

The Silk Way Weekly

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Victims

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Barchi's girls; Living In The Hell

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A Story of Fear and Hatred

A File on Taliban Violence on Women and Fear of Taliban From Women

Editorial

The anti-feminist identity of the Taliban, rooted in the three dominant cultures of the Pashtun society, namely «extreme Islamism based on the reading of the Deobandi school», «Pashtunwali regulations» and «Pan-Pashtunism-revival of political power and ethnic culture», caused that in the first period of this group's rule, women were deprived of their basic rights and in its intensified form, experienced terrible violence such as stoning, whipping, imprisonment, rape and execution. At the same time, in the second round of Taliban government, Taliban's supporters at the regional and extra-regional levels are whitening the group, while the anti-feminist identity of Taliban has overcome all the realities and exerting violence against women by Taliban is even harsher than the first round of the rule of Taliban. In this growing trend over the past two years, Taliban officials have exerted different forms of violence against women under the name of Islam and have left no stone unturned to suppress women in Afghanistan. Taliban's fighters have tried a large number of women based on the fetwas of Hebatullah Akhondzada without going through the legal

processes. There are also several reports by credible media outlets that Taliban fighters have shot killed a number of young women and their bodies have been mutilated with knives and gun rods and then have abandoned them on the allies, in the holes and deserts.

In line with their personal persuasion, by denying women of their basic rights, Taliban have recently suppressed and kidnapped young women and girls in Dashte Barchi, west of Kabul, in order to humiliate them based on their religion and ethnicity. Based on UNAMA's latest report, Taliban have mainly arrested young women and girls from Barchi, an area which most of its inhabitants are Hazara ethnic group, and from Khiarkhaana, an area which the majority of its inhabitants are Tajik ethnic group.

Experts believe the main reason behind the violent suppression of women in Dashte Barchi by Taliban shows their fear of women and girls; As much as Taliban hate Hazara women and girls, they fear them as much. Kidnapping Barchi girls is not only aimed to suppress women but they also want to weaken Hazaras resistance against Taliban; because Taliban have a

bloody and dark background in confronting Hazaras; from massacring Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif to mass killing them in Daikondi; from killing Abdolali Mazari to destroying Buddha Statues of Bamyan. Taliban take all necessary measures to suppress Hazaras in order to neutralize their resistance, but abducting Hazara's women and girls under the pretext of inappropriate

ate hejab will just fuel the hatred of Hazaras against Taliban. As Ayatullah Waez-zadadeh Behsoodi clearly mentioned in his speech on Taliban arresting and suppressing Hazara women and girls, this is something that can threaten the survival of the Taliban. «You attacked Hazara's honor.» He stated.



Takfir (Excommunication) and Kidnapping; A Report on Terrible Behavior of Taliban with Girls

By: **Mohammad Anwar Rahimi**
Translated by: **Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie**

Taliban's officials of Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice at the beginning of 2024 started arresting, kidnapping and torturing a number of girls from Dssht e Barchi, West of Kabul.

Local sources reported to the Silk Way Weekly that on June 13, 2023 the Taliban fighters arrested women and girls in Pule Sorkh, Kota e Sangi, Qala e Naw and Shahrak e Ettifaq of Dashte Barchi charging them with not observing Taliban's dress code. Local sources reported to SWW that Taliban fighters, After humiliation, insults and physical violence, forced women and girls into Ranger military vehicles while they were on streets, or were in educational

centers, stores, and markets and took them to unidentified locations.

Saleh (fake name), a Barchi resident told to SWW that I saw one day the Taliban fighters forcing two girls to get into their vehicle and they told the third girl who resisted against Taliban, "Shamels! Get in the car." He further added that they finally hit her with the barrel of the gun to get into the car. First I did not realize Taliban were arresting them for not observing the dress code; because they were wearing long skirts; two of them were wearing large black veils, and the other one was wearing a green veil. Taliban kept shouting on them, "Whore, get in the car!"

A resident of Pul e Khoshk of Dashte Barchi who did not want to be mentioned his name in the report due to security risks, told to SWW that "I was at Barchi gas sta-

tion when a Taliban Ranger arrived'. One of the Taliban get off the Ranger and told four girls standing beside the street; get into the car quickly! When the girls resisted, four more Taliban fighters got off the car and forced the girls into the car and one of them forced the girls to get into the car at gunpoint. He told them, "Whore, get into the car!". It seemed the girls had just returned from an educational center and they were covered, they were wearing overcoats in addition to wearing veils and coats.

A cartsman of Barchi said, "Taliban also arrested under age girls. One day, I assume it was on June 5th, 2023, when some Taliban fighters were forcing a teenager girl into a vehicle accusing her of not observing the dress code." At this moment, an elderly man told them the girl had hejab and "why do you intimidate her?" Then many people gathered in the area and objected the Taliban measures; but the four members of the Taliban in the area beaten up the protestors. Soon another Taliban's ranger arrived and tens of Taliban fighters scattered the people with whips, butt stocks and batons and took the girl to an identified place.

Local sources in west Kabul confirmed that detention of women and girls by Taliban continued in coming days and several vehicles were allocated for carrying the assault on women and girls in west of Kabul and Taliban carried out the crack down on women and girls with a brutal manner along with insulting, linguistic humiliation and physical violence. "We did it to prevent vice and inappropriate hejba", Abdul Ghafar Faruq the spokesperson for Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of said.

