

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



November 16, 2015

Government Must Bring Rokhshana's Murderer to Justice

The unfortunate girl named Rokhshana aged between 19 and 21 rendered prey to wide practiced callousness—killed in cold blood without conviction. Throng of aged men surrounded the cesspit with stones in their hand whose size and weight could not necessarily fall to any interpretation when the death aimed. Rokhshana was stoned to death without certification of having been the culprit licitly defined adultery. It was later confirmed, escaping the forced marriage with an overage man, the girl had to marry another guy of her age that held her implicated in the said case. It was this finding that served her ruthless killing of the girl by Taliban militants.

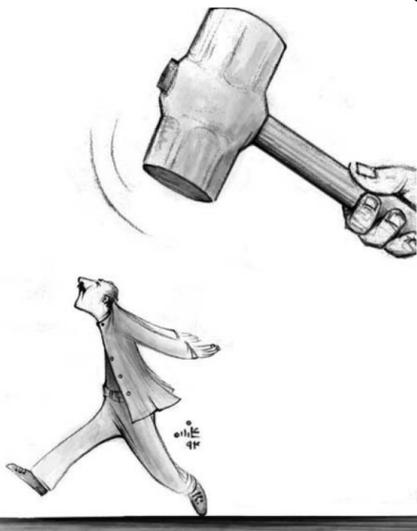
The merciless killing took place about a week ago in a Taliban-controlled area just outside Firozkoh, the capital of central Ghor province. The onlookers indisputably, have had rejoiced the whole of story a woman stoned—nobody could dare questioning the legitimacy of Shariat and local court and the standard operating procedure if adopted to try culprits with the said crime. The people kept in utter ignorance could not question the legitimacy of Taliban's ruling or when it comes to Shariat—everybody turns wordless fearing defilement. World of thank to Lawmakers, for considering the act inhumane and un-Islamic whilst demanding an end to violence against women.

Afghanistan is ruled over by National Unity Government with a president and CEO pursuing modern ideals of democracy where human right irrespective of distinction of gender is given prime importance should be a widely used practice. The hitherto rampant violence against women underlines the persisting gravity of the problem. The family of blindfolded law has lastly appealed to President Ashraf Ghani to take action against those responsible for their child's cruel death. It has been a common practice among Taliban Mullahs to pick and choose a lady based on her personal appeal and attraction unnecessarily without her due consent. The people hardly turn down their marriage proposal by one such elderly religious figure, particularly if it comes to be Taliban mullahs. Undoubtedly Taliban themselves have been involved in severe women rights violation, can't judge an identical case. In modern democratic discourse a person to be implicated in one of the crime can not decide the fate of ordinary masses. It is therefore, the local religious and political leaders' states Rokhshana was stoned by a group of people who were criminals themselves. They urge the government to bring the perpetrators of the inhumane act to justice.

Formerly, in an identical incident amidst a throng of people a lady with a man associate received 100 lashes being charged of keeping illicit relationship with each other. The sorry picture of the lady lashed in public depicts gravest state of haplessness and irrationality of law treating women. Undoubtedly, the sword of illicit charges always hangs over the neck of a female who dares to turn down a baffling order of public official or local elder. Going against the status quo, simply invites more trouble as witnessed in many cases. Earlier, this year Farkhunda was savagely beaten and set ablaze in central Kabul after being falsely accused of burning Holy Koran. The mob killing triggered protests around the country and drew global attention to the treatment of Afghan women.

The worst state of affairs does not end here—the growing ratio of domestic violence another point to worry about. During couple days, at least three women have died as a result of domestic violence and suicide in northern Afghanistan, according to media reports. Going through detailed account of credible statistics women are primarily demeaned and left vulnerable to violence. According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), More than 800 incidents of violence against women took place during the first six months of the ongoing solar year, compared to 764 incidents during the same period last year. The official claims most of the victims of suicide attacks, roadside bombings, illegal courts, harassment and torture happened to be women. The exercise of abusing children and women across the land is not worrying for patriarchal Afghan society and for those with fundamentalist temperaments. The sexual abuse and rape of women and children have been rampant in Afghanistan is chronicled. The government instead of taking measures to uphold women rights is back lashes by enforcement of stoning in Afghanistan penal code. Human Rights Watch registered grave distress said that a working group led by the Justice Ministry that is assisting in drafting Afghanistan's new penal code had proposed provisions on "moral crimes" involving adultery that call for stoning. The political leader has got to lead the nation towards modernization that accepts democratic values and human rights matters.

