

YOUNG LIVES AT PERIL

Recent instances of young men and women from well-to-do backgrounds caught on suspicion of killing their spouses or future partners in cold blood indicate a highly disturbing trend. Something is terribly wrong with society for these incidents cannot be seen as mere criminal acts. All these incidents have happened in north Indian cities and in each case both the suspected killer and the victim are from good social and financial backgrounds. Sometimes, a spouse is chopped to death and stuffed in a fridge or a drum, the other time a man is pushed from the hill to death by his female partner and she then calmly joins the mourners till she is caught. There is also the spine chilling case former judge mother in law and her son being involved in the death of a young woman and brazenly manipulating evidence. The problem boils down to marriages being seen as a very important social event in the lives of the most Indian parents. India, parts of the subcontinent and perhaps Muslim countries may be the only regions in the modern world where parents have the responsibility of finding matches for their adult children and all this is linked to their social status. Additionally, the trend of big fat Indian wedding is also responsible for women getting trapped in unhappy marriages and 'adjusting' so as not to waste the investment made on their weddings. Indian wedding are increasingly been reduced to big tamasha, and vulgar display of wealth. The wedding culture, inspired by Bollywood, has become money oriented and is shorn of spirituality and meaningful rituals which were never linked to money. On the other hand, men and women have aspirations and dreams and they are caught in this whirlpool of wedding culture. Government must fast track the trial in all such cases so as the youth draw lessons from these.

BL Verma

As the entire world reflects on the challenge of substance use on the occasion of World Drug Day on June 26, for India, this issue emerges not merely as a social or health-related problem, but as a grave matter linked to the nation's future. Substance abuse weakens not just an individual, but the family, society, and ultimately the collective strength of the nation. It shatters the dreams of the youth, tears families apart, and hinders the pace of development.

Today, India has the largest youth population in the world. This youth power is the greatest asset of our 'Amrit Kaal'. If this power is channelled into education, skills, innovation, and nation-building, nothing can stop India from becoming a 'Vishwa Guru' but if the youth fall into the addiction of drugs, it will be a loss not just to one generation but to the future of the nation. Therefore, the fight against drugs is the responsibility of every Indian.

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Central Government has not viewed the problem of drug abuse merely as a matter of law and order or health; instead, it considers it a critical issue linked to the future of India's youth and the progress of the nation. On numerous occasions, he has called upon the youth, parents, and all sections of society from public platforms to remain aware of substance abuse. From 'Mann Ki Baat' to various national programmes, he has repeatedly emphasised that drug addiction becomes a problem not of an individual but of the entire family and society.

It is indeed a result of the Prime Minister's sensitivity that the fight against drug abuse has not been limited to government action alone but has been transformed into a campaign driven by public participation. The 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan' (Drug-Free India Campaign) was launched un-



der his guidance, through which the message of awareness has reached crores of youth, students, and citizens.

The Prime Minister firmly believes that India's youth power is the country's biggest asset, and it is our national responsibility to safeguard it from evils like drug abuse.

Launched on August 15, 2020, the 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan' (Drug-Free India Campaign) has today become a people's movement. This campaign is not merely a government programme, but a medium for social awakening.

Millions of youths, students, women, teachers, and voluntary organisations have actively participated in this movement. From villages to metropolises, from schools to universities, and from digital platforms to community events, a widespread public awareness against substance abuse has emerged.

The government has taken decisive steps to curb the supply of substances. The Narcotics Control Bureau and various security agencies have dismantled numerous inter-

national smuggling networks through coordinated action. Surveillance at the borders has been strengthened, and strict action has been taken against organised crime. We must understand that drug trafficking is not merely a crime; it is often linked to anti-national activities and the financing of terrorism. Therefore, this struggle against drug trafficking is also a struggle for national security.

However, the success of any law or government campaign is ensured only when society becomes its driving force. India's greatest strength is its social and cultural consciousness. Our families, our values, our community traditions, and our social solidarity are the strongest shields against substance abuse.

Family is the first and most important unit of this fight. If parents maintain open communication with their children, become their friends, and keep a watchful eye on changes in their behaviour, the problem of substance abuse can be prevented at an early stage. Schools and colleges, too, will have to play an active role

in fostering self-confidence, positive thinking, and a healthy lifestyle among the youth.

Our mothers and sisters are the greatest strength of this campaign. Across the country, Self-Help Groups, Anganwadi workers, and women's organisations have played a significant role in spreading awareness and taking care of families. Their contribution to building a drug-free India is invaluable.

At the same time, we must also change our attitude towards those who have recovered from addiction. A person should be judged not by his past, but by his efforts to improve. The rehabilitation process can be truly successful only if society accepts and encourages them and provides them with opportunities to move forward.