A Selective And Ethnic Based Approach to Humiliate Hazaras

Wide spread arrests of Hazara women

and girls by Taliban intrigued the idea Taliban pursued humiliation of Hazaras under the pretext of fighting with inappropriate hejab. Mohammad Mohaqeq the leader of The Islamic Unity Party of the people of Afghanistan reacting on Hazaras women and girls detention posted on his Facebook account stating "Kidnapping girls in Kabul and arresting them for inappropriate hejab is selective and is a pretext to humiliate and insult a specific religious and ethnic group in Afghanistan."

Local sources in West Kabul confirming the selective nature of arresting Hazara women and girls told to SWW that on January 1, 2024 and the coming days Taliban officials from Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Taliban arrested a number of Hazara women and girls were arrested after being beaten, racial and religious insult and then were humiliated and tortured in detention centers too.

Local sources reported to SWW that Taliban fighters arrested Hazara women and girls although they observed hejab and Taliban insulted them on the streets, allies and stores and educational centers while arresting them, they were accused of lack of appropriate hejab, not wearing veil and black mask.

These sources also confirmed that in addition to arresting women and girls, Taliban had beaten them and if any men asked Taliban that they shall not arrest Hazaras women and girls prior to informing their families, Taliban would have insulted them religiously and honorably."

Ahmad-alias - said Taliban beat women and girls before arresting them and then forced them into a car and took them to an identified location.



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Takfir (Excommunication) and Kidnapping; A Report on Terrible Behavior of Taliban with Girls



"In nanwaei (bakery) station when Taliban wanted to arrested a number of women and girls, some local men mediated and told Taliban these women and girls have observed dress code and why do you arrest them?", one of the Taliban fighters told them, "You are dishonored people; your women and girls are whores. If you are not unbelievers, and had honor, you should have stopped your whores."

One of the witnesses who did not want his name to be mentioned said that Taliban forced women and girls observing hejab and took them and after they psychologically and sexually were tortured, then Taliban called their male family members and told them, "Come and take your whores!". He added that "I was near police district 13 and saw Taliban were arresting women and girls with force. Not for observing hejab; Taliban deliberately arrest Hazara women and girls to insult and humiliate Hazaras."

Local sources told to us a number of women and girls were arrested on mother's day in Kabul while they were buying gifts for their mothers. An eyewitness told to SWW that "Taliban aimed at humiliating and insulting Hazaras." Adding that "I saw myself Taliban arrested women and girls based on false charges as lack of chaperon, lack of wearing a mask, insulting Taliban leaders and other baseless charges in order to demoralize our people."

A male student who did not want his name to be mentioned stated that "I had gone out for buying goods from Barchi market. When I came out of the market, I saw the Taliban forcing the girls to get into the car." He stated. He added that "all the girls arrested by Taliban were wearing hejab, they had veil and appropriate black clothes. Taliban beaten up women and girls and forced them to get into the car with guns and whips. If someone opposed the Taliban decision, Taliban insulted religiously and ethnically them and scattered them with guns and whips."

The videos sent by Barchi residents to the Silk Way Weekly, show all arrested women and girls are wearing appropriate clothes, black veils and long dresses. However, Taliban had told to media these wom-

en were not wearing an appropriate hejab.

The UN Expert Group which Richard Bennet is also a member of the group, in a report published on February 2, 2024, stated that: "Arresting women and girls due to bad hejab started from west of Kabul which most of its residents are Hazaras



and then it was extended to other parts of Kabul and provinces."

According to the UN Expert group's report, most of these women observed complete hejab -but were charged with either observing no hejab or inappropriate hejab, and arrested from public spaces including educational centers, markets, streets and even from alleys. The UN Experts concluded Taliban's leaders to be accountable on these measures.

Zabihullah Mujahid reacting to the UN report said criticizing implementation of religious ruling is not tolerable and is considered as insulting the people. In another interview, Mujahid said the actions of officials of the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice was according to the Islamic sharia saying that "Women's hejab, accompany of chaperon, work place conditions according to sharia and education of women and implementing sharia rulings by the courts, prevention of religious and thought in the society are parts of the duties of an accountable Islamic government."

After retaking the power in Afghanistan, Taliban resumed restrictions on women across the country and the group has repeatedly arrested women and girls from different provinces. However, Taliban have unprecedentedly arrested Hazara women from the public spaces and tortured them in the new round of their crackdown on women.

Mohammad Faqir Mohammadi Deputy Minister for the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in an interview with Tolo news on January 24, 2023 said "Alhamddu lillah hejab is neither the rule of the Islamic Emirate nor the rule of the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. It is a rule set by Allah. People of Afghanistan want hejab to be observed in a complete manner. In terms of hejab, no body has complained to say we don't want it."

Abduction and arresting women with the purpose of extortion

Findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that Taliban have sentenced and tortured thousands of young women and girls from west of Kabul. A number of these women and girls have been released after psychological tortures and sexual harassment with the mediation of clerics and influential people paying money to Taliban, providing written commitment, providing property documents, paying about 150-250 thousand afis, and avoid giving an interview with media on tortures they have experienced in the Taliban detention centers and prisons.

Local sources told to SWW that Taliban

after torturing women and girls in security districts checked their Facebook accounts, WhatsApp, Imo and other social media accounts of them if they had posted against Taliban or had shared they were detained by Taliban they would have been moved into Pule Charkhi prison and if they had not done so, Taliban would have contact-

ed their families and told them firstly; they shall provide a written commitment letter to the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice; Secondly; they shall tell nothing to media and wear veil and Thirdly; they shall pay a specific amount of money as punishment to the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. The source added that measures of the families of those women and girls moved to Pule Charkhi, have been useless and there is no information about the loved ones yet.