The long course we advanced, could earn us nothing, except the rule of nuisance, wicked deeds, widespread manipulation of power, suppression of oppressed and endless tales of barbarism against powerless segment of society. The blind and irrational socio-religious dictates has irreversibly dominated our deeds and thoughts, equally beleaguering our fairer and lucid disposition in every field of human endeavor. Deeming women inferior creature is deliberate negation of their innate aptitude and universal attribute of God's equity. We have to turn to think otherwise, about this much belittled section of our socially betrayed society. The culture deeming women as subordinate citizen multiplies their receptiveness to greater tendency of being subjected to worst treatment. The widespread ignorance provides strong reason to ongoing violence. The flawed cultural practices supported by high degree of illiteracy ratify intense violence against women, stand legitimate and justified. Apart from formal education, community based adult education and awareness campaigns on complimentary right's issues complementary to Islamic teachings might assuage the stringency of sub-standard customary law that undermines women rights.



Shukria

By Muhammad Younas

She was just 9 years old. She did not know whether she was a Shia or a Sunni Muslim. She even did not know which ethnic group she belonged to. All she knew that she had small sparkling eyes, fair complexion and a small cute nose. She also knew that she lives in Afghanistan.

In her native village Dhamordha, Jaghori District, Afghanistan she walked freely. She used to go to her school alone without fear of being stopped. She was studying in year 4. She loved her school and her class teacher. Perhaps she wanted to be a school teacher. She was the second daughter but she always considered herself the eldest child in the family. She did not like playing with dolls because it would make her feel younger. And she never wanted that something should make her feel smaller. She wanted to grow fast—faster than a bamboo tree. She seemed to be in a rush to get bigger as soon as possible. Sometimes she would secretly wear her mother's dress and put her makeup on her tiny cute face but she did not know that makeup would rather make her look younger of her age.

One day, she told her father to buy her some bigger dress.

"Why?" her father asked.

"Because, it will help me grow faster," she said looking up at her father.

"Who told you?" her father asked.

"My class fellow wears her elder sister's dress," she said confidently.

"She was smaller than me last year but now she is nearly of my height."

"But you don't look good in big dresses," her father said.

"I'll not wear it outside. Just inside at home," she explained.

"Why don't you wear your elder sister's dress? It's..."

"No, I can't because she's nearly of my height," she snapped.

"OK," said her father. "I'll buy you in a few days."

"Thank you father," she quickly grabbed her father's right hand, brought it up to her mouth and kissed it. Her father kissed her forehead. She was a dad's girl therefore, her father could not say no to her.

After a few days, one day, her father asked Shukria if she would like to go to Pakistan to see her grandmother and her uncle.

"Yes, I'd love to see my grandmother, uncle and his children," she walked up to her father, sat close to him and spread her arms around his shoulders. "But what'll happen to my school?"

"I'll talk to your school tomorrow," he said.

"When I'm going, father?" she asked. "...and are you going with me?" she asked another question.

"I'll tell you tomorrow," her father said.

The next day, her father told her that she would go with Ali's mother, their old neighbour and family friend. But he promised to see her in Quetta City, Pakistan in a few days and they would come back home together. After a couple of days, early morning, her father took her to the bus station near main bazaar of Dhamordha village, kissed her forehead and made her sit in a small van next to Ali's mother who was going to Pakistan for medical treatment.

"Don't forget to ring me from Kandahar," her father reminded her through the window of the van.

"Yes, father. I will," she promised.

In the meantime, the driver, squeezed in five more customers in a van and then drove off. Ramazan, her father waved off to say goodbye to her daughter.

