

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



March 17, 2015

## Govt. Indifferent to Hasten Recovery of Hazara Abductees

We inhabit a society where falsehood beleaguers the underlying truth, might is deemed right, injustices considered righteousness and corruption, legal course to reach to so called socio-political eminence. Apparently, we owe security apparatus and concerned authorities to look after the entire affairs of the state, whilst facilitating the undertakings of ordinary masses. Nonetheless, the deepening indifference of ruling elite towards the concerns of anguished, murdered and kidnapped citizens worth applause who even dared not to condemn this coward incident by sharing the grievances of affected families. As days pass the fear and apprehension of Hazara deepens who are left awaiting their beloved ones. Elsewhere, in the world every individual counts and are valued; in contrary to our state where dozens don't matter.

Earlier, around 31 Hazara passengers were kidnapped after identity check by unknown masked men on Kabul-Kandahar highway. The incident took place in Shah Joy district of southern Zabul province wherein the armed men drove away 31 passengers to Khak. Since then there has not been any report about the fate and whereabouts of the poor abducted passengers. It is the responsibility of a government within a state to ensure peace and security of its citizens. However, the governments that suffer from administrative incapacities fail to guarantee security. And in such states the weaker strata of the society tend to suffer the most. Women, ethnic and religious minorities and the common people as a whole undergo anguish as a result. Afghanistan is also one of the countries where the government has not been able to provide enough security to its people and the common people face different sorts of problems every day.

This clearly shows the level of insecurity in the country. Some armed men stop passenger vehicles, identify certain people and take them to some unknown place without any difficulty. And the most unfortunate fact is that there are no confirmed reports about who abducted them and where they are at the moment. Since the abduction of these 31 Hazara men, the local community elders along with religious leaders from Jaghury and Rasnah areas have been making concerted efforts for the secure release of the captives through peaceful negotiation, but the efforts remained all fruitless since the kidnapers offered no clear demands. Recent local reports add based on the returns of the tribal negotiators from the particular location where the captives are taken, saying that they could hardly persuade the community elders for the talk about the missing people. Some of the community elders did not even show interest for the release of the captives and that is not sure whether it is due to unhealthy circumstances being posed by the kidnapers or they are not willing to be involved in the matter, according to reports.

In addition, the government authorities have also remained silent and unclear about the release of the captives. Bitter than all, president Ghani who was believed to change the fate of his nation in his leading has also not talked on this regard since the incident happened. Some of the local outlets indicated that the motive behind the abduction of these 31 innocent men are only because of their ethnic identity, therefore certain government authorities seem calm and did not show a single reaction against the incident for they belong to a particular tribe and that their lives and deaths will make no difference for them. Hazaras are often the target of sectarian violence at the hands of extremists in Afghanistan. Hazaras were persecuted during the 1990s when the Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan. During the wars, thousands of Hazaras were killed in Bamyan, Mazar Sharif and Kabul by Taliban. Moreover, they were discriminated badly due to their ethnicity.

Who is responsible for the incident must be sought out quickly and efforts should be hastened to secure the poor victims. The government officials and authorities claim that efforts are underway and certain teams of tribal elders have been assigned as negotiators who are in dialogue with the culprits and there are hopes that the victims will be released. Zabul Police Chief, Ghulam Jailani Farahi has mentioned that efforts are underway for peaceful and unconditional release of the abducted and if negotiations fail, they can use any other options to free them. Seeking the support of the tribal elders is not a bad idea in this sort of incidents and if pursued with dedicated and sincere efforts there can be certain results. However, it is difficult to expect that the culprits would be ready to free the abducted passengers without any condition. Therefore, government needs to follow carefully whether negotiations are carried out with sincere efforts and that the process does not lead to some sort of tragedy for the poor victims.

At the same time the authorities in Kabul must also ensure that they are fully in picture about every measure that is taken. The National Unity Government must itself pursue the developments in this regard as it is a matter of life and death of more than 31 people. Any negligence in this regard would mean a great and irrecoverable loss.

Hazara constituting a large population of Afghanistan have observed peace and allegiance to the said laws of the land. The Abduction of Hazara passengers indicates the miseries yet unaddressed amidst government prevalent silence and indifference.



## Is History Really True?

By Dilawar Sherzai

Much has been said and written about history and its importance in human life. There are thinkers who believe that it is impossible to live without history and everyone must remember it so as to have better future. However, it is always debatable whether remembering history can really benefit us in making our future.

History is the record of past events. Since human beings have memory and since they started having the capacity to record events in the written form, they started forming history. The records of all the events that are available in black and white basically form our history and there are many who believe it to be source of unlimited knowledge for us. Though, these records support us in understanding the people of the past, their ways of living, their beliefs and cultures and so many other details but considering that they can support us in designing our present and past are raw assumptions.

History is present in records and this very fact raises questions about its authenticity. The main problem about proving that an action really happened in past is that we cannot replay it. We just have something written about it. Now, who had written that something and did he really write the fact that actually happened? Was he not biased about what he had written, not influenced by someone else, not forced to write what he wrote? Thus, it is really difficult to justify whether the records show the true picture.

For example, in past the glorious kings had their own historians who were paid to write about the glories of the kings and their kingdoms. They neither had the courage nor the motivation to write the fact and realities. All they used to write were to glorify the kings not to record the events for the future generations to know the reality. The few who dared to write anything against them had to face severe consequences.

