

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



March 14, 2015

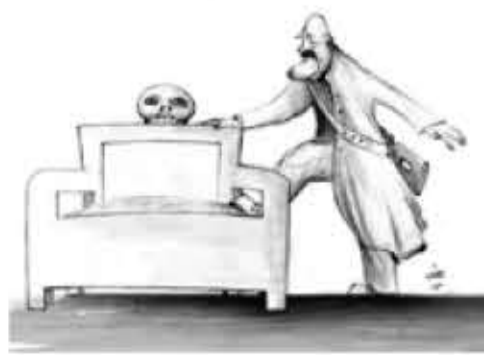
Peace Talks Seems to Crystallize

Afghans have been longing eternal peace for decades. After years of fighting that have claimed awful toll, most Afghans appear to be supportive of a peace process. Formerly, a poll conducted by State Department confirmed this stance. The poll found that 66 percent of Afghans would be acquiescent to amnesty for insurgents if it paved the way for a peace deal. The newly installed government in Kabul affirms security the top most precedence. Nonetheless, the peace dream of Afghans can't materialize, given multiple factors hindered the way to this triumph. The in-depth trust deficit found between disgruntled factions, served a dominant factor restraining this settlement. Taliban never relied Kabul government to be the sole authority that should be talked, to chart out the future course of action. Purposeful, negotiations renders the sole political solution to put an end to this predicament, pleading a trustworthy guarantor. Pakistan can play a significant role, narrowing down the understanding gap by mediating talks between the two factions; government and Taliban. Reportedly, Pakistan enjoys good ties with Afghan Taliban, who disbanded their ties with Pakistani faction of Taliban. Previously it was reported by credible media that Afghan government and the Taliban were preparing to hold face-to-face talks in the following days as a result of efforts by Pakistan and other stakeholders. The encouragements to initiate talks were received by US representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Daniel Feldman. Reportedly, the US would not be part of the upcoming talks, with exception of backing the fresh moves for the political solution, said the report. The report added that efforts were being made to arrange the talks in Kabul in an effort to show that the process is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. It is hastened to initiate talks before Taliban's spring offensive begin, provided the first round talks focusing on ceasefire. Nonetheless, earlier came forth rejecting reports regarding talks with the Afghan government, stating they had neither contacted the authorities nor asked anyone else to carry forth the task. This denial surfaced subsequent to former emergence of report of peace talks between Taliban and Afghan government.

Following the successive developments, Afghan Taliban and the government are about to devise a roadmap to finalize peace talk. The Pakistani army and diplomatic officials in their previous visit to Afghanistan had declared Afghan Taliban have signaled their willingness to initiate peace talks. According to report surfaced the venue is still undecided; preferably out of Islamabad, Kabul, Beijing or Dubai one might be chosen where talks could further. The aforesaid progression bridges the credibility of the former report stating the Government of National Unity had offered posts to senior former Taliban leaders in the new cabinet which were not formally announced. It is said that the Government of National Unity had considered offering posts of the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the borders and Hajj and Religious Affairs, besides appointing Taliban governors to three southern provinces - Nimruz, Kandahar and Helmand. It's a good omen that broad based reconciliation between Afghan government and Taliban could bring true the "peace" dream of ordinary masses of this piece of land.

Following the traces of entire political proceedings, and appreciation descended from President Obama reflects the stage is set to execute the talks. There are tangible evidences that support the smoothening of rout to both formation and finalization of peace talks. Formerly, US unlabeled Taliban terrorist but termed them insurgents; lifted travel ban and made Pakistan initiate talks with them.

There are vital developments witnessed echoing even in constitutional avenues of US and elsewhere. It should be to none surprise, US tempts not to call Taliban, terrorists now onward, given, formerly the White House issues statement, reiterating that the Taliban were not a terrorist outfit while Al Qaeda is. The distinction carved underlines; the US's deep rooted global interests are endangered by later than former. Broadly speaking it seems to be a sub plan of another master plan where Taliban are given space to join back the political domain and disband militancy. There are some hard born reservations Taliban still assert to be primarily considered on peace talks agenda; they eye constitution to be Islamized, Taliban be given greater share in the new setup. The government displayed complete silence about over all developments. Earlier, the presidential palace had said the nation would be informed about major developments in talks with the armed opponents. Reconciliation leading to installment of peace is the ultimate necessity every Afghan longs for over decades. In order to look at the feasibility of restoration of the stalled peace process, and its durability we have to consider some ground realities in consideration. Putting a glance at the political outlook of Afghanistan, chaotic state of delusion is reflected. The incumbent government tries to push for peace talks whilst insurgents resorted to parallel bloodletting must be kept in consideration. It is believed that lasting can only be installed given all factions of the decade long conflict is brought to common terms. Even if talks were to be used as a last resort to install peace then some serious breakthrough must have worked out that could soothe the insurgents to an agreeable demand prior to sitting. The most significant are the demonstration of shift instilled in Taliban's resolve to disband militancy, dissociate Al-Qaida and surrender to constitution of the country. This move practically is unachievable given that Taliban deem to having upper hand in the fight, never surrender to government's demands instead dreams of ousting Kabul government.