The van moved off slowly from the main bazaar. The driver told the passengers that he would not take risk to go to Rasna but instead he'd prefer to go to Guwar, Shajoi, Kalat, Kandahar and then to Pakistan. Hopefully in the evening, we'd arrive in Quetta City.

Shukria's father came back home and told his wife to remind him to ring to the driver to talk to her daughter after five hours.

"OK. I will," his wife said and got busy in the kitchen.

After five hours, Ramazan pressed few buttons on his mobile to ring to

the driver but he didn't get any respond.

"Are you ringing to the driver?" asked his wife.

"Yes, I am but it seems to have some signal problem," he replied. "I think, they haven't arrived yet in Kandahar. I'll ring after half an hour."

After 40 minutes, Ramazan started ringing again but again no respond. He rang after 20 minutes but the driver's mobile seemed to be out of coverage area. "Can you go to the bus station and ask other drivers. They might have some information," his wife suggested.

"OK."

He rushed to the bus station and met few van and bus drivers but none of them had any information. He came back home and started ringing but it did not work. It was in the evening, when he heard his mobile ringing. He quickly answered the ring. Someone on other side of the phone was telling him that all seven van passengers had been kidnapped by unknown armed men. It could be Taliban or may be any other armed group.

Ramazan did not believe his ears. He did not tell his wife. He rushed to the bus station to confirm the news. Some drivers told him but they were not sure which van. In the evening, he rang to his brother in Pakistan. His brother told him that he was in the bus station waiting for the van but he did not see the driver, Shukria and other passengers from the area.

It was getting dark and Ramazan was getting worried. He did not know, where to go or whom to talk? He was continuously ringing to the driver, but his mobile seemed to be switched off. His brother in Pakistan suggested him to go to the nearby Police Station to get help. But he was not sure, whether Police could help him.

It was on the social media, when the abduction news emerged. Later on, the national television confirmed the news of the seven passengers' abduction including two women and a minor girl.

Family members and neighbours started coming to Ramazan's home. His wife fell unconscious, when she heard the news. People around were comforting them and giving them support. Ramazan's lips were quivering. His throat was dried and bitter. His legs were shaking. He was walking here and there like a dead soul. He wanted to talk but did not know what to say. He never found himself so helpless. He wanted to cry but perhaps his tears had dried up. The following day, community elders visited his home and promised to make all possible efforts to bring her daughter and six other hostages back home. He was assured not to lose his heart. Ramazan felt a sign of hope and thanked community elders for their support. He continuously prayed to God to look after his Shukria and reminded of how he thanked Him for being given a beautiful daughter.

After nearly one month in abduction, on 8th of November 2015, a group of elders from Guwar District of Zabul province, brought seven dead bodies wrapped in coffins in Shajoi Hospital. The news of the seven dead bodies spread like a fire in the area and then to Dhamordha village. People rushed to Shajoi Hospital to find their loved ones. Ramazan also hurried to the hospital. Among the dead bodies, there was also a tiny body wrapped in a white coffin. He could not believe his eyes when he saw her beautiful daughter lying dead. He held her body up and pressed her against his chest and screamed loudly. The tears started rolling down on his cheeks like a tap water. His family members grabbed him of his shoulders to support him while the hospital staff started removing the dead bodies on the ambulance to take them to the native village.

Later on, the doctor said that all victims' throats had either been cut by a metal wire or a kite string coated glass. United Nations, Afghan Government and US have condemned the killings. Many Afghans termed it a religious and race motivated killing by unknown armed men.

When she was born her father named her Shukria, which means 'thanks or thank you'. Being so happy at her birth, Ramazan must have thanked God for giving him a lovely daughter. Now, his Shukria has gone, many wonder what's left him to thank God.

