

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



March 12, 2015

Pardoning Photojournalist Earned President Applause

Najibullah Musafir, an Afghan photojournalist who was imprisoned for six months has been pardoned by the President. This certainly is an appreciable move by president taking a bold and cogent step exercising a fair decision that safeguards both the journalists and cause of press freedom. Najibullah Musafir was arrested about three weeks ago and sent to Pul-i-Charkhi prison in Kabul after the court passed its ruling of six months imprisonment without dispensing the right to defend him. Najibullah Musafir was sentenced for pictures taken during basketball play of female in Kabul's Ghazi Stadium but the picture was reportedly used by a telecommunication company in the advertisement. In Afghanistan, media personnel often have to carry out their duties in an extremely precarious ambiance. The variant functional groups owing variant interests try hard to avow their influence and strive earning the favor of media person either by gun or mutton. Last year 60 journalists were killed worldwide. Eight of them lost lives in Afghanistan, making it the deadliest year for journalists in Afghanistan. Hence journalists must act with promptness and caution, balancing their professional duties with awareness about when to pull back should things spiral out of control. In this piece of land numerous journalists have been killed in the line of their duties. Press encounters enormous censure, great degree of restraint and severe and callous treatment from both state and non-state actors. Such cold hearted attitudes are occasionally witnessed in states passing through totalitarian, despotic and dysfunctional or paralyzed democratic regimes. The functioning of media bodies, foreign or local, becoming targets for reprisal for their work as journalists might get worsened if appropriate actions aren't taken. It is an irrefutable notion that democracy encompassing all its core values lay to implementation only when customary cultures are substituted with democratic culture. This renders achievable when ground turns richer for such adoption. Nonetheless, the case is otherwise in this piece of land where biases seek sectarian, racial, religious and regional support. Everybody is discriminated on flawed aforesaid grounds. Truth is lies off and falsehood dominates; the list goes on. According to Reporters without Borders press freedom index in the 2014, Afghanistan is ranked 128th out of 180 countries. But this period has also seen the continuation of a wave of violence against journalists than was unleashed when election coverage began last October. The Taliban stepped up attacks on the civilian population more than a year ago, and their targets have included journalists and media.

Another case that earned prominence was the death of 27-year-old local radio host Kaled Aghah Yaghubi gunned down in front of his children in his home in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of the northern province of Balkh, the previous year. The continuing wave of killing against journalists showed marked increase in violence. This was confirmed by the report released, late 2014 by United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) noted a 24 per cent increase in the number of civilians killed or wounded in attacks or other acts of violence. Earlier a France based independent group Reporter Without Borders released Press Freedom Index 2015 that underlined grave violation of press freedom. The index stated that there were 3,719 violations of freedom of information in 180 countries in 2014 - eight per cent more than a year earlier. The criminalization of blasphemy endangers freedom of information in around half of the world's countries," the report said, noting that religious extremists sometimes also go after journalists or bloggers they believe do not sufficiently respect their god or prophet. The Index puts Afghanistan 122 out of 180 countries with score of 37.44, just 6 degree ahead of former year. The aforesaid appreciable moves might have served the reason to bring it forth. Seeing at dismal performance of the rest of countries, we are refreshed to do a bit of good to dwindle the status quo. Conversely, the RSF's ranking put Iran, China, Syria and North Korea among the countries with the very worst levels of press freedom out of the 180 evaluated. The United States ranked 49, three spots lower than in the previous report, in part because of what RSF said was the US government's "war on information" against WikiLeaks and others. The best-rated nations were northern European states such as Finland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, with New Zealand, Canada and Jamaica also making the top 10. Before assuming the office of presidency, President and CEO promised to support the freedom of press. Some measures favoring freedom of information have also been begun which include modifying the access to information law, eliminating the Media Offences Commission, and the planned creation of a media regulatory body under a new media law. This won't suffice unless regulatory bodies to oversee its implementation are onset. At the same time, there have been two key decisions favoring freedom of information in Afghanistan. The parliament adopted a law on access to information. It's to be remembered that any development hindering the smooth-running of media should be discouraged. Both the ratification of access to information law and getting the Afghan photojournalist pardoned are deemed splendid measure taken by incumbent government which of course embolden journalists further their impartial duties towards in the fairer environment. The governments must come forth sincerely, addressing the boundless challenges Afghan media faces and must not let this very functional organ of society beleaguer.