Karima-allias, whose sister was arrested and tortured by Taliban, said "My sister was detained alongside of her coworker from office on June 8, and they were detained on the way home. When my father and brother suspected that Taliban may have detained my sister, they went to police district of Taliban and Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice told them there were no people with such identifications at their detention centers." Then her father went to the police district along with some local influentials and religious scholars and chief of police district says his daughter is there; but she will not be released for two days. After two days, they received a call from the police district and they were told to pay 160,000 afis in addition to providing a written commitment to the police district and two local influential people also shall guarantee that she will observe Taliban's dress code. "When my sister came home she was in a bad psychological situation and the signs of torture were seen on all parts of her body. She did not talk for two days. Taliban had tortured her just for wearing white shoes." Karima added Taliban in addition to physically and mentally torturing my sister had insulted her religiously and ethnically. "When we were tortured and Taliban whipped and slashed us, they also religiously and racially insulted us. They said Hazaras were nonbelievers and it is legitimate to kill them. You should become Muslims. Taliban told us do prayers to see how you perform prayers." She said. Karima added after passing several days from releasing my sister, she does not feel psychologically and mentally well.

Local sources say arresting women may have decreased in October and November but not stopped. They also added that in addition to arresting women and girls, Taliban check smart phones of young men in the west of Kabul and if there is contact numbers of women saved on their mobiles, or sent a message to their friends, posted on Facebook, there are women photos on their phones or there are music and music videos, then they will be detained by Taliban.



Barchi's girls; Living In The Hell

Author: Adela Azin

Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

The lights of literature associations have been turned off over two years and the light of the investigation, shining from the barrel of the Taliban's guns, has replaced them. It is concerned may a girl write a ghazal, may a lover fall in love with a loved one, may someone read the glorious novel of the "Cholera Years" or may lovers dance for the last time imitating the sad scene of the sinking of the Titanic. This is the nightmare of Kabul, especially of Barchi.

But it is not the whole story. Barchi's women and girls are silently resisting against all these inequalities in the middle of terror and tyranny. They read, write, sing and have rosy wishes for the life. Literally, their wishes may perish in the blink of an eye.



Shekardokht Ehsan, a Barchi's girl who has been forced to stay at home, has not surrendered yet. She continues her career as calm and elegant as a candle does. She sings in her solitude and sings for her imaginary fans as she did while she shined at Daneshju Poetry Center and an active member of Literary Association in the west of Kabul. She wants to work harder; it is what a graduate of Persian language and literature expects from herself: "I had said I would keep silent after this / But sad midnight stories contradict it."

Rubaba Ahmadi couldn't continue her education beyond sixth grade but she is helping girls abandoned from school. She manages a handcraft workshop and teaches embroidery, knitting, sewing and ribbon embroidery to the girls. When Rubaba's daughter were abandoned from education she decided to teach the girls abandoned from school. She said her workshop was a place where girls not only learnt new skills but coped with boredom caused by staying at home.

Our next star is Waheda Ramuz, she always tries to hide her dyed hair from the people around her. Being busy with herself, and hiding herself from the people around her, is what her job requires her to do. It is about one year she has started online business; producing and selling cloth hand



bag and shoulder bag. She says she is very busy these days, "I am happy to have found meaning for my life." I receive orders from different people and places.

While talking with us, Waheda looked nervous but when she spoke, I was comforted. When Taliban banned girls from higher education, she was a second-year chemical engineering student at Kabul Polytechnic University. Waheda is one of the girls who have been affected by the Taliban ban on girls' education. She only stayed for three months at home and then started her online business and could maintain her independence and also support her family.

She wants to be a successful businesswoman in 5 years and works hard to realize her dreams. She has changed her sister's room and her own room to workshop and each day, she is busy working on designing and sewing the hand bags. Waheda said she enjoyed her work. "I have no financial concerns, and the comfort I enjoy from working counts more for me than the financial independence." She is happy that she can help girls deprived of education.

Fatema Rashedi is manager of an educational center. She looks determined, beautiful and humble. Though many challenges face her, she continuous her career in the face of challenges. She organizes meetings, new classes, takes



exams and provides information to the customers. She works from early in the morning to late in the night.

Working with educational centers for several years, she was enough experienced to open an educational center along with some other colleagues to support girls deprived of education. The Taliban's march to the west of Kabul, and the attacks on women and extraordinary arrests of them, disappointed Rahsedi and caused her to close the educational center until the further notice.

In a time Barchi's homes are changed to an open prison to women, women activists like Fatema, Rubaba and Rashedi are inspiring the girls and boost social esteem and confidence. Rasheda says "though women have been excluded, when the

families see women in educational and managerial roles, it gives them hope for the future."

Khadija is a carpet weaver. She married 14 years ago and had come from Bamyan to Kabul and has worked as a carpet weaver since then. What she has earned is few incomes, back disk and declining eye sight. Doctors told her to changer job. Then she started weaving wool and taught her sister-in-law and twin daughters how to do it. Benazir is 18 and her twin daughters are 11.



Zarmina Khateri was happy because she was graduated but banning women from work by Taliban denied her an opportunity to work. She had learned painting beside studying at the university and it could help her to make a living. She opened a painting gallery about one year ago and she has been very successful in her career as a painter. She had about 80 painting students, most of them girls deprived of education, and her tablets have also been put on exhibition.

Taliban's restrictions have impacted Zarmina's business in Dasht e Barchi too. Out of 80 students only 20 students are left. Othe women have closed their galleries and it is a sign of disappointment for Zarmina. She participated in an exhibition in 2004 to exhibit her works. But Taliban tore into pieces two precious paintings of her and she brought home the tablets torn into pieces instead of being encouraged by the authorities.

What makes her happy is the occasional orders she receives on father's day, mother's day, teacher's day and alike. She says "Currently people only think about bread and water and art is their last option or they may likely does not think about it at all." However, in a dark period like what Afghanistan experiences now, it is art that gives hope and light to Zarmina. Of course, a bit silence.