On the occasion of World Drug Day, I call upon every citizen of the country, especially the youth, to become a part of this national campaign against drug abuse. Spread awareness in your family, your school, your workplace and your society. If every citizen resolves to keep even one person away from substance abuse, millions of lives could be saved.

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (Drug-Free India Campaign) is not merely a government programme but a mass movement aimed at empowering India's youth power, family structure and national consciousness.

Let us come together to turn this invocation into a mass resolve and move forward together towards a drug-free India, for the sake of building a developed India. It is the national resolve of 140 crore countrymen. This very resolve will serve as a strong foundation for the building of Viksit Bharat.

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WHEN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND AUTHENTICITY BLURS

Sanjay Chandra

A camp was organised by our newly elected governing body to facilitate certain services for residents. It was a good initiative with a few inevitable hiccups. Many appreciated the effort, while some expressed disappointment. One resident urged the President of the Residents' Welfare Association to personally address such irritants in the future. What caught my attention, however, was the response of another well-meaning resident who rushed to defend the President while assigning blame to the committee member who organised the event. In corporate and public life, leadership is often defined by the willingness to absorb criticism while sharing credit. In our increasingly polarised environment, criticism and defence seem to attach themselves not to actions but to individuals.

A few days later, a neighbour chose to respond to one of my articles on social media with comments such as 'writing for publicity' and 'pathetic'. Interestingly, in face-to-face interactions, he remains polite and courteous. I also found myself reflecting on the untimely deaths of several talented individuals in their fifties. People who still had much to contribute, both professionally and personally.



I do not suggest that these losses can be explained by technology or social media. They did, however, make me reflect on the various pressures that modern life places upon us, often in ways we scarcely recognise. For much of human history, there existed a degree of separation between our public and private selves. Most people encountered a limited version of us. Public life usually required us to present our better selves. Our frustrations, contradictions, and unguarded moments remained largely within private spaces shared with those closest to us.

Digital technology has altered that

arrangement fundamentally. Public life now accompanies us throughout the day. Opinions are formed instantly, reactions are displayed immediately, and disagreements are preserved indefinitely. The audience is always present. Moments of genuine solitude have become increasingly rare.

The distinction between public and private life has become increasingly blurred. What earlier generations experienced in private is now expressed, displayed, and debated in public spaces. Perhaps this is why civility appears more fragile. The pace of communication has accelerated, while

reflection has not. We have acquired unprecedented tools for expression, but not necessarily the habits of restraint, patience, and perspective required to use them wisely. Technology has amplified our voices; it has not always deepened our understanding.

In such an environment, the distinction between performance and authenticity also begins to blur. The person we present to the world and the person we are in our unguarded moments are expected to coexist continuously. Social approval, criticism, validation, and comparison have become part of everyday life in ways previous generations never experienced. Perhaps this is one of the defining psychological challenges of our age.

Technology has connected us more extensively than ever before, but it has also made performance a permanent condition of modern life. We are simultaneously participants, audiences, and subjects. There may be value in rediscovering something that earlier generations understood instinctively: the importance of spaces where one is not performing, responding, or being observed. Spaces where one can simply be. While technology has succeeded in bringing the world closer to us, it may also have made it harder for us to find distance from the world.

Standing against tyranny is service to God

Hasan Khurshid

John Bradshaw once said, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

Can man stand up to these conditions? "Man can but not necessarily with ease", Imam Husain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad, announced from the battlefield of Karbala (Iraq), on the fateful day of 10th Muharram, 61 A.H. (October 10, 680 A.D.).

The pre-Islamic period in Arabia is known as the "age of ignorance". Scudding away from the noble attributes of human principles, the Arabs were treading the path of retrogression and abhorrence. Suffering from worst evils and vices, these Arabs known as Bedouins (uncivilised rustics) were highly temptative of wrecking vengeance, group quarrels, tribal animosities leading to bloody warfare that lasted for generations.

In pre-Islamic period these Arabian Bedouins used to bury their newly born daughters alive out of ego. They had no sense of equality, humanity, decency and brotherhood.

In this crucial moment, Prophet of Islam Hazrat Mohammad brought the message of peace, tolerance, human-

ity, forbearance, liberty, equality, brotherhood, assisting to weak and securing justice for the persecuted. The Prophet gradually started transforming the heartless brutes to humanise and turning towards a peaceful life. The most notorious among them were the Bedouin tribals of "Bani-Omayya" (Omayyads). Omayyads did not tolerate the sojourn of humanity and peace. They violently opposed Prophet's teachings. Omayya's grandson, Abu Sufiyan, son of Herb, unfurled the flag of revolt against Islamic teachings. They started a campaign of persecution on the Prophet, who was forced to migrate from his home in Mecca to Medina. As such, the year of Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina is marked as the beginning of Hijri era of Islamic calendar.

