

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



October 20, 2015

## The Timely Decision of US President!

The announcement of US president Barack Obama to reverse his previous decision and extending the stay of US troops in Afghanistan till the end of 2016 brought a lot of confidence for Afghans and all the world powers who look forward for a stable Afghanistan for peaceful world. According to this plan, 9800 US troops will stay in Afghanistan until the end of 2016 while 5500 US soldiers will stay in Afghanistan after 2016.

This announcement of US president carries a lot of meaning in the present conditions. At present, when Taliban are exerting their final pressure on Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and have opened war at a number of districts and provinces in the country, the future of country seemed bleak and uncertain. According to many political experts, it was an alarming bell for the return of Taliban regime in the country. However, our forces have successfully defended almost all parts of the country and inflicted severe harm on Taliban. This announcement will boost up the spirits of ANSF, increase the confidence of common Afghans, make the government take bolder decisions regarding the future of the country and ensure the international community that Taliban will never return to power to endanger the security of the region and the world. Although a number of political analysts and journalists of the United States have criticized this decision of US president and they reserve the right to have their say in the affairs of their government but as far as ground realities of Afghanistan was concerned, it was a much-needed decision.

First, the menace of Taliban is still the same and this year witnessed the surprising increase in their expansion of activities and strength in different parts of the country. For the first time in last 14 years, they were able to capture a major city in form of Kunduz and ANSF faced tough resistance from them when they wanted to recapture the city from Taliban. Last week, Taliban also carried out a massive attack on important city of Ghazni, which was repelled by ANSF. There are also reports that Head of Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Mansur also visited Ghazni and there were plans to start the new government of Taliban from this city but security forces dispelled their danger. The presence of US and NATO troops is necessary in the country until Taliban are not absolutely eliminated or they do not join the national stream through negotiations.

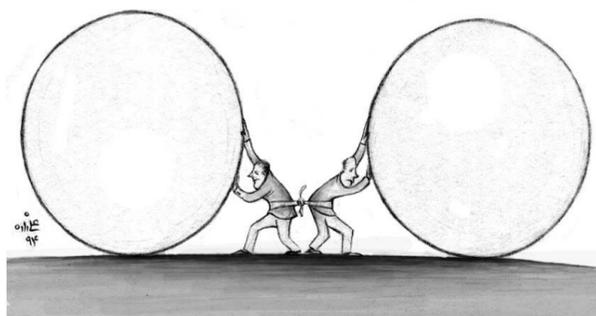
Similarly, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) functioning on a very heavy cost and they require billions of dollars annually. The Afghan government cannot arrange this amount and depends on international powers and especially the United States to provide ANSF with required funding. If US soldiers had left the country, the probabilities of continuation of US funding for ANSF could have greatly decreased and maintaining such a big force could have been very difficult.

Similarly, Afghanistan does not have any facility or production of arms and ammunition for its security forces. At present, when ANSF are busy in fighting Taliban at a number of fronts, the continuous supply of arms and ammunition is very essential. Such a heavy supply and incessant supply of arms and equipment can only be provided to ANSF by the United States and this extension of their stay in the country can make sure that ANSF will be provided with all the needed materials in future as well.

Then there is the issue of Afghan government and economy which is totally dependent on international powers for its successful functioning. Due to the lack of local production and revenue generation, Afghanistan depends on international powers to meet its expenses. Same is the case with government and many other independent organs of the country like NGOs and even media. Now that US government has announced its support for Afghanistan, the trust of international community will be strengthened and all the governments and humanitarian assistance agencies will continue their cooperation with the Afghan government and people.

It must not be forgotten that if US and other world powers refuse to continue the help of Afghanistan in future and leave it alone like they did after Soviet Union, it is feared that country will once again fall into the hands of Taliban. As Taliban are closely associated with Al-Qaeda and can form unity with any other terror organization, there is present the danger of a civil war that may engulf the whole region in its blazes. Then Afghanistan has the danger of ISIS as well.

Although US and its allies have repeatedly vowed not to leave Afghanistan alone and continue their assistance until the country becomes absolutely self-dependent and a strong and democratic government takes roots in the country, much responsibility falls on the shoulders of Afghan Government and People. It must not be forgotten that international powers will not continue helping us forever and sooner or later, we will have take the control of our economy in our hands. For this it is needed that Afghan government should work to improve good governance and curb corruption as these two problems wasted all the international assistance of last 14 years. On the other hand, a common Afghan also needs to fulfill his responsibilities and perform his duties properly so that Afghanistan should no more remain dependent on others.