Muhammad Younas is a freelance columnist lives in Cardiff City, UK and tweets at [toyounasat](https://twitter.com/toyounasat). He can be reached at toyounas@gmail.com or visit [blog www.myounas.com](http://www.myounas.com)

The Holy Cow!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

For decades, India has been regarded as the biggest democracy of the world. With its population of almost 1.2 billion and consisting of large number of religious groups, maintaining a balance between these groups has always been an asking challenge for all the governments and parties of the country. There are two major political groups in the country; Indian National Congress and BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). If Hindus enjoy as being the majority group in the country, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and a number of other religious groups also co-exist with them. Contrary to the claims of Indian governments, the conditions for the religious minorities have always not been much favorable. Riots between Hindus and Muslims, attacks on places of worship and property of Muslims and Christians, and discriminatory laws against minorities have been a matter of concern for the minority groups right from the existence of this country in 1947.

Recent events are quite alarming. In the outskirts of Delhi, a mob of Hindus attacked on house of Muhammad Ikhlq. As a result, Muhammad Ikhlq was killed by the mob while all of his family members were injured. He was accused to eating the meat of cow. Three days before this, a man was tortured and killed by a group of Hindus calling him to be a Pakistani agent. However, the following investigations have not proved that the accusations were correct.

Due to intense media coverage, the case of killing of Muhammad Ikhlq became a national issue. Opposition parties are using it as a strong point to criticize the government. On the other hand, Muslim groups and human right activists are not happy of silence of the vocal Prime Minister who has been very active on commenting on different issues through his Twitter account. It was followed by so many actions in this regard. Slaughtering of cow was banned in a number of provinces of the country, giving rise to so many other controversies. So many people went to the courts against this decision of provincial governments. It must be cleared here that millions of people are directly or indirectly linked with the business of cow meat as it is considerably cheaper than other meat types. Although Hindus regard cow as one of their gods and they don't eat but according to actual statistics, members of all the minority groups, tribal groups and large numbers of Hindus also eat meat.

The statement of a BJP leader was like spilling oil on the already blazing fire when he said that all those who want to eat the meat of cow should leave India and go to Pakistan. Similarly, the statement of the Chief Minister of Haryana province was also of the same intensity, who was reported to say that if Muslims want to live in India, they should respect the values of Hinduism and avoid eating the meat of cow.

Transporting cows and other cattle has also become very dangerous. Hindu nationalist groups have many times attacked and injured those who have been transporting the cattle.

After the incident of the killing of Muhammad Ikhlq, nation seems divided on the issue. If there are many who have criticized this brutal killing of a human being on mere case of eating meat, many others want that anyone trying to eat meat should be succumbed to the same destiny and there should not be any kind of leniency with them.

Before this, Two writers were shot down by unidentified men who had criticized government against the increasing activities of Hindu nationalist groups. Many more have been threatened and ordered to stop criticizing the extremist groups. Angry on the silence of central government on the killing of writers, a number of writers returned their prestigious Sahitya literature awards.

According to some analysts, it is the game of some right wing and Hindu nationalist political parties to win Hindu votes. On the other hand, it is also called the game of Hindu nationalist groups against Muslims to attack them so that they should be forced to leave India and their dream of making an absolute Hindu society should be achieved.

Whatever may be the hidden objectives of this wave of terror and discrimination against Indian Muslims, the actual causes are others. The first cause is illiteracy in which people are not actually aware of the true objectives of a religion. I am sure there would be no religion that should believe in spreading hatred and killing people of other beliefs on petty issues of eating this or that. Large numbers of Hindus have in fact condemned the incidents and called it against humanity. Second cause is the existence of extremist groups on the name of religion, nationalism and other differences. There are a number of Hindu nationalist groups in India that work to promote hatred, as their mere existence needs such controversial issues.

Such groups are in fact failing the state by promoting hatred, ceasing the successful practice of democracy, and violating human rights. Such groups are found in a number of third world countries as they feed on illiteracy and lack of knowledge of masses. Taliban, ISIS and other groups in our country and other countries are one of the worst cases of this problem. It is the internal issue of India in which no one has any right to interfere but a true democracy protects the rights of individuals and allows them to make the choices of their own. It would be very disappointing if people were deprived of their basic rights on the name of religion or anything else.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net

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