Golden Horizons

Written and Produced by the Students of the International Rescue Committee’s Women’s Journalism Program

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Wheat-Salt Solution: A New Treatment for Diarrhea

INTERVIEW

By Manija Fariq, Mujda Siddiqi, Neelofer Wali and Belqees Marzia

Diarrhea is very common in Afghan refugee children, especially in those between six months and two years. Previously, oral rehydration solution (O.R.S) and sugar salt solution (S.S.S) were the only treatment for diarrhea. They saved thousands of children's lives, but it was discovered that people made mistakes in preparing S.S.S. The solutions they prepared were found to be harmful to give to the children who have diarrhea.

UNHCR has decided to stop promoting S.S.S. in the Afghan health program. Since Afghan people are returning to their homeland and O.R.S. packets are not available everywhere in Afghanistan and at every time, for the future of diarrhea treatment a new solution (W.S.S.) is being introduced by the IRC Hangu Wheat Salt Solution Program.

The reporters of Golden Horizons had an interview with Saida Amad, the research assistant of the Hangu Wheat-Salt-Solution Program. The interview is written below:

Q#1: If there are no O.R.S packets at home, how can mothers help their babies with diarrhea?
A#1: Wheat-Salt-Solution is the first home-made treatment for diarrhea in children and adults. It should be used before bringing them to the hospital or clinics and if there are no O.R.S. packets at home.

Q#2: What is the difference between O.R.S and W.S.S.?
A#2: O.R.S. comes in packets. It is the mixture of glucose and salt. O.R.S. is made in factories and is sent from foreign countries as an export. W.S.S. is a cheap and easy way which every one can make at home. O.R.S. is necessary for those children who have become dehydrated because of diarrhea.

Q#3: What are the important points of your research on W.S.S.?
A#3: The important point of the W.S.S. research is that we visited Afghan's houses and it proved to us that wheat is currently used among Afghans. Wheat is found at every home at every time so people can easily make W.S.S. at home. It is cheap and tasty. Children like it to eat and it stops diarrhea. A child with diarrhea recovers soon and in Afghanistan it is easier to make W.S.S. than O.R.S.

Q#4: What are the advantages of W.S.S.?
A#4: W.S.S., like O.R.S, replaces the lost water of the body that results from diarrhea. A watery stool is changed to a solid one. W.S.S. stops diarrhea and vomiting and restores appetite.

W.S.S. stops diarrhea and vomiting and restores appetite.

Q#5: When did you use W.S.S. and what were the opinions about
W.S.S. of mothers who had used W.S.S. for their children?

A#5: During the project's research period in 1991, W.S.S. was used for children who had diarrhea. The children's mothers' opinions were that their children with diarrhea recovered very soon. Their children liked it very much because it tasted delicious. It decreased the rate of stool passage. W.S.S. prevents the body from losing water and is a home treatment.

Q#6: To make W.S.S. what things do we need and how much?

A#6: 1. Two fistfuls of wheat flour
2. One liter of water (one kilo or one seer)
3. Two, three-fingered pinches of salt

Q#7: How can we make W.S.S.?

A#7: First of all, we should wash our hands with soap and water and dry them well. Then pour one liter of clean and cold water into a dish, add two fistfuls of wheat flour in it and two, three-fingered pinches of salt. Mix it until the wheat flour and salt is dissolved into the water and put it on the fire. Stir the liquid well until it boils. At the first boiling immediately take it off the fire and let it cool.

Q#8: When should start we giving W.S.S. to a child with diarrhea and how much should we give?

A#8: When diarrhea occurs for the first time give the W.S.S. with a cup and a spoon. After each passing stool, a glass or how much a child can eat should be given to her or him.

Q#9: How long should W.S.S. liquid be given to a child with diarrhea?

A#9: Every day mothers should give W.S.S. until the child recovers from the diarrhea.

Q#10: As the W.S.S. is like a food, is it necessary to give other food to a child who has diarrhea?

A#10: Yes, it is very necessary to feed a child with diarrhea and to breast feed the child besides giving W.S.S.
Q#11: How long should the prepared W.S.S. be used?
A#11: Prepared W.S.S. can be used from morning till night, but if the prepared W.S.S. goes off and is smelling bad, the liquid should not be used and mothers should make a new W.S.S.

Q#12: If there is a mistake in the measurement of the wheat flour, salt or water what side effects appear?
A#12: If the water is less, the liquid will be solid. The child cannot eat it, so the mother is obligated to add more water to become drinkable. If the water is more than its standard, the liquid will be aqueous and its effect will decreased.

W.S.S. is a home treatment which prevents the body from losing its water.

Recipe for WSS

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Ingredients:
• Two fistfuls of wheat flour
• One liter of water (one kilo or one seer)
• Two, three-fingered pinches of salt

Steps:
1. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them well.
2. Then pour one liter of clean and cold water into a dish.
3. Add two fistfuls of wheat flour and two, three fingered pinches of salt to the water.
4. Mix it until the wheat flour and salt is dissolved into the water and put it on the fire.
5. Stir the liquid well until it boils. At the first boiling immediately take it off the fire and let it cool.

Hygiene for Babies

Transcribed from Dari by Atifa Fazil

We should fight for the protection of newly born babies from hot and cold weather and germs. The environment that a baby lives in has an important effect on the baby's health.

The baby's room should be very clean, organized and intact. The room should be in the sunshine and the atmosphere of the room should be changed every day by opening the windows and the door. If the baby is born in the winter and the room is warmed by a heater, it is necessary to put a pot full of water on the heater for two hours every 24 hours, so that the air of the room does not become dry.

The temperature of the room should be 16 to 18 degrees Centigrade. When babies are having a bath or mothers are changing their babies' clothes, the room's temperature should be about 20 to 25 degrees Centigrade.

The place that is selected for the baby's bed should not be located in a dusty, dirty place, nor located in a direct light, because babies will become used to the light very quickly. If the babies are used to the lights, it will be difficult for the mothers because the babies will not sleep in dark places. Doctors say that 24 hours of light is not good for the babies.
UNHCR helps Afghans repatriate

INTERVIEW

By Suhaila Majid Jalil, Fawzia Shahab, Mariam Fariwar and Atifa Fazil

Currently, many Afghan refugees want to go back to their homeland. Reporters from Golden Horizons interviewed Ms. Shanaz, a repatriation officer at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on July 5 to find out more about UNHCR’s aid for Afghans returning to Afghanistan.

Q#1: What are the main tasks of an encashment office?
A#1: The main job of our program is giving aid for refugees and protecting their lives.

Q#2: What kind of people can get aid from this program?
A#2: Those people can get aid from this program who are registered. The office gives three kgs of wheat and Rs. 3,000 for each family.

Q#3: Can you tell us, until now, how many Afghan refugees have gotten aid from this program?
A#3: Until now, four of five lakh Afghan refugees have gotten aid from this program.

Q#4: What is your budget?
A#4: Our budget is not enough. We need help from foreign countries.

Q#5: How long will this budget last?
A#5: As long as Afghan refugees are in Pakistan.

Q#6: For those Afghan refugees who do not have rations cards, do you have any aid for them?
A#6: This program (UNHCR) does not have any plans, but IOM (the International Organization for Migration) will provide transportation for those refugees who go to distant areas.

Q#7: What is your message to those Afghan refugees who have returned to their homeland?
A#7: My message is for those Afghans who have not planned to go to their homeland, let those refugees who want to go now get the aid.
Repatriation
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

An average of 13,000 Afghan refugees have been leaving Pakistan every day since their long-held wish to live in a free Afghanistan has become true. As everybody knows, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been helping Afghan refugees in Pakistan for the past 14 years. Now, UNHCR is helping Afghan people in Pakistan who are planning to go back to their homeland since April 1992. This program has different centers to help those refugees who have ration passes. These centers are located in Shagader, Jamrud, Pabbi, Hangu and Haripur. Those refugees who want to repatriate to Afghanistan can get aid.