Human Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge

By Dilawar Sherzai

A person should have a great value and affection for humanity. Especially the deprived and helpless human beings should be loved and this love is one of the greatest virtues and the best character of human nature. It is also important that the literate and sensitive people of the world must have respect for humanity and must love fellow human beings without any distinction of race, language, sect and nation. However, the fact is that human beings in today's world are living the life of loneliness without much concern for others. Everybody is busy with his own self. Even the blood relations are not reliable. Though they are claimed to be the strongest but when it is tested within a situation it also disappoints. Human beings consider themselves as the best of the beings. They consider themselves as the most advanced and developed living being on the planet earth. Why do they consider so? They consider so because they think they have been able to invent weapons for them from the stones and have been able to dominate other animals. Yes, they have done so and by doing so they are able to save themselves from fierce beasts, but 'has that distinction made them better?' is the question to be pondered upon. If human beings are asked whether they would like to see Hitler as their ruler or any tiger, they would definitely suggest that they would prefer Hitler. They say so because they believe that he was, at least, a human being and had love and affection for his close relatives. Moreover, there were thousands of human beings who considered themselves safe because of him. However, no human being can be safe from a tiger. At this stance a question rises to our minds, "Are other tigers safe from a tiger?" In most cases the answer is "Yes". There are only few stances where a tiger kills other tigers or hurts them. In addition, the tigers are not in any sort of danger of extinction from the cruelty of their own race. Now, coming back to Hitler, we can safely say that though his close relatives felt safe from him, there were thousands others who felt themselves insecure because of him and were horrified by his army. Many wars were fought under his supervision and they brought great losses to human lives. It has also been mentioned in Holy Books that one of the first children of Adam and Eve killed his brother and executed the first murder in human history. However, within animals it is very difficult to find an offspring killing the other one. Another imperative reality is that it is impossible to find animals creating weapons in order to kill other animals. It is only

the 'distinct human quality' that develops modern and lethal weapons, which human beings use mercilessly to annihilate their fellowmen. Has anyone seen cats and dogs that are great enemies to each other invent guns or arrows against each other? It is only the 'best of the creatures' that has such a capacity to invent weapons and then to use them brutally. It is only human beings, who have conscious, wisdom and understanding and whose knowledge has reached to other planets; who have searched moons and studied stars but have become a threat to themselves. They have, as a matter of fact, made this world a hell for themselves. Was this expected from their wisdom, understanding and knowledge? Never! All these attributes must have positive influence on human beings and humanity and that is the way human beings must utilize them. It is a matter of common sense that whenever something influences us negatively and brings loss to us we tend to avoid such thing, stop it or even completely eradicate it. But, it is weird that human beings have nourished the things that can result in their own extinction. In today's world it can be easily observed that human beings utilize most of their capacities and their potentials for planning warfare and designing weapons. Most of the investments in modern science and technology are for the same purpose. It is horrific to think that human beings have designed nuclear weapons that have the capacity to destroy earth several times. The same energy, potential, capacities and investments can be used by human beings for positive purposes. They can use the same to find out the ways of fighting with social problems, eradicate poverty and provide rudimentary requirements to teeming millions. They can use the same to fight the growing menace of pollution. They can focus more on designing technology that can assist them in fighting different sorts of diseases erupting in our world. There are millions of people in the world who do not have clean drinking water and there are many others who have never experienced electricity in their lives. All the human energy can be utilized to help these people but unfortunately human beings are intoxicated with the thirst for power. Hatred for their own fellow beings has blindfolded them and they are not able to see the positive energy they can generate. It is really important that human beings must revise their way of living. They need to realize that they have the responsibility of making this planet worthy for all to live with pride and dignity. They have to prove that they are really the best of the creatures and their wisdom, understanding and knowledge are the attributes that can make them proud. Dilawar Sherzai is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at Outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