In similar fashion different nations have written their histories the way they have wanted. They have always strived to exaggerate their successes in the past and strived to delete the realities that have resulted in their loss or humiliation. Therefore, there are different interpretations of the same historical event and it is really difficult to find which one depicts the reality. Dan Brown in The Da Vinci Code highlights the same reality, "History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books-books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon?'" It can be observed as well that nations, in the memory of their glorious past, tend to neglect their present. They keep on focusing about past and praising the same

instead of being practical and striving to change their fate in present. Our example (of Muslims) in this regard is very much relevant. Some of us keep on remembering the past wherein Muslims had the glory and great achievements in science, arts and statesmanship.

However, in the process we fail to realize the fact that today we are far away from what we used to be and something needs to be done about it in the present. Remembering glorious past does not bring glory, we have to work hard for it, be practical and change ourselves, our societies and our destinies. Steve Maraboli has rightly said, "Today is a new day. Don't let your history interfere with your destiny! Let today be the day you stop being a victim of your circumstances and start taking action towards the life you want. You have the power and the time to shape your life. Break free from the poisonous victim mentality and embrace the truth of your greatness. You were not meant for a mundane or mediocre life!"

Another mistake that certain people and historians make is to bicker upon the minor details regarding the incidents in history. As there are different interpretations of history and different details about the same incidents, there are differences among different individuals or groups of individuals. All of them think and even believe that they are right while others are wrong. They even insist that others should change their views according to them.

This even results in serious clashes and even wars. The same can be found among the believers of different religions and even the believers of different sects in the same religion. And, what has been the outcome is not hidden from anyone. Christopher Paolini, regarding the same reality, has quoted beautifully, "People have an annoying habit of remembering things they shouldn't."

Thus, it should be understood by all the sensible human beings that history is not always the truth. The different interpretations, different biases and considerations, pressures and greed, political inclinations and religious beliefs have all contributed in designing the history; therefore, it is not always the true picture of the events that really occurred and there are only limited ways of proving the facts in history. Bill Waterson says, "History is the fiction we invent to persuade ourselves that events are knowable and that life has order and direction. That's why events are always reinterpreted when values change. We need new versions of history to allow for our current prejudices."

The only way history can be beneficial to a certain extent is when we are able to see it with wider perspective; analyzing the different interpretations and avoiding being biased. Believing history blindly can only make us more extremists and make our opinions and actions more distant from reality.

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## Lifting the Ban on Islamic Headscarf

By Hujjatullah Zia

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty," stated in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2).

Based on this Declaration, freedom of religion is the basic right of man. One can practice religious rituals without political barriers. A discriminative approach towards a certain class on the basis of its belief will contradict Human Rights Law and therefore should be deprecated. Moreover, labeling a class fatuously due to its creed, on the grounds of fundamental practices of a sanctimonious coterie, will add insult to injury. The negative vestige of discrimination and cruel acts will not fade away. A sense of pique will be palliated but it is really hard to heal the wounded hearts and outraged conscience of victims.

According to reports, Germany's top court said Friday that Muslim teachers can wear the Islamic headscarf in class as long as it doesn't disrupt school activities, in a ruling likely to revive emotional debate.

The Constitutional Court said Muslim teachers in state schools could no longer face a blanket ban on the headscarf, effectively revising its 2003 decision that left the door open to it being barred. Since 2003 several of Germany's 16 regional states, which are responsible for education, have banned teachers wearing the Muslim headscarf following the top court's initial ruling. The two plaintiffs, a teacher and a school social worker, from western NRW state had lodged the complaint against the ban. Nurhan Soykan, general secretary of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, welcomed the ruling, saying that even if it did not amount to a "general permit" for the headscarf, it sent a "positive message".

The country, home to the biggest Turkish community outside of Turkey, has heatedly debated the headscarf issue since neighboring France passed a law in 2004 banning the wearing of headscarves or any other "conspicuous" religious symbols in state schools.

Lifting the ban on wearing Islamic veil in school by Germany court is extended a warm welcome but what about the women who were hurt emotionally since banning headscarf in state school? Most probably, a number of Muslim women

have either gave up or lost their jobs for practicing their religious rituals in public. Undeniably, religion is the idol of pious individuals and curtailing the freedom of religion will be highly hurtful to them. In other words, since religious symbols, especially headscarf for Muslim women, is the epitome of modesty, banning veil is tantamount to besmirching their character. Headscarf is a religious value in Muslims' culture. A woman wears veil to shield her beauty and charming hairs from the licentious looks of evil characters. For instance, a flower needs to be kept out of passersby's touch by strong fence and jewelry needs to be protected in safe place and woman's character needs to be safeguarded against potential harms by observing hijab. Muslim women love their headscarves and wear of their own volition - it also gives them peace of mind. Nothing is negative with this tenable clothing.

The diversity between moderate and fundamental Muslims should have been clarified earlier. In another item, the mistrust between Islam and West has passed historical ups and downs and Muslims indiscriminately fell prey to injustice. As a result, the US President Barack Obama said in his speech in Cairo few years back, "The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of co-existence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars."

More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.

Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. This has bred more fear and mistrust."

To amend this condition and bridge the gap between Islam and West, a thorough study in religion and cultural values is needed. After all based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all citizens are supposed to be treated equally irrespective of their sex, color, religion, belief, etc. Curtailing freedom of religion will put the justice of a country under question. To put it succinctly, a government should approve the law to accommodate to citizens' beliefs and cultural values without any discriminations. All the countries are urged to abide by international law and treat the citizens equally.

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