Still Prophet Mohammad was not given any respite and relief. Mohammad was compelled to fight battles many a time. In Medina, Prophet established the system for administering the "rule of law" in the light of Islamic jurisprudence, under the command of his son-in-law Hazrat Ali Murtaza ibn Abi Talib. Notwithstanding the bravery of Ali, the accused Omayyads suffered a thorough collapse. The shrewd Abu Sufiyan played a trick to subscribe to Is-

lam outwardly and the Prophet mercifully granted quarter to Abu Sufiyan and his men.

On the contrary, Mohammad, realising his duties as Prophet was preparing his two beloved grandsons, 'Hasan' and 'Husain', sons of Ali Murtaza and Fatima Zehra, as perfect specimen of his own attainment and imparted to their young minds all the characteristics of his high morality.

After the demise of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, the school of Islamic thought, philosophy, culture and administration was shifted to 'Caliphate' with temporal and ecclesiastical powers. The first three caliphs were: Abubakar, Umar and Usman. The last caliph Imam Ali Murtaza, was assassinated by the henchmen of the conspirator and hypocrite Muawiya son of Abu Sufiyan while Hazrat Ali Murtaza was prostrating before Allah in the mosque.

After Ali's assassination, Muawiya with the might of sword, usurped the seat of Caliphate in Syria and declared himself as the self-appointed caliph. Muawiya, the first ruler of the House of Omayyads, displaced the democratic Islamic rule by oligarchical and barbaric despotic rule. After the death of Muawiya, his son accused Yazid as-

cended to the Caliphate seat of Syria. He was a hardcore terrorist and had surpassed all his ancestors in practicing cruelty, violence and corruption. Yazid was libertine and sinner to the extent that the barest mention of his objectionable character is taboo in this civilised society. Yazid was the mammon of Unrighteousness, whose lust for power prompted him to beat society into the mould he favoured. Yazid's criminal behaviour indicated the extreme occurrence of vulgar, inhuman innovations in the established Islamic values. He was immoral to the extent that he had married the real sister of his father.

On the contrary, Imam Husain was recognised throughout the Arab world for his excellence of behaviour, wisdom, compassion and piety. When Yazid occupied the erstwhile seat of Caliphate, deceitfully usurped by his father Muawiya, Yazid by terrorising the citizens, sought their allegiance to accept him as leader of the faithfully. He then demanded allegiance from Hazrat Imam Husain. Accused Yazid was equipped with all the paraphernalia of power but so long as he didn't get the allegiance from Imam Husain, the grandson of the Prophet, he had no reli-

gious sanction to claim the Caliphate. He therefore demanded allegiance from Imam Husain to subscribe him as leader of the faithful. When Yazid bargained hard for Imam Husain to choose between allegiance and death, Husain straightaway refused him for allegiance, saying, "A person of my kind, cannot accept the allegiance of a man of his (Yazid's) kind." Husain knew that recognition of Yazid's immorality will permanently disfigure the "true faith" and a "pseudo religion" will emerge in the guise of Islam. Had he encountered no opposition, Islam was bound to acclimatised to the paralysing atonality from Yazid's degenerated symphony.

Imam Husain was mercilessly assassinated in the desert of Karbala along with 71 family members and companions on 10th of Muharram, 61 Hijri (October 10, 680 A.D.), after being kept hungry and thirsty for three days.

Their heads were severed from the bodies and were mounted on lancers. Among the slain martyrs was Husain's six-month-old infant son, Ali Asghar, the buoyancy of whose innocent blood refloated the sinking ship of Islam. Ali Asghar's moon-like innocent severed head was too mounted on a lancer.

Asghar's little body, among 71 others was too trampled through the hoofs of horses of Yazid's cavalry. The tents of Husain's household were torched. Daughters and grandchildren of Prophet Mohammad's extended family and the only surviving, ailing son of Imam Husain, were taken captives and paraded from Karbala to Syria, on bare backs of camels, where they were appeared before accursed Yazid, the wild beast in human form.

10th Muharram is universally observed by right-thinking and kind-hearted people irrespective of caste, religion or faith. "Never in the fight of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few", said Churchill. The event of Karbala, taking place on 10th Moharram, 61 Hijri, teaches us: Never support injustice and oppression, no matter, how powerful the oppressor might be. No matter, what incentive, what threat you might be given? Husain declared, "Do not submit to exploitation of any kind, maintain a tenacious grip on veracity, and better die with honour guarding against evil, than live in shame."

The writer is a legal journalist and a columnist; Views presented are persona