In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has planned to provide transportation facilities for those refugees who do not have ration cards.

If you as an Afghan refugee wish to get aid easily, please concentrate on the following points:

• If you have not planned yet to go to Afghanistan, please wait and let others get the aid first.
• If you want to get the aid, do not panic, wait for your own turn.
• You should get the aid only when you are ready to repatriate because you cannot get the aid again.

If you follow the above points, you will be successful in your tasks.

Repatriation
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

It has been a 14-year wish of all Afghans to see their country free of any foreign powers and to stay independently in their home.

Now our country is free. We can make use of this opportunity. We can cooperate with our people in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We can attempt to develop our country.

So, dear citizens, come and give a hand to each other for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and help our poor people, widows and orphans.

We should be truthful in all our tasks. We hope you will start working hard from today to rebuild your destroyed home with the help of God and your people.

Reduce the hostility from your hearts and follow the verse of the Holy Quran which says, "Catch the truth's ripe and do not be separate from each other."

Mines threaten Afghanistan's future
NEWS FEATURE

By Saleha Ehsan

Mines are one of the biggest problems for now and for the future of Afghanistan. Mines have destroyed the agricultural, industrial and living areas of Afghanistan. More than 40,000 Afghans have died or been injured in mine explosions. Also, there has been a big increase in mine victims since Afghan refugees started returning home.

About 20 to 30 million mines are scattered throughout Afghanistan. They have caused major problems like preventing transportation, disrupting business activities and agricultural production, and killing and maiming people.

The streets of Kabul are full of young and old people who have lost limbs. The United Nations estimates that between 200,000 and 400,000 people have been disabled by mines.

Since April, when the mujahideen assumed power in Kabul, many people have returned to Afghanistan and have been injured by mines. Most of those people were hit by mines while travelling or working in the agricultural fields of Afghanistan. Sixty percent of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Surgical Hospital's patients are suffering mine injuries. At this hospital 79 percent of the patients are people injured by mines when they returned to Afghanistan. Fourteen percent of these people were children and eight were women. In the ICRC hospital in Quetta the number of patients with mine injuries has increased recently from 26 to 37 patients. At the ICRC hospital in Kabul, by comparison, the number of patients injured by mines totaled 17 in February, 31 in March, 57 in April, 60 in May and 54 in June.

The United Nations estimates that between 200,000 and 400,000 people have been disabled by mines.

Before the mujahideen assumed power in April, 4,325 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were discovered in Kandahar, Kunar, Nangarhar, Pakia and Logar provinces. About 1,260 anti-personnel
405 anti-tank mines have been discovered by trained dogs which have been sent from Thailand.

Demining efforts began in 1989, when Operation Salam was established by the help of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Operation Salam includes clearing and demining sections.

Since this program was established, it has served Afghan people in different ways, and about three million people have learned how to clear mines. Also, in the women’s section, about 50,000 Afghan refugee women and children have been familiarized with mine clearing, according to Shakiba Alekozai, the previous manager of Operation Salam’s investigation department’s women’s section.

Besides mine clearing and demining course in Pakistan for Afghan refugees, this program has been sending groups inside Afghanistan to teach mine awareness and to do demining.

Groups of 14 people with trained dogs and flail machines (a special machine for mine clearing) stayed for about two months inside Afghanistan before the Islamic revolution succeeded in April 1992. Now, about 18 groups with all the facilities have been sent to Nangarhar, Tochar, Ghazni, Paktia and Kunar provinces. Also, this program receives the reports of their groups from each supervisor that they have sent and they are in touch with them.

The organizations which are in Pakistan plan to transfer their program inside Afghanistan. The secretary of Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC), Hadi Haya, said, “If our supervisors are transferred inside Afghanistan it will be better for more work and activities.”

Twelve trained Belgian dogs will join with 52 trained American dogs who are working on clearing mines inside Afghanistan, according to an announcement in the U.S. Information Service’s Dari/Pushto publication. Also, the U.S. and the U.N. want to send 100 dogs inside Afghanistan after training them for eight weeks. The U.N. wants to make a team of Afghan who will be familiar with dogs and can use the dogs during the operation. These trained dogs will find mines during the operation.

Although parts of some provinces like Kandahar, Paktia, Ghazni, Logar, Nangarhar and Kunar have been cleared of mines, every province of Afghanistan needs to be cleared from mines, because many villages, streets, canals, hills grazing lands, mountains and fields in every province are full of mines.

In addition to these programs, hospitals for Afghan refugees in Peshawar have helped Afghans injured by mines. The Medical Refresher Courses for Afghans (MRCA) operates a hospital in Peshawar for Afghans injured by mines. This hospital treats injured Afghans, and about 20 percent of its patients come from Nangarhar province, according to the administrative manager of the MRCA hospital.

A ten-year-old patient at the MRCA hospital, Zarjan, said, “I had lost my hands in a mine explosion when I was six years old. Before I came to this hospital I was not able to work with my hands, but since I got medical treatment in this hospital I feel better.”

Although these organizations are working to protect Afghans from mines, Afghan people need more help to be safe from the danger of mines.
Mines

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

 Millions of mines were planted across Afghanistan during the war. This has become a big problem for the people who are returning to their homeland. To avoid the danger of mines, please pay attention to the following points:

• Never enter areas where there are no inhabited places and which have a lot of plants and trees.
• If you enter a mined area, do not move. Do not panic and retrace your footsteps.
• When you want to go to Afghanistan, try to get information about the mined areas in your home area. Programs for mine awareness have information.
• Whenever you see a place covered by a lot of plants, be careful, inform other people -- especially those people who are trained about mines -- about it and ask them to help you. Also, leave a sign on the place.
• Tie up your animals and put them in a pen. Look after them to make sure that they are absolutely tied strongly.
• You must go with your animals to pasture. Bring more than one person when you go out with the animals to protect yourselves from all sides.
• If one of your animals is killed by a mine, don't run after it. First save your life.

Handling Weapons Safely

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

 Protecting others from weapons and explosive materials is an important duty of everyone. Indeed, weapons play two roles in everyone's lives. First, they can save people's lives. Second, they can take people's lives in a second. Let's use these dangerous materials in a very careful way to save our lives. Please be careful and pay attention to the following points:

• Keep all weapons away from the reach of children.
• Do not let children have toy weapons.
• Do not show interest in weapons in front of children.

Let's help disabled Afghans

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

By Beiqecs Marzia

Islam gives us advice and tells us to look after the sick, poor and disabled.
You have seen that some people in your community have difficulties which other people do not have. People can have problems with speaking, seeing, hearing, moving, learning or feeling. We could find these people in every community. About seven out of every 100 people are considered disabled by their communities.
War is the main cause of disability in Afghanistan. During 14 years of war in Afghanistan, thousands of people, especially children, have been disabled. Due to the poor nutritional condition of mothers, some children are born with mental and physical problems. These disabilities can be mild, medium or severe. Many people feel uncomfortable with somebody who is disabled. Some of our people think that a child's disability is a punishment for the sin of the parents. Some other Afghan families may feel ashamed of having a disabled person in the house and hide him/her away from the community and make him/her valueless.

Disabled people often depend on their families for everything like feeding, dressing, washing, and getting from one place to another. This is a big problem for their families.
Unfortunately, many communities have been unfair to people with disabilities. It is true that disabilities stop people from doing some activities, but with training most people with disabilities can
do most of the activities that other people do, even if they do them differently or slowly.

