

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



March 25, 2015

Farkhunda, We are Sorry!

Brutal and inhuman killing and burning of Farkhunda ashamed us all around the world. Both local and international media are repeatedly showing the painful scenes when a helpless woman was brutally tortured, mutilated and then burnt down by a group of merciless and stone-hearted people. The sad incident has left behind numerous question marks on our social character, our poor understanding of religion, our utilization of religion for our dangerous purposes, lack of courage as members of society, our trend of blindly following a crowd and weakness of our security forces.

At the same time, it shows how much we are away from actual religion and use it only for displaying others few acceptable things and also the inactiveness of our so-called NGOs that utilized this occasion for their own benefits. A good aspect of Afghan society also came into light that society is now more socially aware due to internet and large number of social networking sites.

True motives behind her killing are still hidden but now, not a single person is ready to accept it as it was mentioned in the beginning that she insulted Holy Koran. People are sure that she became a victim of a plot in which the emotions and religious sentiments of common people were tactfully utilized. There are many speculations about the motives and circumstances that gave birth to this sad incident. Unfortunately, our country is still in tight grips of ignorant and really cunning gang of people who use religion for their own purposes. There are large numbers of fake saints and spiritual healers in different corners of country who loot the innocent and ignorant people on the name of religion. As they are involved in criminal activities so they often keep a number of strong thugs and assistants to bully the people and silence those who might interfere or object on their work. Shrines of a number of saints are occupied by such criminal groups. These groups not only loot people but they are also involved in a number of criminal activities like selling drugs, and even raping the girls who come or are brought by their relatives for spiritual healing and treatment.

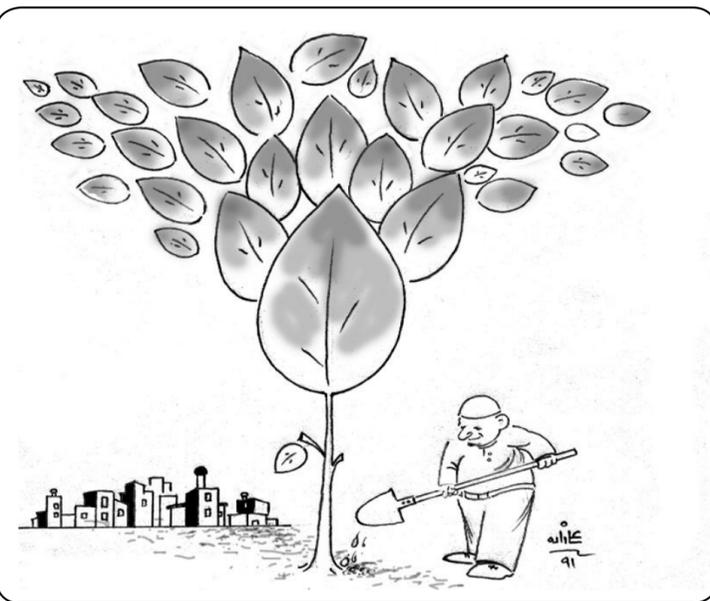
Here, another strange practice is also common. On the name of spiritual healing, some religious texts are written on a paper and given to patients to wear around their necks or dip it in water and drink the water. Though it is considered a good source of religious treatment but it is also used by these fake saints and scholars. In Farkhunda's case, it is believed that she had objected on one of the similar writings and it was given the name of blasphemy. The number of culprits who were in the front to catch, torture and then set ablaze Farkhunda were the workers or thugs of the scholar who had given orders of the killing of Farkhunda. Another aspect is the unlimited authority of these so-called scholars and saints who can condemn a person to death if it pleases them. If government and our security organizations carry out research, they can find thousands of such fake scholars and spiritual healers who are looting the people on the name of religion. This sad incident has given us a unique opportunity to take a nation-wide action against these thugs.

There are also reports that majority of the criminals caught were unaware of the basic teachings of Islam. Though this discovery is not something unexpected but it has been discovered very late. If the angry crowd had asked the same question from them on the spot, this sad incident could have been averted. It shows the true condition of religion in our society when people are not only unaware of the religion but also utilize it only for making a show-off on a number of occasions and usually these show-offs end in something evil.

Our general public is also the criminal of this crime as they either directly got involved in this or they stood silently to watch to let this criminal act happen. It shows the deteriorating status of our social courage and ethics when we either become a part of a wrong act or keep silently watching it, without raising our voice against it.

