

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



October 15, 2015

Muharram; The Month of Sacrifice!

As the holy month of Muharram has approached, responsibilities of government, security forces and citizens increase altogether. This year, this month is slightly different from other years because this time of the year, we are having so many security threats. At one side, we have Taliban who are carrying out massive attacks on a number of cities and towns of the country and they have successfully infiltrated through the security net of capital city Kabul as well. It was evident from their recent attacks in the most crowded places of the city. In case of any mass gathering on the occasion of Muharram, there are threats of attack from Taliban and other anti-state elements which may result in large number of people losing their lives or getting injured. Then there is the threat of militants of ISIS who have ominously increased their activities in Nangarhar province and neighboring places. It is also feared that they may also carry out attacks in order to disrupt the normal functioning of life in a number of cities of the country and especially in Kabul. Then we have the threat of those suicide bombers who are exclusively sent by our enemies to target the processions of this holy month. Our country witnessed a number of such horrendous attacks on such occasions of religious significance. Their aim was to target a specific group or members of a sect so that hate should be promoted between different ethnic or sectarian groups of the country.

As far as responsibility of government is concerned, it should make foolproof plans to make all the gatherings and processions of Shia community absolutely safe and secure. In this regard, responsible members of government should meet with the elders of Shia community and in the light of their suggestions; all the security and administrative plans should be finalized. In the light of experiences of both the government and elders of Shia community, the preparations can be given the final shape so that any shortcomings or mistakes of previous years can be eliminated.

Our security forces also carry a heavy responsibility of protecting the lives of our citizens in the important month of Islamic calendar. We are confident of our security forces and their preparations and performance on similar occasions were remarkable but it should not be forgotten that we are facing a number of threats from inside and outside the country. These enemies can come up with new and cunning techniques to foil our security arrangements and threaten the lives of citizens. In the light of previous experiences, all the arrangements should be made not only in Kabul but also in all the major cities and towns of the country. However, the biggest responsibility lies on the shoulders of the elders and religious scholars of our country; both from Shia and Sunni community. It is a matter of proud and satisfaction that there is currently no hatred or religious bias on the basis of Shia and Sunni. In Afghanistan, Shia and Sunni Afghans have long lived, worked and enjoyed the life together. Same spirit is held in the month of Muharram when people cooperate with each other to express their love and gratitude for the sacrifice of the grandson of our Holy Prophet (SAWS). However, this air of unity and love is not digestible to our enemies and they keep trying from time to time to promote hatred between these two major sectarian groups of the country.

In this regard, the role of religious scholars and Imams of mosques is important. However, Muharram marks the remembrance of the sacrifices of the grandson of our Holy Prophet (PBUH) and both Sunni and Shia equally love and admire the great sacrifice of Hazrat Hussain (A.S). We read in our history that when Shia Muslims used to mourn in their own way, Sunni Muslims also cooperated with them and they used to distribute rice among poor and served the thirsty with water. In short, this occasion brought two groups closer to each other and showed the universality of Islam.

This responsibility lies on our religious scholars and Imams of mosques to tell people about the actual spirit of this month and use this occasion to promote unity and cooperation between them.

Having a look at the present security situation, it would be more appropriate to arrange all the gatherings in closed boundaries and not make too much gathering on open roads. Even if mass gatherings are arranged on open roads, it must be taken care that no one should be disturbed or harmed on the name of a religious procession. Any such act will greatly harm the feelings of others. On the other hand, all the Afghans should promote positive comments and posts on social networking sites and discourage those comments or posts that provoke hatred.



Unconditional Threat Pursues Afghan Media!

By Asmatyari

Violence, intimidation and subjugation have been extremist elements, seeking a right portrayal to their wrong deeds. Throughout human history, man observed silence even if the authoritarian government exercised entirely unjust deeds. The masses rendered hapless to a degree that they had to deem an entirely ill-conduct of ruling class, licit. The disclosure of any truth that could harm the so called self-defined reputation of ruling elites, would earn them disreputable consequences. World of regards to democracy that enshrined the right to free speech, an uncontested democratic right, making the government accountable for every deed they undertake. The media therefore is crucial organ of democratic society, keeping the citizen informed about every development taking place in governmental avenues particularly the truth about public affairs.

In modern democratic society, the system of governance requires well-learned citizens, who are known of most if not all developments taking place within the departments of the government. The foresaid proposition is strengthened by implication of a degree on transparency that is fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. The people with totalitarian brought up can't bear these bunch of free flow of information tempt to curb it. The functioning of media bodies, foreign or local, becoming targets for reprisal for their work as journalists might get worsened. The governments must come forth sincerely, addressing the boundless challenges Afghan media faces and must not let this very functional organ of society, beleaguer.

It is an irrefutable notion; democracy encompassing all its core values lay to implementation only when customary cultures are substituted with democratic culture. The media allowed to function without any hindrance is deemed a core culture, must be promoted. This renders achievable when ground turns richer for such adoption. Prior to 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 set in. 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. This piece of land transitioning towards vibrant democracy intervene certain degree of restraints -including violence and intimidation from both state and non-state actors. Reportedly, most cases of violence against journalists involved the Taliban, government employees and officials of private organizations, but rarely average Afghans. The public official, Taliban, tribal lords demanding censored news, favoring their deep-rooted interests irrespective

of their legitimacy regarded, serve a primary reason making journalists vulnerable to violence and endless threats.