It is your responsibility to explain to families that there are many ways to help disabled people. When you or the community want to help a disabled person, you should decide about the following:

• What can the person do?
• What can the person not do?
• What might the person be able to do?

Then you should start to help the disabled person by doing the following:

• Alleviating the disability by operations or exercise
• Training disabled people in new work and living skills
• Adapting the homes of disabled people and public buildings.

There are many different organizations working for the disabled in Peshawar, such as the Rehabilitation Center for Afghan Refugees, Sandy Gall, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Serve and Radda Barnan (Swedish Save the Children). These organizations work for the rehabilitation of disabled people in different fields and different ways.

It is the individual responsibility of every single Afghan, especially the families of disabled people, to give disabled people equal rights as other people in the community. The reality is that today's disabled children are tomorrow's future. Afghanistan needs their hard work even if it's simple work.

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Hazrat Zahra course teaches Afghan women to read Holy Qur'an

NEWS

By Neelofar Wali

Hazrat Zahra, a Holy Qur'an course for Afghan women, opened on June 1 at the Afghan Women's Society on Arbab Road.

The Afghan Women's Society was established in 1992. This program has three parts. The first part is Hazrat Zahra, the Holy Qur'an course and the second part is the outreach team.

In the outreach team, the teachers go out of the center to teach the Holy Qur'an. For example, they go to the Afghan OB/GYN Hospital.

The third part is Dawate Irshad, which teaches uneducated women basic things about the Holy Qur'an. This program is supported by an organization of women from Arab countries.

The Hazrat Zahra Holy Qur'an course has two classes and 35 students and it is for six months. In this period of time, students learn how to read the Holy Qur'an with tajweed. Tajweed is a special kind of reading because Arabic is difficult to pronounce and it teaches people to read with the correct pronunciation.

"The attitude of the teachers is very good with us and they teach us in a good way and try their best to make the students understand," said Sara, a student in the course.

The Hazrat Zahra course has a library too. This library has approximately 1,000 books. They have different kinds of books; for example, they have story books, books about Islam, and books in Dari, Pushto, and English about general topics.

"The attitude of the teachers is very good with us and they teach us in a good way and try their best to make the students understand."
Hazrat Zahra teaches women

"We planned to expand this library as a public library for women only, because in Peshawar there is no library for women in a secure place," said Ms. Khurshid, the manager of this course.

Some books which are in the library were bought from the bazaar and some of them were gifts from different Arab organizations.

"We opened this course for women to have knowledge about their religion, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths (the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, p.b.u.h.) and about Islam. As a result when they go back to Afghanistan, they will be able to make an Islamic society," Ms. Khurshid said.

Every woman who wants to join this course should be educated because at this course they study the Holy Qur'an with translation and Tafseer, which provides more information about the verses of the Holy Qur'an which are read and translated. The difference between this course and the other Holy Qur'an courses in Peshawar is that this course is for educated women and the other Holy Qur'an courses are just for uneducated women.

In the other courses, the teachers were just reciting, but here they teach in a very good way by translation and Tafseer," said Sara, a student of this course.

When the program goes back to Afghanistan, the program will have other programs. They will have a literacy course for women all over the country because 98 percent of Afghan women are uneducated, Ms. Khurshid said.

Agencies Offer Education for Afghan Women

NEWS FEATURE

By Mariam Fariwar

According to interviews with different women working with projects for females in Peshawar, the most important issue that needs to be concentrated on is female education in Afghanistan.

Like many welfare organizations, the Swedish Committee has launched a variety of activities for Afghan refugees in Peshawar since 1982. The committee started a primary school called Zarghona Ana for Afghan refugee girls in 1986. Also, it has been supporting six schools in Shamshatu (a refugee camp in Peshawar) and other schools for Afghan girls like Omahat-ul-Mominin (a pre-school and secondary school), Om Salama (a primary school) and Sara school in Ferdous (an area in the center of Peshawar).

Moreover, the Swedish Committee has expanded its activities for female education inside Afghanistan. It has different agencies in 22 provinces of Afghanistan such as Balkh, Takhar and Badakhshan. The educational assistance inside Afghanistan is just provided in villages. The Swedish Committee sends equipment, such as textbooks, stationery, black boards, water tanks and carpets from Peshawar to village schools inside Afghanistan.

According to the reports of the Swedish Committee, the parents of those children who are studying in the schools sponsored by the Swedish Committee are satisfied with their children's teachers and lessons. Due to the teachers' kindness, the parents provide the teachers some financial aid such as rice, wheat, etc.

Consequently, the Swedish Committee receives applications from parents living inside Afghanistan who need education for their children. "It's my feeling that this change is one of the good results of the war," said Mieke Platvoet, the head of female education at the Swedish Committee.

Another example of female education aid for Afghans is the Master Teacher Training Project.
This project is run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Fifteen teachers are participating in this six-month master teacher training course.

At this course, teachers will learn how to be enthusiastic toward their students, how to make and use a lesson plan, how to provide interesting materials for students and how to make students active in a class. In addition, these 15 teachers will train 180 other Afghan female teachers who teach in primary schools in refugee camps of Peshawar.

"We should act according to a well-known proverb that we have, 'learn from the cradle up to the grave,'" said Sakina, the manager of the Master Teacher Training Project. "A country can never be rebuilt if there is not any improvement in education."

"We should act according to a well-known proverb that we have, 'learn from the cradle up to the grave,'"

As children make the basis of a society, the education of women is useful and beneficial for her own children, Sakina added.

Another source of education for Afghan girls is Naheed Shaheed. This school has been providing education for girls in grades one through 12 since it was established in 1984 by Inter Church Aid. The school provided education for 200 students in 1984. Currently, student enrollment has increased to 1,000. Facilities such as textbooks, stationery and a library are provided for enrolled students. The subjects which are offered to them are math, science, history, geography, languages and Islamic studies.

"We should follow our great prophet's word who says it's an obligation for every woman and man to be educated," said Shaima Chinzai, the headmistress of Naheed Shaheed School.

"In Afghanistan each woman has a responsibility even if she is a housewife or a teacher and in this case we approve of Napoleon (the French leader) that a woman rocks her child's cradle with one hand and with another hand she controls all the world," Shaima said.

Women in the Afghan Jihad

By Suhaila Majid Jalil

"In the Pul-i-Charkhi prison the communists cut the hair of Muslim women, stood women in water for 15 or 20 days and imprisoned women in one room without enough food and water for one month," said Jamila, a typist from the Islamic organization of Afghan women who spent one year in the Pul-i-Charkhi prison.

"I cooked and prepared clothes for the mujahideen in Nangarhar province for six years," said Bibigul, who lost her two sons in the Afghan war.

Like other Afghan mothers, she also never lost her courage and feelings when her two sons were martyred, Bibigul said. In addition, she became more determined to participate in jihad.

Jamila and Bibigul are Afghan women who, like other Afghan women, participated in the 14-year war along with their mujahid brothers.

In Islamic history, Muslim women have participated in jihad from the time of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) up to the present. Their struggle adorns Islamic history. Muslim women, with their strong faith in the way of Islam, participated in jihad with their fathers and brothers. By this participation they helped men during the war. The prophet's wives and other Muslim women helped by cooking, distributing water, treating patients, taking care of wounded people and washing the clothes of fighters.

Afghan women struggled and provided all of this help during the 14 years of war. By this struggle they kept alive the story of the prophet's wives and other Muslim women in the Islamic history of Afghanistan.