Integrating Moral Values Earns Social Cohesiveness

By Asmatyari

We all protect our life because we care for it more than anything else. We shouldn't be forgetful of worth of life driving values. If life is so important, the values of life are even more important. Values are guiding principles, or standards of behavior, which are regarded desirable, important and held in high esteem by a particular society in which a person lives. Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable constitute values. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Nobody is born with moral content in him. It is inculcated in him by his education and experience of life. Hence, it is necessary to teach moral values from the very beginning of the childhood. We all pick up morals throughout our life, but it is the education that moulds them in our characters.

By educating children about morals and their values in life we can make them fit for the society as well as the nation. It is the only way out to keep control that they find themselves unable to differentiate between right and wrong. Moral education will enable them to go on the right path forgetting all those, which are not at all desirable. In an age when everything seems to have gone topsy-turvy, when everyone seems to run after some monetary achievement, no one can deny the importance of moral education. At present children fail to come to terms with morals because they are not aware of any. The first thing that comes to the mind is the increasingly bad behavior of students. The frequent outbursts of defiance against parent authority a lack of respect for elders is all inductive of weak moral character. A great crime rate amongst the younger people who come within the range of 18 to 25 years is indicative of the kind of society they inhabit. Our society has been slipping towards the ditch of immorality and the day is not far off when we will see our society fallen into that trench if we do not mend our ways, if we do not inculcate morality in our younger generation. People have many different values for many different reasons. Some have the same values; some may place more of a value on one thing than another. This is what differentiates from one person to the next. We can find through the chronicles of history, people placing greater values to rationalized decisions, worth progressing than those guided irrational dictates.

Values are shaped and formed through different circumstances; how you may or may not have been brought up; through any religious beliefs you may hold; or even from just personal likes and dislikes. Upbeat values are important because they allow you to have an overall feeling of peace and joy. Moral values can give meaning and purpose to your life. You are able to direct your behavior towards beneficial and fulfilling activities. When you live your life according to moral values that are based on honesty, compassion, courage, modesty, and forgiveness, then you can also form positive bonds with other people. Exercising a great sum of fair deal in our daily affairs earn us a value

named honesty. Incorporating honesty in your life makes you trustworthy. You will have a clear conscience because you can respect yourself. The people that you come into contact with will be able to count on you to be fair and sincere. Your integrity will allow you to advance in both your personal and professional life. There are more opportunities for you to fully experience life when you are an honest person. The act of sympathy enjoying the position of power is called compassion. It's another significant value helping us strengthen the bond of togetherness. It allows you to have sympathy for the misfortunes of other people. It also motivates you to give them any type of assistance that you can. Compassion results in having feelings of mercy towards other people. When you have compassion as a moral value people are more likely to put their trust in you because you will be non-judgmental of their circumstances. When you stand firm against your rival in every field of human endeavor you are not only a dauntless but also a courageous person. It is value that gives you the determination to face anything that impedes your progress through life. You will also be able to overcome any obstacles because you won't let fear hold you back. Others will feel confident relying on you for encouragement because you find solutions to whatever problems arise in your life. When courage is one of your moral values, you can bravely face the world.

Every human being owes some distinct exceptional features that bring him distinction. Using such position to greater interest of minority in disguise is a deliberate act of immodesty. In life, it is essential to your survival to have modesty especially in respect to courage. Modesty allows you to realize what your limits are. It helps you to stay focused and keeps you from becoming overconfident and reckless. People will feel comfortable around you because you are humble and you do not try to belittle them. Man is by nature bound to commit pardonable mistakes. Forgiveness is also an important value of in one's life. It allows you to move past hurtful or damaging situations. It allows you to abandon feelings of anger or resentment against others or yourself. You can be emotionally healthy when you practice forgiveness because it keeps you from holding onto pain and resentment. Reviving these dying values is extremely important for your overall well-being. Moral values provide a structure for your life. Honesty makes you respectable. Compassion makes you sympathetic to others. Courage gives you the bravery to overcome life's challenges. Modesty keeps you focused and humble. Forgiveness allows you to be emotionally stable because you don't hold onto anger and resentment. These attributes will allow you to live your life in a way that reduces your stress levels. You will also have peace and harmony in your life. Moral values allow you to live your life in a manner that you can be proud of. The bonds that you form with others will also be more fulfilling because you live your life according to honesty, compassion, courage, modesty and forgiveness. We must be aware of the fact that betters the moral in the people, greater cohesiveness in the society.