I reach Resalat wally. It is one of the most crowded areas in west of Kabul. At the entrance of this ally, there are nearly 50 sewing shops, goldsmiths and handicrafts. Masuma was grade 8th when the Taliban banned girls above 6th grade from school. She has come from Malistan district, Ghazni, to work along her sisters. She has a sewing shop and lives independently from her tow sisters. She is satisfied with what she earns but she still dreams to become a teacher.

Bahara Ahmadi is a miniature and



calligrapher. She is a little hopeful about the future; she is banned from education but may get scholarship. She likes to study psychology. However, she is concerned about the future. Because the number of the girl students has dramatically dropped at the gallery where she works.



Gul Begum (fake name) swings her past and future together with a needle. She feels less energized in the mornings. She was 14 when she married. She has four children now. Her first work was a hand embroidered hat that she gave to her husband. After that their family has counted a lot on her income. She earns about 15,000afs. She pays part of the family expense, school fees and clothing of their children.

Sanam's story is a bit different and



bitter. She has studied midwifery and she works as a saleswoman. She was just graduated from university after the Taliban takeover. She could not start her internship due to economic problems. Sanam needed 3,000afs to pay the hospital for her internship. However, she started working as a saleswoman. She is paid 5,000 a month. She hopes to have her own storefront one day.

This book ends by recounting the life story of Sanam Najafizada. The place of many Barchi girls is empty in this report. The girls who opened study rooms and when Taliban resumed power, these girls lost their jobs, those girls who did not accept to have an interview, hairdressers who continue their work secretly and the women's rights protestors who are imprisoned in their hideouts.

Centralized Repressions; Hidden Resistances (Overview of Efforts and Struggles of Barchi Girls)



By: Hafiz
Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

1. A brief Account of the General Situation
«A flat plain, unmarked and sunburnt,
Without a blade of grass or sign of
neighborhood,
Nothing to eat and no place to sit.
Despite all this, on the surface of their
heart,
A huge crowd has gathered.
A million eyes, a million boots in line,
Without any emotion on their faces,
they are waiting for a sign.»
(W. H. Oden)

As much as it is concerned with the life of women, in general and briefly, the life of Afghan women under Taliban is the same «flat plain» mentioned in the verse of Oden. Oden was probably talking about the lost moral perspective of wartime. As the lined and long boots of the war had left nothing to live, the plains were empty, unmarked, sunburned and dry. But on the barren expanse of the same empty plains, groups of groups, millions of eyes and millions of boots were standing without any sense of shame and honor, waiting for a sign and an order to empty another place of life. In Afghanistan, under the Taliban rule, women have been completely excluded from the social life and deprived of their equal rights with men. From a feminist perspective,

these deserts that are the scene of Taliban gallop, are totally dried up and unmarked and sunburned. It is where all emotions and green values of women are levelled to the earth under the boots of Taliban. There is a long line of guns and Taliban as far as the eye can see, and all of these Taliban, armed to the teeth, are waiting for a new sign where to close the door on the women and where to see a hair of the women's clothes and hijab. Then there is gun, boot and butt stock. Work, recreation, dance, singing, loving, trip, education, driving and ... are all banned on women.

2. The Lost Days of Dashte Barchi

In the flat plain of Taliban, there were also villages which did not change much after they took over Afghanistan again. In many areas where Pashtuns live, from the provinces to the mud houses of Kabul, there were men who did not allow their women to work, go to school, university and educational centers. Optional coverage, was not an issue for them from the beginning, and that's why they did not challenge the new restrictions of Taliban against women. Because, the same culture of dominance and suppression existed there and women, deprived of education and work, never went out with their faces uncovered. In many Pashtun families, there was no concern about sports, running, cinema and music for women.



But Barchi was totally different. The gender war was diminishing gradually in Barchi, and the tasks were allocated to the people based on their talent and capacity and not their gender. It did not count if you were a boy or a girl or you were a man or woman, as long as you had the talent and facilities for sports, the talent and facilities for studying, the talent and facilities for music or any other work, you could work according to your desire and facilities. But presence of Taliban in Barchi disrupted all these modern values. As in a morning when you wake up and see that it is frozen everywhere; Taliban took in the same way Barchi to the frozen and cold season. Maybe it is not that gloomy for the Taliban who had not lived in Barchi and for those Pashtuns who had lived at the suburbs with the same dominant culture of oppression and dominance, but for those who had seen these differences and lived them, that painful growth of poplar trees which now each of which passes through the dry seasons is very sad.

3. Centralized Repressions; Hidden Resistances

New reports show Taliban are deeply divided on governance policies. They have difference nearly on all of issues. Contrary to this, they share a common goal, at least they show they all agree on this policy; it is suppression and exclusion of women.

For more than two years, the Taliban have been single-minded and focused on suppressing women. But women have also had hidden but exemplary resistance at the height of domination and oppression. One of the various types of resistance is the secret education of the girls in Kabul.

After the wave of arrests and baseless abducting of young women and girls by Taliban in Dashte Barchi, many girls could not go to educational centers. Even, they could not go out of home to the bakery in the alley. These same girls who were born in Barchi, or at least from wherever they came from, had experienced and understood the different face of Barchi. A general self-awareness had been found in Barchi and people understood that they were going the right way. But on the same days when the wave of women's arrests started and the courses were completely empty of their presence, many of the same girls who

understood Barchi's different face, started their hidden resistance on the same days. They understood the growth of the poplars in the garden, which were now going through dry seasons, and as such they did not leave the scene completely deserted and empty.

