam. From their examples we must learn that we must all contribute toward the development of our nation and that this cannot be done without being equipped with knowledge. So, we should all attempt to acquire as much knowledge as possible, in order that we may render our services to society in the manner of the women of early Islam."

However, Amanullah sought to change Afghan society, where traditional cultures held strong sway, overnight. In late years of his reign, he had a trip to Europe along with his wife. Returning from the trip, he was deeply influenced by European development and believed that women's hijab was an obstacle before democracy. He urged that Afghan women should not observe veil, his main intention was to ban burqa, a traditional head-to-toe covering with meshes on the face that is still used by some Afghan women but has no religious aspect. Since Afghanistan was not ripe for this sudden change, this created a backlash and a reactionary uprising known as the Khost rebellion was suppressed in 1924.

Amanullah took high steps to bring democracy in Afghanistan and served the nation with good intention. Unlike his predecessors, he did not discriminate against the nation on the basis of their sex, creed and color and considered women's position equal to men. During his reign, women attended schools and involved in social and cultural activities. In other words, the role of Afghan women was not restricted within the four walls and he sought to eliminate the traditional and tribal structures, where women had no rights and liberty. He disapproved of women's subjugation to men and tried to eliminate the patriarchal system which was embedded in Afghans' culture, mainly in tribal belts.

However, the pace of change was very fast in a society where patriarchal and tribal customs ruled for long years and women were deprived of their rights. Importing European's development or culture was tantamount to cutting the text from its context and pasting it in a completely different location — it was not digestible for Afghanistan at all. Therefore, a number of opportunists, mainly Khans who found their self-interests in danger, stoked public sentiments against the king. People protested against him with a strong sense of anger which led to the fall of his reign. Overall, he was a man of honor and rendered great services for the nation. He caused many positive changes and took high steps toward national rights and liberty.

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