In fact, Afghan women have provided their services for their mujahid brothers in every village and place. They cooked and prepared clothes for the mujahideen. "I lived in a village in Wardak province. Everyday I cooked for a group of mujahideen who were in our village," said Zakera, a young girl from Wardak province.
Afghan women, jihad

Sometimes Afghan women participated directly in jihad and helped the mujahideen in different ways. Parween, a woman from Logar province, said she remembers a big fight between the mujahideen and the Russian soldiers in Logar province. It was summer and the weather was hot, Parween said, and her daughter distributed water and carried weapons for the mujahideen. The other women took care of the wounded mujahideen, she added.

Parween, a woman from Logar province, said she remembers a big fight between the mujahideen and the Russian soldiers in Logar province. It was summer and the weather was hot, Parween said, and her daughter distributed water and carried weapons for the mujahideen. The other women took care of the wounded mujahideen, she added.

In addition, Afghan women spent many years in prisons and took part in the demonstrations against the community government. In the demonstrations, Afghan women expressed their feelings by burning the communists' books and pictures of the communist leaders. One of these women was Naheed Shaheed, a well-known person who was killed by the communists during a demonstration in Kabul. Thousands of other young girls like Naheed Shaheed were killed or injured, but they never surrendered.

Afghan women resisted the cruelty of the Russians and their partners in the prisons. The communists inflicted many kinds of torture and cruelty on Afghan Muslim women. "I faced many kinds of torture in the Pul-i-Charkhi prison, but I never lost my feelings and courage against them," Jamila said.

"As Afghan women have participated with their mujahid brothers in the 14 years of jihad, they should have the chance to work with their brothers in the reconstruction of a free Afghanistan," she said.

Afghan widows face problems

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NEWS FEATURE

By Mariam Ehsan

Two hungry and sickly women with thin bodies, wearing old dresses and old chadors dragged leather bags along the streets of Hayat Abad (a neighborhood in Peshawar). One of them was knocking at the gates of Pakistanis' and Afghans' houses and was yelling, "In the name of God bring something for eating and drinking, if you bring us some cold water it will be your kindness."

A door opened and a young woman brought them some food and water. "Oh! My lady, God grant you paradise. Please bring some clothes and children's shoes for my children; they are orphans, their father is dead," the youngest one said. She wiped tears from her face with her chador and said, "if my husband was alive I would not have to beg."

The oldest one said, "God is angry at us. We are so unlucky, our country has become free but we can not go there because of the money for transportation and we do not have any home in Afghanistan to live, "The Russians destroyed everything, our lands are full of mines what we should do? I don't know, God knows," she added.

Gull Chahra and Bakht Be-Be are widows who, like other Afghan widows, face many problems. Widows make 20 percent of Afghan women in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fourteen years of war in Afghanistan has caused a major increase in the number of widows in Afghan society.

Bakht Be-Be and Gull Chahra came from Afghanistan 10 years ago. The Russians martyred Gull Chahra's husband eight years ago, because he was a mujahed. Bakht Be-Be's husband died in a bomb explosion seven years ago in Kandahar (one of Afghanistan's provinces). He was also a mujahid.

Gull Chahra has three children: two sons and one daughter, and Bakht Be-Be has three daughters and two sons. Their children do not go to school, because they cannot afford to go to school. They have to come with their mothers to beg. "If our children can go to school it will be very good for their and our future life, but what should we do?" Gull Chahra said.

These two widows live in Kacha Gari camp (a neighborhood in Peshawar). They do not have a ration card to get food. They come to Hayat Abad to beg, because there is no work for them. "Our children need to have food to eat and clothes to wear -- if we do not do something they will die," said Bakht Be-Be. She said that if there was a job she would do it with happiness, and added that working is not as difficult as begging.
Bakht Be-Be and Gull Chahra live in a tent in a yard that Bakht Be-Be's husband built seven years ago in Kacha Gari camp. Gull Chahra lives with her father-in-law. Bakht Be-Be and Gull Chahra live in a yard because they do not have husbands.

Another widow, Mahar Taj, a mother of two daughters, came from Afghanistan three years ago. She works at a refugee school in Peshawar as a cleaner. She gets a salary of Rs. 1200 per month but it is not enough for her family. "Life is too difficult for a widow," she said. "After my husband's death nobody helped me." Mahar Taj's one daughter got married but her husband was killed too. Now, she and her three children live with Mahar Taj.

Shakoko is another widow who works as a cleaner. "I have to take care of my children's stomachs. I cannot afford clothes for my kids," she said. She gets a salary of Rs. 1300 per month, but says that is not enough for her and her four children. Shakoko said that she and her children cannot afford to wear new clothes, and they always wear clothes that other people give to them.

Shakoko's three children go to school, but she is worried about her oldest daughter. Her daughter is 14 and still uneducated. She has to stay at home and prepare food for her sister and brothers and do the housework.

Shakoko has been living in a shared house with her brother's sister-in-law and her aunt's sister-in-law in a neighborhood in Peshawar for about four years because she cannot afford to rent a separate house.

In Pakistan, some NGOs have projects for widows. For example, IRC has a loan project which is part of the IRC Self-Reliance Program in Hangu. This project helps widows and makes their life easier. In 1990 the program gave loans to 82 widows so they could start poultry projects. The program gave the widows six to eight-week-old chicks. After the chickens begin to lay (about five to six months later), the widows can pay back their loans, according to the IRC Annual Report 1991.

There is an other NGO called the Islamic Relief Agency for Afghans (ISRA) in Peshawar that is supported by Sudan. It has a program for widows that gives them Rs. 500 per month in cash and other things like medicines, clothes and shoes. All widows who are in this program have a notebook which lists the things that the program gives them.

Despite these projects, some widows say they still have difficulty. These Afghan widows wish to have a good job and to receive enough salary to foster their children. They also want a safe place to live. They wish that their children could have enough food to eat and clothes to wear. They want their children to go to school and have a fortunate future.

Some widows do not have jobs and those that do say the salary is not enough for them. According to these widows, the NGOs' projects for Afghan widows are not entirely successful.

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Afghan orphans suffering from exile

NEWS FEATURE

By Frishta Olfat Shehbazada

One evening a small girl with blue eyes, braided hair and an old torn dress was knocking at our neighbors' doors. She was dragging a leather bag and yelling at each door, "In the name of Allah bring me something to eat!"

No one opened their doors for her, and she started crying, "Oh God what has happened to us, on one hand our poverty and on the other hand on one helps this poor girl."

Nazo, like hundreds of Afghan refugees that do not have any place to live and food to eat and face many problems, begs in Peshawar. "We'll die if I don't beg," she said. Her family does not have any rations and their camp does not belong to any leader, she said.

Nazo, 13, came to Pakistan eight years ago, when the former Soviet Union's military murdered her father and brother. Her father was a mujahideen commander in Karabagh (a northern suburb of Kabul city). She came to Peshawar with her mother and six sisters.

They had nothing to eat and no one helped them. Then her mother went to the fields and brought grass for her children to eat, Nazo said. Also they did not have water to drink. As a result, two of her sisters died within two weeks. "It was the hardest time in our life," Nazo said.

Nazo's mother sent her to beg for food and money. In this way Nazo found a job for her mother in an Afghan family's house. From that time on their life became better.

Nazo said she is the oldest daughter of the family. "I wish I could be the richest woman in the world," she said. "Then I would help each and every poor family. " She said she plans to stop begging and start studying because she would like to become a doctor. "A doctor has enough income to help people," she said. "In this way I'll make myself rich," she added.