Perhaps it is very infuriating for the Taliban, who want to deprive girls of education at any cost, and very sad for those who understand so much passion, effort and struggle, that the young and teenage girls hide in a corner, in a room, with fear and trembling to study. They used to gather in tight and cold places without electricity or heating and studied a new foreign language. They knew that lonely women are cold at the beginning of the season, but they greeted the warm sky of tomorrow from the underground of that cold winter.

Bakht Bigum Haidari, one the girls afraid of going to the educational center alongside her female classmates, was studying at the basement of their house. «When suddenly all girls were not allowed to go to educational centers to study, we did not leave the scene to Taliban.» She said. «It is true we are in danger, but as Taliban do not want us to study and be educated, we shall do it with strong determination.» She added.

At the same time, many girls started home education and concealed resistance in Dashte Barchi. It was a decision decided solely by the girls. And no institution supported and managed it. Without knowing about each other's plans, the girls were proceeding in a parallel program and struggled for the future of a forbidden life.

In these days that our water goes to the neighboring countries, our mines are looted, the terrorists are further coordinated and replaced in Afghanistan, and all women are forced to stay at home and all young and educated generation of Afghanistan leave the country, yet women and girls in west of Kabul have not left the scene and they gather under their basement, hidden and trembling, unemployed, but have plans and hopes for the future children of Afghanistan.

It is while Taliban in a «mission of find and hit» look for new pretexts to further restrict women and girls. Look at the women alone at the beginning of the cold season!

Barchi Girls; Spacelessness Is Like A Revelation

By: Rohollah Kazemi, PhD in Islamic Philosophy
Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

House, alley, street, city, school, university, shop, educational center, beauty salon, workshop, clinic, hospital, mosque, hotel, cinema, motorcycle, bus, etc., all these are examples of "space". come to number I can even talk about happiness, sadness, hope, despair, passivity, activity and in general about emotions and sensual qualities, as an inner and subjective space. Anyhow, man can't step out of space, he is thrown from one space to another space, and in fact, from an experience to another experience and goes through from one place to another place. They are born in a specific space, and live-in specific place and die in a specific place. In each space, the subject enters into a certain relationship with himself, the other, and the space itself, which the other space does not have, and each space gives him a specific territory for his activity and relationship. Therefore, the subject either is and exists, so it is necessarily located in a space, but if it is not located in any space, or if it is cut off from the majority of spaces and is rejected in something as a void, it basically does not exist.

This arrangement reaches as to an answer if we ask what is the space for a subject? We should say "space" shows the territory of his "Being" and "becoming". Being and becoming actually occurs in a space and occupy an area, and thus, the subject experiences expansion and contraction, existence and non-existence according to the amount of multiple and wide or singular and narrow space. In this way and in a sense, the subject becomes the same with the space he owns or throws himself into; because it is only the space that makes the subject to appear and accepts it subjectivity. On the other hand, subject has only "freedom" in "space"; Because freedom depends on experience and practice of possibilities and as mentioned earlier, space is not empty. Space is the interplanetary of an experience and possibility and attachment to something. It is a space that reveals the possibilities and we experience different possibilities and relationships.

Though space is considered as a possibility itself, it creates many other possibilities within itself.

On the other hand, Generally, transformation in the nature of a space, execution of the space, leads to the execution of

subject. For example, when a space is categorized, with the concept of gender, and therefore, a subject is rejected from, for example, a political space and thrown away as an object, it is the subject itself that is divided, not that a subject (woman) is expelled from the space and a subject (man) takes its place. Because the subject has no gender and therefore cannot be divided with itself, but it is split in two, takes a gap and collapses in its own abyss. Every limitation in the human world is a predicate that includes everyone, and the subject who thinks he is free and outside of it, is actually delusional. But driving the subject out of a space changes the nature of the space itself and gives it another definition. Therefore, the distribution and allocation of political, social, educational, etc. spaces, before the execution of the subject, is originally an act to negate the space and not recognize it.

Any limitation in human world is a process encompasses anyone and the subject releases itself and consider itself out of such limitation, in fact, it is illusioned. But expelling the subject from a space, changes the nature of the space, and provides a new definition of it. Therefore, the distribution and allocation of political, social, educational, etc. spaces, before the execution of the subject, is originally an act to negate the space and not recognize it. In another sense, by negating the subject or narrowing and depriving a space, as much as the space changes in its nature, the subject is also limited and transformed. It means that a type of dialectic will remain between the space and the subject for ever; the subject is able to change the nature of the space or open a new space, as space also may change to a revelation to the subject and leads it to a new discovery of itself and its relationship with other relationships.

From the perspective of this arrangement, I would like to describe the position of a subject who is missing all its spaces; but it reaches to a revelation instead of mourning and being disappointed.

For more than two years now, Afghan women and girls have lost almost all of their space for activity. Women, especially the fighting women and girls of Dasht Barchi, live in the midst of many impossibilities: the impossibility of education, training, work, business, music, art, etc. In fact, all the spaces and doors of life have been closed to women and girls of an impossible degree. Even the daily activities have been stopped for them and there is no



shelter left for them; And therefore, they have been thrown to the zero point of life. Dasht Barchi girls have lost all "spaces" they had and were proud of them including spaces for studying, writing, and creating: They are arrested in the streets, they are kidnapped in the alleys of Barchi and Kabul, they are surrounded, they are rejected from education classes, they are expelled from school and university, they do not have a place to work and a job, etc. They don't have any "space": no political space, no union space, no social space, no work space, and no academic space. It is really to live while having no space and every time it becomes suffocating. And Afghan women and girls continue living when their life is a living hell.