However, the following events are also hopeful. It is not the only incident of its kind. In our villages and rural areas, large number of people fell victim to these stupid people who are using the name of religion for the criminal activities. However, it is the only incident that got such mass public attention, thanks to social networking sites and active media. The Media were found to be very much effective in this case when large number of people were kept updated about the progress in this regard.

Though the role of police was not satisfactory in this case but later on, they tried to compensate for this by catching the criminals involved in this barbarous crime. Almost 42 suspected people have been caught in this regard and according to police, more arrests are expected. It is the demand of public and our political leaders as well that the criminals should be tried in the least time possible. They should be made to face the severe punishments for their crime. This would partly stop the way of such incidents in future.



State of Utter Despondency

By Asmatyari

A lady wearing traditional Islamic dress is shown denying, she had set the holy book on fire in the. The rowdy mobs encircling her resort to vulgar language and turn her propositions down and coerces her confess the leveled allegations. It is a moment later when the disruptive mob takes to harshest violence on unfound accusation against a woman," showed the video formerly released. The subsequent inhuman sights shared on social media are inexplicable and can't be justified on any moral grounds, jolts every benevolent soul, depicting the state of utter statelessness.

The woman got slaughtered mercilessly by throng angry mob; some of whom earned virtue by giving a free hit with iron rod, stick, twig and vehicle; others relied to triggering off the mob to do their part while using trash language; and some resorted to be a silent onlooker. A woman yelled, sobbed amidst stream of blood flowing down her face and body, begged forgiveness but everyone relied to witness the account of brutality by turning a deaf ear and a blind eye instead. Only rare sane voices were heard barring the mob of wreaking malice. How could the rude mob, overwhelmed by mislead emotions control their infatuation? This is not an excerpt from a Hollywood/Bollywood movie but a brutal tale of unfortunate women later recognized as Farkhunda that previously took place on the street of Capital city, Kabul.

Earlier hundreds of people attended the burial of an Afghan woman who was beaten to death and set on fire by a mob for allegedly burning a copy of the Holy Koran. Her funeral was attended by large number men and women who demanded justice for the departed soul. The previous day hundreds of protesters took to Supreme Court, shouting "Down with ignorance!" urged the Afghan government to bring to justice the killers of a woman lynched by a mob for allegedly burning the Holy Koran.

Farkhunda, the unfortunate lady had a mental malady since childhood and was taken to many mullahs and doctors to get her treated. Despite of suffering illness, she continued her studies at a Madrasa. According to credible media sources on the morning of the fateful day, after leaving school, she turned up at the Shah Do Shamsheer shrine (King of Two Swords); she was reportedly visiting mosque every weekend for prayers.

It is said that she began to pace the shrine's courtyard. Along the wall of shrine is a small metal fire pit, where visitors throw orange rinds, soda cans and other trash from picnics. It was there that several women, who were busy preparing meals for beggars, saw Farkhunda standing over flames. Subsequently, a woman began shouting that chapters from the Holy Koran were on fire. But when one of the shrine's attendants rushed back to the firepit and pulled out the burnt pages, he wasted no time in whipping up a mob. He laid the pages on a wood plank, which he then carried out to the street. There, according

to witnesses, he began shouting: "The woman has burned the Holy Koran! An infidel woman had burned the Holy Koran!" It was only a crowd gathered within minutes, and it kept growing until it was hundreds strong. What happened subsequently is inexplicable sorry tale that finally claimed the life of the lady.

Subsequent to the incidence the reports, of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) surface that declared woman guileless, had not burnt the Holy Koran. The officials confirmed that their investigations have revealed the books had Persian transcripts and there was evidence to prove the accusations against the victim. News eventually came out that Farkhunda had not burnt the Holy book and instead it was an amulet (taawiz) given to her by a religious leader of the mosque itself to 'ward of evil' and help with her illness, Farkhunda had reached out to the mosque for help where she was once for ever helped. The rare security personnel present at the sight unknown of their sole duty of rescuing the accused were found playing a mediatory role, is sickening. Desperately, despite the presence of guardian of law and order the panorama took place and they kept getting amused at the sight, is query worth responding. This has always been our dilemma; the law enforcers reach the crime scene subsequent to felony taken place and the criminals have manage escaping or their presence would not bar people of committing crime. The police personnel enclosed the tale of a hapless lady beaten to death and torched to ashes. The crowds surrounding the sight were making shot of flare of smoke arising from her body reflects an in-depth absurdity. It was indeed rare but the worst brutal incident that might have never taken place on the surface of earth.