In Pakistan, there are some organizations that work for Afghan orphans. For example, the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA) helps the families of Afghan orphans by giving each family Rs. 500 per month. In addition, this organization has some other kind of help, such as treating illnesses and giving clothes, shoes, etc. to these Afghan families.
NGOs help Afghan orphans in Peshawar

Also, the Madina Munawwarah Charity Trust, a school sponsored by an Arab man, helps orphans. This orphanage has two separate sections: one for boys and one for girls called Dar-ul-Yatam (a primary school where Afghan orphans study). Both the boys' and girls' portions are in different buildings beside each other and have similar facilities.

The women's section has about 500 Afghan orphan girls of different ages from four to 25 and 20 Afghan and Arab teachers. The students spend their days and nights in the hostel and after each 15 days they have a three-day holiday. Classes are from the primary levels to the eighth grade.

"It has many more facilities for students," said Aamina, an Afghan teacher in the girls' portion of Dar-ul-Yatam. For example, the school provides medical care, Rs. 300 per month, transportation, a mosque where students can pray, clothes and shoes (daily dress and uniform), stationary, books and notebooks and food for the students.

"Life is nothing without education," said Aema, a student of the school. They study for five hours from morning to noon then they go back to their rooms. After changing uniforms they go to the dining room for lunch. After having their lunch and praying, the students have time to learn cooking, sewing, stitching, embroidery and household chores.

"An illiterate person is like a blind person," said Nazo. "If these organizations really work for refugees, they should be aware of each and every orphaned refugee in the camps," she added.

At last she cried and with a doleful voice said, "What are these programs for!"
Afghan Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital serves Afghan women

NEWS

By Fawzia Shahab

The Afghan Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital is the only hospital of its kind for Afghan women in Peshawar. The hospital has many facilities for outpatients and people who need to stay in the hospital.

This hospital was started in November 1984 and has 24 beds with 13 doctors and 40 nurses, of whom 13 are Pakistani. Also, one Pakistani doctor works as a volunteer.

Different organizations support this hospital, such as the International Rescue Committee, Help the Afghans Foundation, the Swedish Committee and other groups.

The main facilities of this hospital are 24 beds, an operation theater, an out-patient department, an anesthesia machine, and a delivery room. This hospital has an ultra-sound machine which can show a four-month pregnant woman the sex of her baby.

This hospital also has a vaccination section for mothers and babies. It is important for mothers, especially for newborn babies, to get vaccinated on time to protect them from dangerous illnesses. Also, the hospital gives medicine for patients for free. "If some medicines are not in the hospital, we give the patients money which they can spend for buying medicine outside the hospital," said Julie Bolger, the administrator of the hospital.

Every day many patients visit the hospital. This is a big problem for the patients and the doctors because all patients can not have a chance to make an appointment with the doctors. "If we get more funds we'll make small clinics in different parts of Peshawar," Ms. Bolger added.

Sometimes this hospital faces problems, but they can meet these needs by the help of other hospitals. "We send the patients whom we can't treat in our hospital to Khyber, Arabic, Ludine and some other hospitals," said Zakia, one of the doctors of this hospital.

When patients are at the hospital, they receive health education lessons which can help them when their children get ill at home. "Once, during the midnight, one of my neighbors' children got diarrhea, but their was no medicine and no doctor near the house. I made ORS and helped her child," said Fatima, one of the patients who was in the delivery room.

The doctors' and the nurses' attitudes are kind and friendly toward all the patients. "The doctors, nurses, and the services are the best, that is why I came to this hospital twice from Shinwar, a province of Afghanistan," said Sitara, one of the patients.

Gul Sanga, another patient said, "People said it was a good hospital, and when I came here and saw the treatment I realized that it is the best one."
The Rights of Women in Islam

By Mujda Siddiqi

Women are respectful beings and make half of the society. We can determine the rights of women in Islam when we compare their rights and their position before Islam.

Before Islam, women's rights were disregarded in all societies. They did not have any human rights. They were always tortured by men. Men always made women do the most difficult work. In the hot summers they farmed, cut down trees, and carried wood from the mountains, as well as raising their children.

Also, women went fishing in the rivers and cooked in the cold winter. In fact, some societies thought that women were devils and said that women had made the prophet Adam leave Paradise by eating wheat.

Before Islam, women were sold in the bazaars like animals. Men also exchanged their wives. This activity occurred in ancient Greece, for example. Plato (a Greek philosopher) gave his wife (Gazantive) to al-Sibia (the king of Greece) as a gift.

In the pagan state of the Arabs before the advent of Islam, Arabs buried their girls alive or put them in the rivers because they were ashamed of them. When a girl was born in their homes, they were very sad and ashamed of her.

When Islam came, women got their position, especially in education, culture, and economics. They got other rights too. First of all, Islam maintained the equal rights for both men and women and saved women from being buried alive and other tortures. The *Holy Qur'an* says, "On resurrection day, God will ask the buried girls who buried them? Was it because their families were ashamed of them? Or was it because they were hungry and powerless?"

Also, in the Hadis (the sayings of the Prophet Hazrat Mohammed, p.b.u.h.) it says, "Paradise is under the foot of mothers." The prophet of Islam, Prophet Hazrat Mohammed (p.b.u.h.) advised men to know women's rights and to respect them until the last moment of his life.

The most important right granted to women by Islam is the obligation of education for women like men. It says in the Hadis, "Talabatul elim Farizatul alla kuli Muslim wa Muslimatoon." In translation, this means that getting an education is an obligation for both men and women.

We are proud of our rights which Islam maintains for us. We want to preserve our rights under hejab-i-Islami, by covering our faces and bodies with a chador or an Islamic hejab. Islam gives us our rights under the hejab-i-Islami. Islam gives different rights for women so no one can exploit them.
Wearing hejab guarantees society's morals

By Fawzia Shahab

The biggest purpose of Islam is the protection of society's morals. All Muslims should use all opportunities to perfect society's morals. They should struggle against the things that are obstacles to the establishment of a moral society and support the things which could guarantee a moral society. All Muslims should be the guardians of their society's morals but the participation of women is more effective than that of men because women preserve the chastity of the family and society.

Women can protect themselves and keep their society's morals high by covering their bodies from men who are not their mahram (a person who can take care of a woman in Islamic law, like a husband, father, father-in-law, son, brother and nephew). The 31st verse of the Surat-ul-Noor of the Holy Qur'an says, "say to the Muslim women that cast down their eyes and keep their nice bodies. Do not reveal their beauty except to their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, sons, brothers and nephews." Muslim women are supposed to wear hejab under Islamic law. It is an obligation for them.

Imam Fakhar-Din-Razi, one of the greatest philosophers of Islam, wrote that during the pagan state of the Arabs before the advent of Islam, free and bondwomen came out of their houses without covering themselves. Men followed them and abused them. All these women were accused by people of wrong doing. To avoid situations like this, God orders women to cover their bodies.

Islam requires a Muslim girl to cover her body from the time that she becomes an adult to the time that she does not have attractiveness in her body. As God mentions in the Surat-ul-Noor of the Holy Qur'an, "Muslim women could know how to cover their bodies by studying and understanding Islamic laws." God says in Surat-ul-Quran, "Do not reveal the beautiful parts of your body except the places which you have to reveal like the face and two hands."

Some Islamic scholars accept that women should not cover their feet. The passage means that women should cover their bodies except faces,
hands and feet when they face men whom Islam's laws do not let them see. Women can get a comfortable feeling by covering their bodies because they are obeying Islamic law.

Sometimes the situation requires women to cover their faces. However, Islam does not limit that. God mentions in the Holy Qur'an, "Prophet say to your wives, daughters and other Muslim women that throw some part of your chador (veil) on your faces, that near, people will know you, no one will border you." God sends these verses to guide every woman to wear a big dress or chador (veil) that can throw a part of it on their faces. In addition, these verses describe the advantages of covering the face. If a woman goes out with a face that is covered people will realize that she is honorable, gentle and chaste.