Amidst all these impossibilities, but Barchi girls are determined to create a "space". They have changed impossibilities to creativity in these dark days.

It is true that they search for a crypt day and night to create space; A small crypt for work, an invisible crypt for art and painting, an invisible crypt for learning, a hidden space for writing poetry, a mangrove cave for burning and building, a small hole for writing and sewing, an invisible nest for sadness and a silent hut for hope.

Now, these crypts and holes show the space of Barchi women and girls; Very small, silent and hidden. Except for Barchi girls, no one knows what commotion is going on inside these silent crypts; But they want to make space out of these crypts and create a space to live in these tombs. However, a metamorphosis worthy of reflection occurs at the heart of this exclusion and confinement, and that is the emergence of a crypt instead of all other spaces;

In fact, all the spaces are condensed into one space, and whatever happens in a specific and separate space, must be done here in this space. The rejected woman of Kabul and the outcast girl of Barchi actually reach a development; She turns the small space of her house, her invisible safe, into a city, street, alley, university, workshop, school, etc. and she has to experience everything in this crypt.

The problem is the conflict between two radical forces: The conflict of somebody who has no understanding of the space, but owns all of the space, without knowing what to do with a pace and its possibilities, except emptying the space and the impu-

riety of space itself, with the one who understands the space but no space is left for her. One occupies the space; but inherently remains annihilated with it, the other one is excluded from the space, but reproduce it in another face.

What we see in the political-historical aspect of the story is the conflict between the ruling system and the people, the battle between the ruling apparatuses and the civil fighters. Though this conflict carries ethnic confrontations (suppression of Hazaras) and gender confrontations (patriarchy). Indeed, these confrontations, in the perspective of historical and cultural changes, is also rooted in the conflict between the values of the traditional world and modern values; of course, a tradition which has nurtured in the ethnic, racial, and tribal traditions and within political, historical and social relations and it has emerged in each period in a special way. It can't be discussed here in details; But one should not understand the issues without mentioning the foundations. The problem is that the forces and apparatuses of the government continue to suppress women's civil struggles - and this pushes the rift and distance between the people, especially women, and the government to its final limits - but from that point of view, women and girls have a turn and creativity. They arrive and welcome a metamorphosis.

The new predicate that they discover, that is, the density, transformation and representation of all spaces in one space, the representation of all city spaces in one house, should not be considered simply as a forced retreat from settling in urban spaces and therefore bound and static, but rather a departure to face a new confrontation and new understanding of space should be known. This welcome brings a new revelation and understanding of space and teaches us a new way to deal with crisis and blockage.

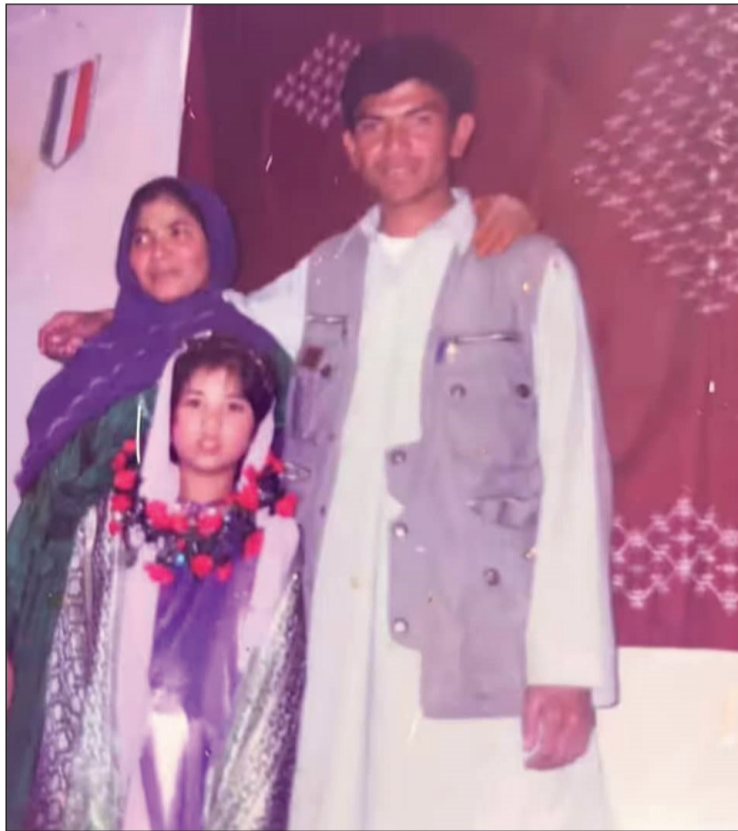
The Silk Way Weekly, has prepared reports of this exclusion, creativity, and resistance of the wills with the impossible, with the evils of a villain

and rogue regime. These reports are simple, but they have deep meanings, they are individual experiences, but they are left to the nature and manner of collective action. They should be read as partial lines of a general structure and collective efforts crystallized in individual action.



MAHTAB;

A Woman Who Gave Birth at 12



By: Adela Azin
Translated by: Mohamamd Sakhi Rezaie

She has recently disclosed mysteries of her life and has talked about violence she has experienced in her life. She went to Iran due to threats she faced in Afghanistan by Taliban and her husband's family, and makes a living working as a tailor in Iran. Mahtab Eftekhari, a female journalist and women's rights protestor against Taliban's policies on Afghan women, lives in a rental house along with some other women protestors. She suffers from heart disease and back pain. But she must work to afford her life as a female refugee in Iran. Mahtab said when she separated from her husband, Taliban gave the guardian of the children to their father. Her husband wants to marry her child daughter, Zahra, with Mahtab's nephew to prevent escaping his children from home. Zahra, 13, paints as a hobby, and completed 6th grade last year and she is deprived of education after sixth grade by the Taliban verdict.