Following the atrocious incident the President who was due to leave to US, condemned the tragic incident whilst issuing orders of an immediate probe into incident and formation of an independent commission to investigate the brutal murder of the woman. In the meanwhile, the United Nations condemned the brutal murder of the woman in the strongest terms.

The brutal incident that took place on the avenues of Kabul raised serious questions on the competence of state apparatus to tackle a situation before that grows worse. The lady certainly hadn't committed a blasphemous act; nonetheless the enraged mob did it by desecrating a dead body of a lady followed by putting her on an ablaze. Why wouldn't the security forces, public officials and city administration hastened to calm and disperse the mob? If the mob had gone unruly the shells of tear gas could have helped them scattered. This incidence certainly brought us infamy and tempted to tarnish our image as tolerant and civilized nation. Nonetheless, the culprits involved the killing of women must be brought to justice and should face fair trial and put to punishment that would hold off such butchery.

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Cold-Bloodedness

By Dilawar Sherzai

Our city has become ruthless these days. It has become insensitive to human emotions and humanity. Though it is the start of spring season, there is no scent of flowers and greenery. The sky has become grey and the winds have turned dustier. The roads are lengthy and lead to nowhere. The people have become ferocious and barbaric. They saunter so as to find victims, attack them and tear them to pieces.

It was not always the way it is now. The beginning of spring season was more colorful in Kabul. The celebrations of Nauroz were more joyous. Hafth Mewa was more mouthwatering. Qabuli had more taste and odor. The songs of Ahmad Zahir used to be more melodious. Things are not the way this year. There is a change - something has haunted the city. There is smell of blood near the Kabul River. Yes, it is the blood of Farkhunda!

The same Farkhunda, who was bullied, stoned, dragged, kicked, beaten and burnt by hundreds of men. The same Farkhunda, who seemed like a helpless dear among a group of hungry Hyenas. The same Farkhunda, who kept on repeating that she was guileless and had not done any crime or sin. However, she could not convince the violent men. The men who had only heard that she had burnt the Holy Koran. The men, who were not even sure that she was really responsible for burning Holy Koran. The men, most of whom themselves did not know how to recite the Holy Book perfectly or understand it properly. The men, who were blindfolded by religious extremism and chauvinistic beliefs. The men, many of whom themselves had committed several sins but were never held accountable for. The men, who proved their manhood on a woman who at that stance was stranded and alone.

How to talk of justice and fair play in a country, where the punishment for a crime that one has not done is death? How to talk of humanity when the people feel taste in killing a lonely woman by dragging her on the streets? How to talk of Islam in a society where there is no respect for well-being of others? How to talk of responsibility in a city where the policemen are incapable to provide you safety even when you are being beaten to death in front them? How to talk of guidance and spirituality in a society where

the religious leaders are the ones who lead you astray?

There has to be a way to salvation for the coldblooded murder of Farkhunda. Protests are appreciated but not enough. A different burial was necessary but not sufficient. Even it is not enough that Farkhunda's corpse was carried by her fellow-women; not even this that her burial rituals were carried out by women themselves. It is also not adequate that people are wearing her masks and chanting "I am Farkhunda". Something more needs to be done. Something that can guarantee that such heinous acts will not be repeated. Something that can make women feel more secure while they are on the streets and even in their houses. Something that can teach a lesson to those who will to do anything they want in the name of religion. Something that can restore our belief on human beings and humanity. Something that can absorb the stink of the burning corpse of Farkhunda from the air around us.

Why don't we mend ourselves? Why don't we recognize that we are naturally the best of the creatures and claim to be superior? Why don't our minds think and our hearts feel the way they should? Why don't we strive for a better way of living? Why don't we adopt the habit of research and the search for knowledge? Why don't we open our eyes and see the things as they are not as we want them to be? Why don't we become religious in a true sense and pursue the path of wellbeing and spirituality? Why is the life so worthless for us, and the death so dear to us? When others can do all these things, why can't we? Are we really so senseless that we are not able even to recognize our benefit and the way to our survival?

Enough is enough! Let's stand tall like human beings and not crawl on earth like insects! Let's make life worth living and worth respecting! Let's feel our responsibilities and each one grow a flower to make our country a garden! Let's portray Islam the way it deserves - spreading wellbeing and peace! Let's respect women and their true role and importance in our society! Let's disseminate the message of love, tranquility and humanity! Let's support justice and make sure that the episode with Farkhunda is the first and the last one! Let's do all these as this is the only way to live like better human beings!

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