The 31st verse of the Surat-ul-Noor of the Holy Qur'an says, "say to the Muslim women that cast down their eyes and keep their nice bodies. Do not reveal their beauty except to their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, sons, brothers and nephews."

All Afghan refugee women cover their faces and bodies with a chador (veil) and most of them wear hejabs like Arab women. Like Afghans, Pakistani women wear chadors (veils) and hejabs, though Afghans pay more attention to covering their faces and bodies. This is because the situation for Afghan women in Peshawar is destructive. Pakistan is not our own country. Second there are some roles which are acceptable for Muslim women, that women should not go out without a chador (veil) or a hejab. That is why Afghan women are interested in wearing a hejab or a chador (veil).

This is not a limiting way for women to live. It is the way to be a precious member of the world as God want woman to be and to be a member of society that could be respected by all. All Muslims appreciate Muslim women dressed properly and respect them and their personalities. In addition, women guide their society to improve. Muslim women will always attempt to follow Islamic law forever.
Women must play a role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan

EDITORIAL

By Manija Fariq

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is a challenge to its people. Indeed it is difficult work that might need years of hard work, but it is not impossible. A small group of people or men are unable to rebuild all of Afghanistan. It is the responsibility of every patriotic Afghan including men and women to cooperate and to work hard and truthfully in order to achieve their greatest aim -- the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

When we speak of the reconstruction of Afghanistan, we are talking about the ruins which our country has received as the 14 years of war's inheritance. Afghanistan is a country with no shelters for the majority of its population and is a country with a high rate of illiteracy among its people, especially among women. Afghanistan is a country which is not able to feed its people, due to the destruction of its agriculture and productivity. Finally, Afghanistan is a country which has lost millions of its youth, the greatest of its strength. Afghanistan wants help from its people.

In fact women, as half of Afghan society, are a very important element in the development of Afghanistan. In Afghan society men are the active factors. Women are the factors of progress of the Afghan society, the active elements of day-to-day life, the traditional teachers, and the helpers of men in the fields.

Afghan culture underrates women's work and female education outside their homes; however, the Holy Qur'an, which is the first resource of Islamic countries' law and the Hadiths (the sayings of Hazrat Mohammad P.B.U.H) remind men and women to work together. According to Hadis-i-sharif, "Talabul elmi farzatul alla kule musulm wa musilma," (both men and women are supposed to get education). Due to Islam, Afghan women have the right to take part in ideological, political, economical, social and cultural fields, and to get education. Thus, Afghan women who obey Islamic law could have a part in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.
Today Afghanistan needs to be reconstructed in various areas such as its security conditions, health, agriculture, education and economics. Rural and urban women can have their own role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan according to their field and skills.

Rural women have an important role in the development of Afghanistan. Making carpets and rugs, embroidery, and sewing are the individual work of the rural women. Afghanistan has been exporting its carpets and rugs to foreign countries from the earliest times. As the Afghan carpets, rugs, silk and karakul skin produced by the rural Afghan women are famous in the world markets, these are very important in the economy of Afghanistan.

Some of Afghan rural women are interested in raising cattle and planting which will also be effective in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

It is the responsibility of every patriotic Afghan including men and women to cooperate and to work hard and truthfully in order to achieve their greatest aim -- the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Basically, Afghan society today even more than in the past needs women’s work because war has destroyed the greatest of the Afghan men’s power. We have lost a great number of Afghan men during the 14 years of jihad and thousands of our people have been disabled by war.

There are groups of different kinds of Afghan women, who can do essential work in the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the stage of their family lives. For example, Afghan women who are widows and whose male relatives have had limited employment opportunities started working to earn honest money to feed their families. If these women keep working in the future in Afghanistan too, it will help to have more people to rebuild Afghanistan.

Overall, Afghan women can take part in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, when they have their Islamic rights. The rights of women in Islam give them power and more confidence to perform work in the stage of their society for the benefit of their people. It assures them that they are really human beings and that they are the members of their homeland, because women also have deep feelings of patriotism for their country and want to do as much as they can to rebuild Afghanistan.

If the real Islamic women’s rights are not given to them to take part in reconstruction of Afghanistan, the development of Afghanistan will be delayed. In other words the time which Afghanistan needs to be reconstructed will be doubled.

Today, Afghanistan’s reconstruction needs Afghan women to work hard. Community development which the people themselves are involved in is much more effective than the development sponsored by the government. A community can not progress unless its people -- men and women -- have good feelings and really want to improve their country.

At this historical and sensitive stage of Afghanistan, all Afghan people should put the discord and discrimination away and men and women should feel themselves responsible for the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

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Shadow of War

POEM

By Saleha Ehsan

The miserable shadow of the war makes every one hopeless, helpless and astonished.
No one can help each other.
No one can hear each others' screams.
This shadow covers Afghans like a black cloud.

Oh!
Who know when will this black mourning will abandon Afghanistan and Afghans?
Who can imagine this truth away?

But there is one that can hear our screams and can help our poor people.
This is a big and powerful being.
The supreme being, who knows how to help his creatures.

It is the Almighty Allah.
The companion of the universe.
Finally Allah will remove this shadow.
Which leaves millions of widows and orphans of Allah’s slaves behind.

It is a clear truth that no one can feel the sorrows of orphans and widows except Allah!
The one who we believe in every time.
The one who can help us.
The one who can hear us.
And the one who can do everything....
Health education: an essential need for all Afghans

EDITORIAL
By Belqees Marzia

Why do more than 85 percent of Afghans need medical assistance? They do, because the absence of attention to health and both personal and public hygiene and the exposure to different diseases. The present children are the builders of the country. If they develop good sanitary habits during childhood, their need for medication will be less in the future. Therefore, it is very necessary to teach health education in schools.

IRC's Health Educator Training Program was established in March 1989. Since it began, it has sponsored five training sessions. Course graduates are able to propagate information about health and prevention of diseases by many different methods. This course has established 14 health education departments at different organizations. Also, it recently established a health education department at Bibi Aisha School in Khurasan camp.

It is very important for mothers to have information about hygiene and health, because they are responsible for caring for and feeding their children. However, it is difficult for adults to change their habits. On the other hand, children "have more enlightened minds than their elders, who can memorize quickly but forget later," said WHETP Manager Atifa Sadat.

When children are taught about health, they share their lessons with their families, which enables all families to be taught indirectly. Mastoora, a health teacher at Bibi Aisha School, said, "After teaching sanitation to students, I ask them to discuss their lessons with their family members. Most of them bring many questions from their families the next day."

According to a WHETP assessment, the children are interested in health education lessons and practicing what they learn. "After a few days of teaching, it was observed that the students came to school cleaner than before," said Najiba, Directress of Bibi Aisha school.

According to a WHETP survey, all those responsible for primary schools said that having no budget, books and materials is the only obstacle to establishing health education branches in primary schools. It is clear that the joining of sanitary teaching to the regular curriculum is not an easy task and will require hard work and money.

However, if we turn to the annual consumption of medicines, we will realize that medicines cost much more than the establishment of health education departments. Besides, many of the medicines which are distributed to people are provided after their expiration dates. Such medicines cause problems for people.

Prevention is better than cure. We hope that all those responsible for public health and education will work hard so health education will be a part of the primary school curriculum. This will enable Afghans to spend foreign aid on the reconstruction and development of our homeland instead of on imported medicines.
AWRC fills need for literacy programs for Afghan women

EDITORIAL

By Atifa Fazil

Today, the majority of Afghan people are uneducated. The progress of a country depends on education. Afghanistan, which has been destroyed by war, cannot be reconstructed without educated people. The literacy rate among Afghan women is three to seven percent. Most Afghan refugee girls waste their time sitting at home. They have learned things they need for housekeeping, but they might not be good mothers capable of raising good and healthy children and of solving budget problems and other house problems. A way to solve this problem is to get women educated.