Mahtab Eftekhari was 10 when she was forced to marry. Her father passed when she was 1 year old and she started carpet weaving when she was 4. At 10, she was a skilled carper weaver and she also went to school. "I was happy because I could go to school though I was weaving carpet." She states.

Mahtab was one of the top students in her class and wished to work as an announce in a visual media. This made her to practice speaking in front of a mirror. When graduated from grade 3, her mother and aunt told her they shall go to Helmand province

to attend her elder brother's wedding. Although, she did not like it, but she finally agreed, because it was a good idea, because she was free for some days and did not need to weave carpet. When she arrived in Helmand, she faced a young violent man and her family members told her that this man was her husband. "He is your husband and you should accept him." They told her. She discovered later that as her brother did not have money, he had exchanged her with his wife for his cousin. After that, Mahtab, 10, had to live with a violent young man under the same roof and experienced hardships which were beyond her capacity. Whenever she asked her father and mother-in-law, to help her and send her to her mother's home, they only beaten up her.

Mahtab was pregnant after one year of forced marriage and then her husband's family brought her to Kabul and she gave birth to a baby girl when she was 12. Her child was a toddler with disability. Then she gave birth to two baby girls and both of them died due to illness. Mahtab said she did not have healthy infants for being underage and lack of taking enough nutrition when she was pregnant and as her infants were baby girls, her husband's family did not take them to doctor for treatment. "When you give birth to a baby boy then we will take you to a doctor." They told her.

Mahtab, after giving birth to her fourth baby girl, escaped from her husband's home to Kabul in order to take care of her child and save her life. Mahtab's father and mother law came from Helmand to Kabul to take

her back home; but she was enough brave now and said she wanted to stay in Kabul because she had experienced too much domestic violence in Helmand. Consequently, her husband decided to stay in Kaul with her. After passing several years, her son, Abulfazl, was born. At this time, Mahtab was 23 and to achieve financial independence, she started working as a tailor and hair dresser. Although, she loved to continue her education, she supported her daughter, Zahra, to study. Mahtab only could buy books, especially books on human rights, in order to be more aware of their rights and protect them in a better way.

Mahtab taught her daughter Zahra songs since she was four-five years old and took her in the media to make her success shorter. At the age of six, she registered her in school and every day she learned new things, she also taught Zahra. She took her daughter to tailoring and hairdressing salons and wanted to complete the half-finished dreams of her mother; But the members of her husband's family, who had seen her bravery, always told her husband not to leave Mahtab in the community, so that she would not tell others about the troubles that had happened to her at their home in Helmand. According to Mahtab, her husband had little income and despite the violence imposed on Mahtab, he had to allow her work outside to earn money. With the smallest capital, Mahtab opened a hairdressing salon and with the income she received from this way, she provided the cost of Zahra's language, painting and school education and the cost of living for his little son Abulfazl.

In order to get rid of her husband's violence, Zahra repeatedly referred to the Human Rights Commission and human rights advocacy organizations during the Republic government and during the time of the Taliban, she referred to the police station of this group. But none of them could reduce her husband's violence against her; until she had to open a divorce case. "I didn't decide to divorce and I was fighting until my daughter grew up and when I got tired of being beaten, I had to think about divorce." Mahtab says that her husband's violence and beatings increased when the Taliban re-

turned to power, and her husband used to taunt her saying, "Where are your human rights organizations?"

Finally, the Taliban gave Zahra and Abulfazl to her father in a divorce case, and her father took them to Helmand. Mahtab, whose mother's seal does not allow her to be in peace, goes to Helmand after a while to escape her two children, and she coordinates with her daughter via her small phone and elopes them both. On the Kandahar-Kabul route, the Taliban stopped the car carrying her. She waits for an hour for her mother-in-law and sister-in-law to arrive, and as soon as they arrive, they throw stones at the her.

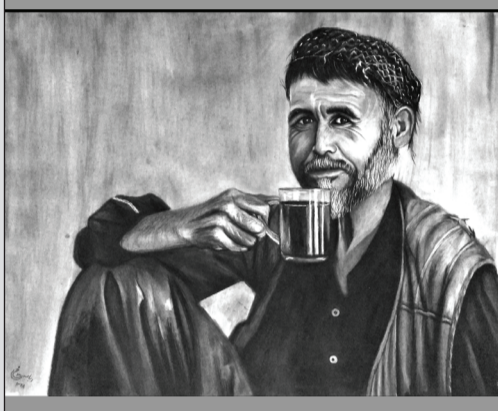
Because of the kidnapping of her children, the Taliban held a field trial for her; But as soon as they realized that these two children are her children, they leave them to Mahtab. Then Mahtab moves to Kabul but is unaware that her husband has already arrived in Kabul from Helmand and has thrown himself down from the mansion wall and is waiting for Zahra. As soon as Mahtab enters the house, her husband, who is already separated, takes them to Helmand and based on Mrs. Mahtab's statements, her husband took Zahra's phone due to the fear of her children running away again and wants to marry her to her uncle's son.

Zahra, 13, an artist now, who has many dreams for her future, may face the same violence her mother faced. Zahra has portrayed violence against women in her paintings and has told media that she wants no girl to be a victim of forced marriage as her mother was.

Mahtab fled to Iran fearing Taliban and her husband's family. She raises her voice from Iran against Taliban's policies on women and supports women's rights activists. She took part in protests against Taliban's policies secretly before she divorced her husband. But then, she openly participated in the protests against Taliban and does not want her daughter and no other girl to be a victim of selfish domestic violence; an act she calls it "Crime and Rape". "As long as I am alive, I will not remain silent for the sake of taking my daughter and son, and I will stand up for the oppressed women of my country." Zahra says.