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Zabul Kidnapping: Government's Indifference not Helpful

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

It is almost a month since 31 civilian passengers were abducted by unknown militants in Zabul province. The military operation going on in Zabul province, which was aimed at saving the passengers seem to yield no tangible result. This is while it has virtually closed all communication channels between the Taliban and local elders in Zabul and Ghazni provinces. In recent days, unconfirmed reports suggested that the militants have relocated the kidnapped passengers to Taliban-controlled districts in Ghazni province. With the mysterious kidnapping of 31 passengers unresolved, the public is gradually getting desensitized to their fate and the government does not seem to be serious in resolving the issue.

With each passing day, the glimpse of hope to have the passengers released is vanishing. Unlike the initial days of the kidnapping, local elders and inter-ethnic negotiators now seem helpless and express exhaustion over the situation. Despite all the media coverage and government or non-government efforts to free the passengers, there are still a lot of ambiguities over the kidnapping. During last three weeks, some claimed the perpetrators are affiliated with Islamic State groups, as called Daesh in Afghanistan. However, many local sources and government officials have categorically denied this. They have blamed the Taliban, or at least some local commanders previously loyal to the group, for the kidnapping of the 31 civilians. Despite widespread rumors that some foreign militants may be involved in the kidnapping, a number of locals and government officials have said that the Taliban are responsible for the incident. The Taliban, however, have denied being involved in the abduction.

This has now made the problem even more complicated. Given all these claims and counter-claims, the mystery whether who is behind the abduction remains obscure. There are different accounts of the demands of the militants. When negotiating with local elders and government interlocutors, the militants must have made some demands to the government and local mediators. Some reports suggested in early days of the event that they wanted back a vehicle full of ammunition seized by security forces.

However, what is clear is that the government failed to make compromises and continue engaging in talks with the militants through local elders. Also the government has not acted transparently regarding the development of the negotiations between the militants and the locals. Government officials have put the public in dark over the issue. Whether the kidnappers have reached out to the Afghan government for any sort of demands is also not known to the public.

On the other hand, the government did not respond to the issue as the people expected. The military operation for rescuing the hostages was widely praised by the public, but there were also some skepticism. However, it is almost obvious that it was a wrong move at a wrong time which would certainly is not going to help releasing the hostages.

The military operation was in fact meaning abandonment of the hostages by the government. There are perhaps many reasons related to the government's lack of willingness to make the issue its top priority. In recent months, the government has stepped up efforts to bring the Taliban on negotiation table to end the decade-long conflict. As many other disastrous attacks by the Taliban, the government seems to be deliberately downplaying the issue so to appease the militant groups. Among the several justifications for the government officials in taking the issue not seriously, one is that fact that deaths and casualties in Afghanistan have become so common that have desensitized not only the ordinary people but also the government and other key players to accept that deaths occurring on daily basis in Afghanistan are inevitable. Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, on Friday March 12, 2015 confirmed contact between government officials and representatives of the Taliban and another group for the release of kidnapped passengers saying that he had informally sent a delegation to Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province. He added the group, to which the kidnappers were linked, had been told that innocent people had been seized. "Another Karachi-based extremist group has also been contacted."

The kidnapping is of grave concern not only for Hazaras as an ethnic minority in Afghanistan but for the country as a whole. The issue, and its unpredictable consequences, has the potential to spark ethnic tensions in the war-torn country. Such tensions could easily erupt in areas where ethnic groups live in vicinity while government has no effective security and governance coverage. Such areas could be the starting point for such inter-ethnic tensions as locals in vulnerable areas are finding themselves in difficult security situation which is forcing them to arm and defend their villages against any invaders.

This has happened in the past and could happen at any time now or in the future if the government fails to protect the relative harmony between the people by providing security. Another justification that the issue and other similar incidents could develop disastrous for Afghanistan is that foreign hands may be involved in such security incidents while local insurgents are still believed to be responsible as whole. Involvement of foreign players may quickly get the situation uncontrolled. The simple fact that militants drag certain passengers belonging to an ethnic group is quite worrisome. Such systematic moves in countries like Iraq, Pakistan and some African countries have proved destructive not only for the minority groups but also for the governments' ability to govern effectively. Therefore, the government needs to act decisively and change the course it has taken so far. The government's visible indifference to the fate of the passengers will seriously harm the government's credibility in maintaining its commitment to the safety and security of the people. The government should take those who are responsible for the incident and redouble its efforts to release the passengers. The right approach would be for the government to go through negotiation channels if it is determined to save the hostages.

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