In Peshawar, one program which is doing this is the Afghan Women's Resource Center (AWRC), which was established Oct. 22, 1989. AWRC started a course to teach uneducated Afghan refugee women in Peshawar and camps. The course teaches knitting, reading the Qur'an, mathematics, basic education in Dari and Pushto, and health for one six-month semester.

The Afghan Women’s Resource Center’s course has succeeded. 180 students have completed this course during the five terms of the course, according to the manager of AWRC, Ms. Najia. AWRC has approximately 20 students in every class. AWRC accepts students aged 19 to 50, uneducated girls and housewives.

By opening more literacy courses, AWRC can give Afghan women a good future. "We have a lot of students who come to this course and demand a class two. They complete one semester and they want us to make an advanced semester for them too," Najia said. "People have the interest to study. We should make their wishes true by educating them." Freba, a 19-year-old graduate of this course said, "I would like to read and write. I would like to write letters to my family and read their letters, but I can’t."

AWRC’s course for uneducated women is the type of program which is most useful to Afghans.
A patriotic girl

EDITORIAL

By Suhaila Majid Jalil

It was June 1989. The annual examinations of Ummahat-ul-Mominin girls’ school were in progress. When the tenth class girls were taking the Dari final exam, one of the questions was to write a short article about Afghanistan. Zarghoona, one of the students of the tenth class, attempted the question which was about Afghanistan.

Zarghoona answered the questions so well that it seemed like she had spent all her life in Afghanistan. In fact, when Zarghoona left Afghanistan she was five years old and did not remember it. But, the feelings which she had about her country stimulated her to write about it, and the dreams which she had about her homeland were true.

This girl was not a common school girl, who just came to her class and played. She was much different from the rest of the girls of her school. Zarghoona was a patriotic girl and had very strong feelings about her country. She always wrote different articles about her homeland. She had a great desire to see Afghanistan in a peaceful condition. She had always expressed her deep and hearty feelings that she wanted to go to her country as soon as possible and rebuild her destroyed homeland.

When the examination finished, the school announced the results. Zarghoona got the first position in her class. When she said goodbye to her friends, she embraced all her friends. She was very sad at that moment, because she thought that she could not see her friends during the vacation. In fact she did not realize that she would not be able to see her friends forever.

The school closed for the summer vacation and all the girls went to their houses. Zarghoona also went to her house and showed her result sheet to her parents. Zarghoona’s parents were very happy, because she got the first position in her class, and they told her that they would accept anything she wanted.

As she knew that her parents always spent the summer in Afghanistan, she told her parents that she wanted to go with them. Her parents refused because of the bad situation of Afghanistan. Finally, she made her parents let her go with them, and her parents accepted.

They went to Kandahar province with a group of mujahideen. Zarghoona was very happy when she left Pakistan.

Within a few nights of her departure, in an area of Kandahar province, a mine exploded when their bus crossed the road. Zarghoona and many other people who were in the bus were killed. Her parents and few people were wounded.

Zarghoona, this great young girl, was born in Kandahar province in 1972. She was a good writer in Pushtu and Dari and had special merit in everything. Like most Afghans, Zarghoona also could not get her desire to see her country. She was one of the thousands of young girls who were killed by mines.

Mines are one of the millions of gifts of the Russians which still remain in different areas of Afghanistan. Mines will kill hundreds of innocent people like young Zarghoona unless organizations for mine clearing and awareness extend their help to Afghan people. In addition, Afghans who have been trained about mine clearing and awareness in Peshawar should teach and familiarize other Afghans with the problems of mines. Every Afghan knows something about mines, but they need to learn more. It is the duty of all Afghans to save our lives by clearing our country of mines.

A Message

POEM

By Saleha Ehsan

Freedom -- which cost us the blood of millions of young and old.
Oh Allah!
Finally 13 years of great effort by Afghans have shown results.
Every mother’s prayers, sighs, tears and wishes have borne fruit.
They can now see their dreams come true in their waking hours.

But how can they believe it
While people do not seem to have any feeling.
All the people are in torpor.
Why are the people not happy?
Why do they not understand the word “freedom”?

Such a beautiful word.
How pure!
How meaningful.
What a magnificent word it is.

How nice it would be if all the people welcomed their freedom with one voice.
How beautiful it would be if people planted flowers of happiness in the deserts of their wishes, together.

Why have the flowers changed into thorns?
For how long will this bloodshed and agony go on?
For how long will this bloodshed and agony go on?
For how long will the hand of despair choke the throat of happiness?
For how long?
HAZARBOOZ TRIBE

In a small yard an old woman with small braids in her hair (bafet), wearing long dress, is milking a cow.

Some children and young girls sit in a small room covered with a galeem and decorated with some pictures and brocaded papers on the walls. They are listening to their own song that they recorded at their uncle's engagement ceremony in six-speakers tape recorder.

In the second side of the room are some trunk, some mattresses and pillows. Shelves with boxes, teapots, saucers and cups on them are around the walls.

A young woman, wear long brocaded silk dress and cover her face with very big brocaded chader (veil), carrying her eight months baby, enters the room and after greeting sits in one side of the room.

She is a married woman of hazarbooz tribe. One of Afghanistan's tribe is hazarbooz with different custom. The hazarbooz tribe is from Nengahar province and speaks Pashto. Women cover face from other women in the family and has different engagement and marriage ceremony.

When a girl reaches 16, it is time to get engaged, said Bassgoll, a housewife. After the engagement, the girls cover their faces from their in-laws family and their relatives and friends, she added.

After some days of engagement the fiance with his brothers come to visit his in-laws family. He brings money, three outfit and fruit with him. He puts the money in the tray after drinking tea, she said. In the morning the bride's mother gives the gifts brought by fiance to her sisters, cousins and friends, she added.

After one year, they get married. The wedding ceremony is two days long, Bassgoll's daughter-in-laws said. All the guests stay in the bride house for a night and a day. In the afternoon the groom's family comes to take the bride, she added. The bride's friends put make up up on her under seven chader on them, when they finish putting make up, they give the bride a handkerchief to cover her face under the chader. During putting make up, some old women from the groom side make small braids her hire. (While the making small braids, they will be never able to see her face,) Bassgoll's daughter-in-law said.

When the groom family take the bride to her in-laws family, because she was covering her face from her in-laws and in the marriage ceremony she also cover her face, guests and groom's relatives loved to see the now comer of the family.

Therefore, for three time, they take her hand off of her face and shows to the quests, after three time, again she covers her face with handkerchief, she added.

At 1 p.m. of the second night is Nakah (Marriage contract: nakah is the religious part of the marriage, after nakah in Islamic religion, they become wife and husband.)

The bride family gives ten suits, a carpet or a namad (a kind of carpet made of camel wool, especially made in north part of Afghanistan), a sewing machina, an iron, a blanket, a thermos, a prayer-carpet, a table clock and a trunk as a trousseau, Bassgoll said.

The groom's family gives the jewelry. (The poorest family should give four golden rings and a mateka (a kind of jewelry that women put it in their forehead) for the bride,) Bassgoll said.

The groom's family gives a golden ring or a slaver necklace for the bride's sisters, cousins and her aunts and clothes for other relatives, she added. (After seven day of the marriage, the bride comes to her father's house and stay for two nights,) Bassgoll's daughter-in-law said. After two nights, her family give her new dress and put make up on her and with some different dishes send her back to her in-laws family, she added.