## Muharram Teaches a Lesson of Humanity

By Hujjatullah Zia

The blood of Imam Husain (A.S) is oozing from the pages of history to convey message of selflessness to human societies. His words went beyond the desert of Karbala. He played his human role in the best possible way to reform the society and root out the dictatorial regime. He moved to free the individuals from the chain of slavery. An honorable death was far more reputable for him than a dishonorable life.

He sacrificed his life to uphold moral code, human practices and religious tenets. Imam Husain (A.S) turned down to pledge allegiance to a cruel regime - which carried no legitimacy. Yazid ruled the bodies of people but not their soul. Despite his flagrant misdeeds, he urged Imam Husain (A.S) to vow allegiance to his kingdom. Since Imam Husain (A.S) was the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and a charismatic personality, his allegiance would bestow legitimacy to Yazid's sultanate. To revive religious values and ethical code, he did not only refuse to do so but reacted manly against his regime.

The message of humanity and selflessness outweigh the tragic aspect of Imam Husain's (A.S) revolution. Although he was martyred mercilessly on the burning sand of Karbala along with his family and companions, nonetheless his blood gained victory over sword. In other words, his blood decorated the episode of Karbala to portray sacrifice for revival of humanity and moral values. But the tragedy of Karbala is more salient in Islamic societies than human messages. It is naive of those who shed tears in Holy Month of Muharram regardless of its sacred messages or to atone their annual sins. It should be considered that Muharram symbolizes the best of the human spirit and moral principles. Therefore, one has to consider the messages and lessons that the revolution of Karbala teaches the societies.

Imam Husain (A.S) explains the mission of his sacrifice in his own words: "I have taken this stand not out of arrogance or pride, neither out of mischief or injustice. I have risen to seek reform in the community of my grandfather. I would like to bid good, forbid evil, and follow the tradition of my grandfather and my father." He adds, "Can't you see that the truth is not followed and the falsehood is not shunned? In such circumstances a believer should desire to meet Allah. Surely I regard death as nothing but an honor and life with oppressors as anything but disgrace."

According to Islamic worldview, all the prophets were sent by Allah Almighty for the salvation of men. They were the heirs of one another who made efforts for the same purpose. This historical continuity of prophecy ended with Muhammad (PBUH). According to Shiite Muslim ideology, this responsibility was placed on the shoulder of Imams after the demise of Muhammad (PBUH). Hence, Imams were the heirs of holy prophets. From the very start

of history, there was always a battle between right and wrong. For instance, when Cain slew Abel, it was the first drop of blood shed on Earth and the war between right and wrong started - there emerged the Devine and Devil's parties. Moses protested against the King of his time Pharaoh and wrecked his imperial castle. Abraham revolted against Nimrod and Muhammad (PBUH) against the pagans of Makah. Hence, all Abrahamic prophets preached the same religion and launched war against the oppressors and pagans of their times for the same purpose. In other words, all the prophets came to preach the oneness and uniqueness of God, direct men to salvation and fight against the Devil's party. Finally, Imams also fought battles to defeat the Devil's party - those who trample upon humanity and moral values.

The blood of Imam Hussain (AS) played the most vital role in history. Martyrdom was not a death for Imam but a new and eternal re-birth. The stagnant societies of that time awoke to new life by Imam's blood. He was a great mastermind who planned that his blood should flow in the stream of history and time so as to be a warning for all dictatorial regimes.

Many lessons can be learnt from Imam Husain (A.S) - we learn to be brave, resilient and firm just as Imam Husain (A.S) and his companions were; that it is better to die with dignity than to live in humiliation; that our rights can be defended even in the face of death. True faith is tested in the hardest of adversities. Life can be sacrificed for a just cause. As Mahatma Gandhi, Indian political and spiritual leader, said about Imam Hussain (A.S) that My faith is that the progress of Islam does not depend on the use of sword by its believers, but the result of the supreme sacrifice of Husain, the great saint. Adding that I learned from Hussain how to achieve victory while being oppressed. Edwar Gibbon, an English Historian and member of Parliament said about the great sacrifice of Imam Hussain (A.S) that in a distant age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Hussain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.

His blood will keep the heart of history beating for centuries, he knows. His tomb will be the shrine of freedom fighters. His bravery, manliness and virtue will be a great lesson for human and humanity. His drops of blood will make an ocean to ruin the skyscrapers which are built at the cost of the people's rights and properties. He decides to recover the religious beliefs, moral values and social norms which have been eroded after the sad demise of his grandfather. He will prevent Islamic Sunnah from being metamorphosed. Does he have arms and armies? No, his arm is his blood and his armies are his family and the small group of his companions! He will make an ocean to drown the dictatorial regime and his blood shakes the palace of dictators. In short, his blood still injects new life into societies and invites men to move against oppression and corruption.