Formerly Taliban issued a strong threat against TOLO TV and 1TV with death threats against all staff. Taliban accused the two channels have reported contrary to their interests. In a statement issued by the group, it said the two channels were now considered a direct military target in their war. In addition to the death threats, the Taliban threatened to destroy all facilities belonging to the two TV channels. Following the reception of threat call Afghan media collectively staged a press conference and resolved not to bow to the threats of the Taliban following the group's issuance of statement and video. Such bright day light issuance of death threat demonstrate the major challenges facing journalists and freedom of speech in Afghanistan and the urgency to find ways to provide journalists protection. With exception to risk of life the daily wages are infinitesimally small. Journalists still struggle for fair wages and decent working conditions. It's worth, underlying the media persons suffer lack of laws, protecting wages and secure working conditions. Responding to threat call to media bodies government at the end of the day could hardly dare to condemn the call.

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 by physical might. Hence journalists must act with promptness and caution, balancing their professional duties with awareness about when to pull back when things spiral out of control. In this piece of land numerous journalists have been killed in the line of their duties. Though, press censorship isn't popular term -the great degree of restraint and severe and callous treatment from both state and non-state actors is worth mentioning. Such cold-hearted attitudes are occasionally witnessed in states passing through totalitarian, despotic and dysfunctional or paralyzed democratic regimes.

Formerly a report surfaced by Freedom House that showed dreary picture of Afghan media, declining a degree ahead to that of former year. The FH found Afghanistan drop in rankings of press freedom, going from 66th to 67th, based on increased government restrictions on journalists as well as rising violence and threats against the media. According to the report, the systematic imposition of restrictions, non-implementation of the Access to Information bill, increased cases of violence against journalists and broader security threats are the major factors that making Afghanistan a less than hospitable environment for the press. The aforesaid reservation is tallied by officials from NAI, an Afghan media watchdog and advocacy group, confirmed that 2015 saw conditions facing the press worsen from past years. 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.

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It's Time to Act Wisely

By Dilawar Sherzai

Life is a complicated phenomenon; it is full of loses and victories. When we are born, we have to live the life in any condition; mostly we find losses in this complicated life. Whatever! We are here to look at the positive aspects of life so as to make our life worthy to live and better for other fellow beings.

Since mankind is considered to be the supreme creature, we all know it perfectly that he, from the very first day had the quest to search for cryptic and mysterious aspects of the universe, to elaborate the un-explained, to approach the un-reached, to see into the unseen, to depict the hidden, to discover the un-found, to hear the unspoken, to speak up the unsaid and to practice the un-experienced. As doing them is his duty, the reason for his being and the desire of his unique nature. Thus, man's nature is the basic unit of all his actions; so we can say that it provokes a man to get up and act.

With the modernization of the world, anticipation of technology and creation of different kinds of ideologies and intellects; life has become too much difficult and complicated. In every step of life we find hurdles; we have to be careful while moving our footsteps. It is on the strength of our efforts whether we crash the hurdles or we jump over the hurdles or we just give up in front of them. Unfortunately, failure has the capacity to dominate us on certain occasions. We fail whether we don't strive ourselves or we are defeated by our opponents. Suppose, there is a student and he applies for a job and he is much better option for the post but another person comes with strong recommendation and takes the seat; here it isn't his fault, but that does not change the result. So in both cases failure has deep impacts on human minds and hopes.

It can be easily observed that when we fail we get frustrated and depressed. Then the grief attacks and engulfs our psychology. Now the question is, "How to prevent our frustration, depression or grief?" ... By partying, by listening music, by keeping our minds away from the current depression or by realizing, understanding and finding the way for the solution of the problem? This is what we all are searching for. We need to understand the real meaning of our lives. We need to understand what our lives are? Does it mean 'getting up early in the morning, finding breakfast, going to work, earning money, betraying people in order to earn more profit, returning home, having dinner and sleeping. If we analyze deeply we come to know that all these activities are just a part of our instinct and most of the animals also perform some of these tasks. Now we need to find out that what we need to do in order to be differentiated; the only easy way is taking part in social activities and being optimistic. Keeping in view today's practical world and the competitive mood of state of affairs in the world one must be quite active

and energetic to bring his ideas into life by taking suitable and favorable actions/steps against the customary problems so that he could promise his survival through the tough and rapid pace of political and economic struggle. Currently, we are suffering the worst form of terrorism and yet again we lack the unity of thought and clear vision to overcome the prevailing pathetic condition of our society and its members. We are scattered into many ethnic groups and different schools of thought. We are contaminated with the differences existing among us and on the other hand we wish to beat the present miseries. Every single person chants the slogan of coming together, joining hands with one another and thinking with broader perspective, removing all personal clashes and differences in order to bring about constructive remedies to the tribulations. But one has to bear in mind that these are only miraculous ideas which have never been acted upon.

It is really important not to be disappointed while facing the difficulties and problems and act appropriately to solve the issues. Everybody must take care not to become the victim of inaction and strive to find out ways of getting out of quagmire as all the human beings are gifted with the unique quality of sanity and capability to think and ponder. This is the only way we can call ourselves the true human beings - distinct from other creatures in the world.

In fact, there are different ways of dealing with the problems and different people act differently. If a person is not appointed for a job because the second person has strong recommendation; he may get fully disappointed and never again strive to find job and will instead fall into more grief and tragedies. Or, he may become more committed to face the challenges and keep on striving so as to be able to prove his capabilities even in the presence of unjust circumstances. And, in my view the second action is a better option as it demands active role of human beings and it is how beings should live in human society. If we find something wrong in social, political and economic systems, we must strive to penetrate within them and try to make things right, but we have to change ourselves first. If we find our people dump, we need to make them realize the importance of their active participation in society.

It is really vital that we must not lose hope because of depression and frustration. We need to make ourselves wall in front of the problems and always fight for our rights. In the current circumstances when there is great hustle and bustle and much confusion and misunderstandings, it is necessary that we must understand ourselves, our role and status in the society and our responsibilities. If we want to change things all around us, it is really vital that we must start from ourselves; as it is the only way to bring about changes in the systems.

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