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(Those who married their cousins, it is not necessary for them to cover their faces from their in-laws,) Bassgoll said. (but) it depends on the girls (what they prefer,) she added.

Bassgoll's daughter-in-law point to the young woman, cover her face and mutters with her eight month baby and said, (She is my daughter-in-law, I told her lot that it is not important to cover your face, don't do it. But still she cover her face.)

An old woman enters the room, everybody stand and shake hand with her and invite her to sit, and Bassgoll's daughter-in-law continued, (It is shameful for girls to not cover their faces from their in-laws, people think that she is not a polite girl.)

Although, it is very shameful in hazarbooz tribe not to cover the face, (I don't like my self and my daughter-in-laws to cover their faces,) she said.

(May be some day it will be change and women can be talked and sit free in a house without any condition,) Bassgoll said.
FEATURES

Customs make people of Herat unique

FEATURE

By Belqees Marzia

Herati people have special customs that make them different from people of other provinces of Afghanistan.

Like other provinces of Afghanistan located in the west, Herat has dry weather, especially in the summer. It has 120 windy days every year. Because of this, most of the people squint and use eyeglasses. Squinting becomes their habit which makes them recognizable from other Afghan people.

Winter in Herat is dry and cold with some snow fall. Since there is a shortage of electricity, gas and wood a great majority of people use a sandally for heating. It is a type of short table with four legs. Herati people dig the floors of their rooms 40 cm in diameter 30 cm.

After they heat charcoal outside the rooms, they bring the charcoal and put it in the fire place, and then over the sandally. Usually they put mattresses around the sandally with big pillows to lay on. All family members sit on the mattresses and put their legs under the sandally and pull the quilt up to their shoulders and relax.

"The nice things about sandally are, first it is economical, second sitting around sandally is very comfortable and third it keeps all members of the family together," said Nafas, a former teacher in Herat.

During the winter, the people of Herat make special traditional foods besides other common Afghan foods. Gholor sheer and gholor turoosh are the most special Herati dishes that people make and eat during winter time. Gholor sheer is made of wheat, milk and sugar and gholor turoosh is made of wheat flour, yogurt and different spices.

In the fall, they make the dishes and then let them dry. After sifting they keep the dishes for winter. They usually eat gholor sheer for breakfast and gholor turoosh for lunch and dinner. They usually cook gholor turoosh with dried meat (landi) and butter oil.

Since the majority of vegetables and fruits are not available and are very expensive during winter, people gather large amounts of fruits and vegetables during summer and fall, after drying of fruits and vegetables they keep them for their winter consumption, eating dry fruits, especially nuts and baked seeds of squash, melon, watermelon and sunflowers for snacks is very common in Herat. During the winter after dinner they usually eat those seeds, while an elder member of family is telling folklore and historic stories.

Herati people also have customs for their weddings. Like other parts of Afghanistan, marriage take place by family arrangement. The boy’s family finds a girl and then they go to the girl’s family to propose the marriage.

If the girl’s parents agree with the match, they give a candy basket to the boy’s family, which is a sign of agreement. The basket contains a list of the things such as clothes, jewelry and the conditions for the marriage parties.

Whenever the families are ready, they will provide all the items of the list and discuss the date of wedding with the girl’s family. Mostly the boys can not see the girls before the wedding night. One night before the wedding, women from the boy’s family and close friends take some henna and candies to the girl’s house to put henna on the girl’s hands.

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The next day, both families (only ladies) take the girl to the hamaam (public bath) to wash her. They prepare a snack (usually fresh fruit or tea) for the guests in the hamaam and play music. They put the nekah dress, which is green, on the girl and take her to the boy’s home. This day is the wedding ceremony, which is usually takes place at night. As a custom the bride breaks four to five nuts under her shoes before she gets into her bedroom on the wedding night. It is believed to save the bride from evil eyes.

One or two days latter they arrange another party called Takht Jamee which only closed relatives and friends will be invited. All guests bring some present for bride and groom. This is the last party of the wedding ceremony.

Delivery of a baby boy is probably the best news for all Herati women in their life. If the baby is a boy the entire family will celebrate his birth day.
Herati customs

When he reaches six days old then the family will arrange a party which is called Shab-i-Shash (sixth-night). The parents usually name the boy at this party. In this day the mother also goes to the hamaam with all female members of the family.

Due to development of modern life, their business and 14 years war Herati people have to adapted some of their customs. Even so Heratis have maintained a unique set of customs.

Takht-Jami:
A n A f g h a n c u s t o m f o r m a r r i a g e

FEATURE

By Salcha Ehsan

After greeting each other in a crowded party, all of the guests look around the corners of the room to find the bride. A young woman loudly says, "The bride is coming -- she is on the stairs," and then she sits in her place to wait to see the bride.

"Mashallah," (well done!), "how beautiful, how nice," the guests say when the bride enters the room. Then everybody stands and greets the bride.

The bride is wearing brocade clothes with beautiful jewelry. She hides her face shyly from the other women, but smiles to herself. When she sits, everybody throws confetti and sweets on her.

This party is called Takht-Jami and is a special party held three to seven days after a wedding. This day is held on Friday, and the relatives and friends of the bride and groom gather to celebrate the day of Takht-Jami. The guests bring clothes, money, jewelry, house equipment and many other things for the bride, which they give to the groom's parents. Also all the guests bring expensive or cheap gifts for the bride, such as golden rings, necklaces, bangles and earrings; clothes; shoes; money; dishes; flowers and so on.

Some families invite people for lunch, but others prepare an afternoon tea for their guests. After having lunch or tea, the young girls dance in front of the bride. In Afghan villages women sing songs and play drums. When the girls dance, the other guests throw money on them.

Ashak

RECIPE

By Mariam Ehsan

Afghan people do not eat this food every day, but occasionally they prepare this delicious food, especially for their dear guests.

To prepare ashak, use these ingredients:

Cake flour 1 kg
Eggs 2
Leeks (Gandana) 2 kg
Oil 1.5 kg
Minced meat 1 kg
Onion 0.5 kg
Tomatoes 0.5 kg
Yoghurt 1 kg

Water as needed
Garlic, red and black pepper to taste
Dry and fresh spearmint

First make a hard paste of cake flour with water, 0.5 tablespoon salt and 2 eggs. Cut the leeks into small pieces. Pour three tablespoons of oil and a little more into a large pan. Then put the leeks into the oil just for a while. Then take it away from the heat.

Smooth the paste by a spaghetti machine or a special rolling pin for making smooth paste (ashgaz). Then cut the smooth paste by the mouth of a glass and put one full tablespoon of leeks into each piece. Then close each one of them like a pocket and put them on a plate.

Pour yoghurt into a piece of cotton cloth and let it all the water of the yoghurt drip out so the yoghurt becomes chaka (yoghurt without water). Pour 10 to 15 tablespoons of oil into a large pan and slice four onions into it. Fry the onions for five minutes and then add the tomatoes and garlic and fry the mixture for three minutes. Then pour two cups of water and also add 1 kg minced meat, salt, pepper and other spices to taste. Cook the mixture until sauce gets thick.

Pour some water into a large dish and put it on the fire to boil. Then put the ashaks into this boiled water for 10 minutes. You can also cook the ashaks in oil, but just for one minute.

After 10 minutes take out the chaka from the cotton cloth and put it into a pan. Then add garlic, a little salt and dry spearmint and mix them. Then smooth this mix on plates and put the ashaks onto it. Pour the mix on the ashaks and then pour the sauce that you made before on the ashaks. For appearance and taste put fresh or dry spearmint, black and red pepper to taste on them.

Mmmmm! It smells so delicious, let's eat it.