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## Muharram and the Sense of Unity!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

First month of Islamic calendar is important due to the great sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S) and his companions. This occasion is considered as the turning point in the history of Islam when it got re-birth and was saved of annihilation and absolute destruction in its initial stages.

Though it might not be of much interest to those who have limited interest in religious matters and it might have not come into the knowledge of those who live in big cities with educated backgrounds but different attitudes of people on this occasion forced me to write this article.

Before coming to those strange behaviors and attitudes of people regarding this great sacrifice and the holy month, few well-understood facts should be revised. Imam Hussain was the grandson of our Holy Prophet (SAWS). He refused to recognize Yazeed as the new caliph of Islamic world as he did not believe that Yazeed deserved this auspicious position of Islamic world. When he was migrating with his family and companions, they were stopped at a place called 'Karbala' in Iraq by a commander of Yazeed and given two options: he should confer to the caliphate of Yazeed or should be ready to fight with the army. Instead of supporting something wrong, he chose the latter way and he and his companions sacrificed their lives in Karbala for the sake of protection of Islam.

Now, it is clear that Hazrat Hussain's act of sacrifice left behind a clear message that at any condition, we should not accept something wrong. Writers and philosophers have written a lot about different aspects and impacts of this great sacrifice of Islamic history and I am not in position to say more about this. I remember my childhood when Sunni and Shia together took part in the procession of Muharram. It was an occasion that brought people together. There was no fear of any bomb explosion or suicide attack. Starting from first day of the month until the tenth, different gatherings were arranged. People distributed alms among the poor. Rice, tea, milk, cold water and cold drinks were distributed to the poor and the hungry. For children, it was an occasion to enjoy as they used to eat a lot of rice and drank a lot of tea and cold drinks. On the tenth day of Muharram (called Yaum-e-Ashur), there would be large processions of Shia people who mourned in a number of different ways. Sunnis also distribute tea and cold drinks among the participants, held free medical camps for the injured and helped in shifting the seriously injured ones to the hospitals. In short, the month of Muharram brought a message of unity, love, respect, cooperation and brotherhood without any discrimination of sectarian differences. However, later on the seeds of hatred were sown and nurtured between different sects. Muharram be-

came the worst victim of this hatred. In order to promote hate, a lot of misunderstandings and misinformation was spread among people. It was told that Muharram belongs to Shias only and it had nothing to do with the Sunnis.

However, it must be understood that this day reminds us the sad incident of Karbala where the grandson of our Holy Prophet (SAWS) was martyred and it has nothing to do with Sunni or Shia. Both Sunni and Shia equally love our Kind Prophet (SAWS) and his grandson.

With the arrival of Muharram, we see a lot of tents, and other similar things on the roads of Kabul. It is sad that these things are promoting a kind of difference among people. Similarly, on the day of Ashura, a big procession of cars comes out on the streets of Kabul and people have complained that they disturb the large number of other people. Same complaints were lodged against the procession and shouting of people on the occasion of death anniversary of Ahmad Shah Massoud. In a city and the country, where majority of people are illiterate and not aware of the rights of others, any such step should be taken carefully. It should be taken care that lives of others should not be disturbed on the name of religion or politics.

In the same way, there is need of broadness and sense of respect for religious practices of others. If some people like to conduct any religious ritual and if we do not agree with this, we need to respect and cooperate with them considering them our fellow citizens. In Europe and America, followers of different religions practice their religious rituals without any fear and every religion is respected with a sense of responsibility. It is the true spirit of humanity and democracy as well.

A huge responsibility falls on the shoulders of religious scholars as well. They need to educate the people about this holy month of Islam and tell them about the importance of it. They should educate people that this month and event is above any sectarian difference and equally belongs to both Sunni and Shia. People also need to be educated about respecting the beliefs, practices and rights of others.

As I mentioned earlier, this month can bring all the Muslims together with a spirit of sacrifice, respect and cooperation to each other. On the other hand, our enemies are working hard to highlight our differences and turn people against each other based on false information and rumors. It is needed that people should study and try to discover the actual truth themselves. Being humans and Muslims, they also need to show respect to each other. This is the spirit of Islam and this will be actual gain of this holy month as well.

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