The Charm of Words Never Fades Away

By Hujjatullah Zia

Are you fed up with words? I don't blame you. I am nauseated by them sometimes. I am also, to tell the truth, nauseated by ideals and with causes. This sounds like heresy, but I think you will understand what I mean. It is so easy to get engrossed with ideas and slogans and myths that in the end one is left holding the bag, empty, with no trace of meaning left in it. And then the temptation is to yell louder than ever in order to make the meaning be there again by magic. Going through this kind of reaction helps you to guard against this. Your system is complaining of too much verbalizing, and it is right. The big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important. "Through the sands of time...the written word has changed the course of history, inspired many to fight for their beliefs and most importantly...elevated mankind to a higher understanding of man's inhumanity to mankind." Don't you think that one will be blasé about rhetorical terms and inundation of words? Newspapers are fraught with shibboleths and clichés or wordy and lurid reports about a spate of rapes, killings, burglaries, etc. The efficacy of words seems to be waning and even the more tragic and inhuman acts begin to pall - unable to raise public concerns. To put it succinctly, in the potpourri of words and political rhetoric, people have read about war and violence to satiety. It is simply said that man is confined in the frame of words, which are unable to depict a strong emotion or a profound antipathy. In other words, a deep feeling of sadness will be reflected only through a drop of tear, a great pleasure through a raucous laughter, a puissant sense of shame through redness of face and a painful ache via a wan face. Perhaps some believe that gestures, facial expressions and symbols play more integral role in our social life, as a tool for communication, than words. For instance, a deep sense of love or honor can be expressed only by a kiss - as a mother gives to her child and vice versa. Furthermore, the negative role of word is highly prominent in social life. As a result, one will hurt the feelings of his/her bosom body or break their hearts by a sharp word. A wound made by a pungent word in one's heart will be more painful than a wound made by sword in one's body. Likewise, people

make a lot of enemies by using foul languages and heaping vituperation upon one another. In public life, vilifying and maligning this or that are the daily practices, which sometimes lead to fracas. So, it is better to keep silent rather than forcing tears into innocent eyes. Additionally, words cannot discover one's true intentions and sincerity. In another item, a person seeks to curry others' favor or ingratiate him/herself by obsequious language. Under the veneer of glib talks, people are wheedled and their emotions are exploited to a large extent. For instance, many credulous girls have fallen for the bogus claims and sweet talks of wicked men in our society. So, phonies mask their evil intentions in the frames of flamboyant words to prey on simple girls - it is rife all over the world. So, what is the need of playing with words everyday in a thousand and one manners? The efficacy of word is beyond doubt. When you read about moral turpitude, violence and bloodshed, you have to express your antipathy against perpetrators and your sympathy in favor of victims by the power of words - only contorting your face will not be enough. Moreover, it is a moral incumbent upon you to allay the pain of victims and their families with soothing words. Words are not only used to hurt one's feelings but to heal the wounded hearts of hapless individuals. One can evince his/her love and emotions to somebody by words better rather than gestures. Although a drop of tear indicates a strong feeling but it is not an impeccable way of expressing sentiments either. We have also crocodile tears, which are shed to deceive people - particularly the girls who are highly sensitive. One will see that all the histories are written to depict the acts of men. The stock of knowledge is transferred from one generation to another in the frame of words. The messages of religion and prophets are conveyed to us via written words. Therefore, language is the best tool for communication. We should be highly discreet about using words. Through words, we can break one's heart, blacken one's reputation and so on but it is all misusing of the words. Word reveals one's personality. For instance, a fool will speak absurdly but the wise will talk meaningfully. Your heart will melt with the charm of words. As a result, the charismatic leaders lured the public by the power of words. In short, by the cogent attraction of words, one can rule people's hearts and minds. So, words are as necessary for a society as oxygen for breathing. Let us communicate in a friendly atmosphere, reveal our human feelings and talk to heal our wounds. Hujjat Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

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