The symphony of life; A girl who had no dreams



By: Khaliq Ebrahimi
Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

Rubabah had no dream until she was 14. It is the shortest news about a girl looking for help for days, months and years to find somebody to give her a glass of water to satisfy her thirst. Maybe it is hard for those to understand this when they have not been in the same situation as Rubabah has experienced. For example, "In an afternoon of Kabul cold season when a ray of sunshine comes through the window into the home, You! Yes, you wish sit under the sunshine but are not able to move outside the room and get energy, how devastated would you feel. It is hard to be waiting someone lends you a hand. Not a stranger, but your sister, brother, father, or mother, remember by accident that a member of the family loves the sunshine but can't use it indiscriminately without their help. Not only this, but from the smallest problems of life to the biggest, he needs help. From eating and drinking to life and impossible dreams, he needs help." This is the life of Rubbah Mohammadi. The one who invalidates a famous Persian cliché an all-rounder (art pours from every trick); Because no trick works from her hands and feet, so that we can say that art flows from her every trick. All her art depends on her eyes, ears and tongue, nothing more. She has been waiting for many years for a gate to hope and light to be opened and she can move towards that light even if it is two steps. That door of hope has been opened to hear many times but she has not been able to stand up and walk towards it. It is the biggest secret of her life.

She does not remember exactly how old she is because when they were moving from Sabzdarah village of Malistan in Ghazni province to Kabul, her family left the Quran which her date of birth was written on the back of it. But he remembers that in 2003 they left Malistan for Kabul for treatment. As much as they could, her family rented a house in Barchi, and every day their only task was to take Rubabah to the Red Cross Center for treatment, and that

too for free. Sometimes she remained in the bed for several weeks and months. Her father worked in Iran to pay for her medical expenses. Her mother, who had several other children to take care of, had one leg in the Red Cross Hospital and the other leg was stuck in front of her other children. It was difficult. It is better to say a few steps more than difficult. Because there was not much hope to recover Rubabah's ability, and on the other hand, the family's economy was not strong enough to pay for the car rental and other expenses every day and to be informed about her. Her family made the final decision about Rubabah.

What was that decision? Return Rubabah to her home because they were disappointed in her recovery. It meant helplessness; Leave her alone for as long as she survives and continues to live.

That is, 17 or 18 years later, when Kabul, the capital of the country, fell to the hands of the Taliban, when Ashraf Ghani managed to escape from the battle and survive, when millions of people drowned in an aura of hopelessness and despair. She was a famous artist and lived in the United Arab Emirates and in the city of Abu Dhabi. She had been staying there for less than two years. She used to take orders from merchants, make paintings and make a good living from it. Almost 7 months after the fall of Kabul, she returned to Kabul, but this was not the Kabul where Rubabah was disappointed, depressed, waiting, or creating works of art, but she was setting up an art center, and giving motivational speeches to school students. Here, I must write that during the past years, Rubabah was able to turn from a hopeless person into a suitable role model for hope and fighting for life, many things had happened, but the collapse of Kabul was something else. During these years, Rubabah had learned to paint with the hand and teeth, from a novice she had made herself among the famous artists of the country, she had created an art gallery and entered several exhibitions. including an art exhibition in the city of Mersin, Türkiye.

But when Rubabah returned to Kabul from the most luxurious city in the world

like Abu Dhabi, she faced a hundred percent different situation. She soon found that even if no part of her body functioned properly, even if she had no limbs to commit sin and live a womanly life; Because she is considered among the girls or women of the country, she should sit at home and wait for the opening of a gate to the light. Considering that the wind will not blow for girls' dreams and there will be no future. Finally, this was the decree of the absent emir of the country, and disobeying it was punishable by whipping in public, humiliation and insult, and imprisonment, and it had been implemented many times. This is how Rubabah was forced to stay at home.

She was threatened several times in 2020. Her art work, located in an area of Dasht Barchi, and was attacked by armed men, and when they threw some hand grenades it exploded, her paintings were all destroyed but Rubabah didn't give up and continued. She continued to give hope to the society.

Rubabah learned from a young age that she could lean the paintbrush with her teeth and turn it artistically on the paper with her head and neck movements, finally by repeating this difficult task, she would produce shapes of flowers and natural landscapes. Of course, at the beginning, she did not know she would become a global celebrity, but she did it for amusement and passing the time. Little by little, when her work picked up and she found a friend to encourage her and teach her some things, she realized that painting is the sunlight that shines through the window into her room in the cold winters of Kabul.

Warm, radiant but far from reach. Just as she needed help to get into the sun, she needed help to learn to paint, and that person had come to her. The person who is not known and Rubabah does not disclose her/his name, and she has not mentioned the name in an interview with the Silk Way Weekly, is the big change maker of her life. I shall not forget. When Rubabah's business improved, she was famous, she took many orders and worked hard and received in-

centives. But after the fall of Kabul, since she was not active publicly, she changed the method of her work and lived with it.

Due to her physical appearance, in another words; her difference with other girls who are at the same age with her, after several years working in the field of art, she notices that two issues play a significant role in her life and art work and she loves them a lot and she works on those topics. She loves the face of women and most of her tablets, especially one of them, took four months to be painted.

A scratched face of a woman inspired by a painting in one of the Buddha caves in Bamyan. She says that this is the most expensive painting that she has ever worked on, and of course, this work was also commissioned, and she received three thousand dollars for realizing it. The second thing, which is the source of inspiration in his artistic works, is the culture, customs and traditions and historical and ancient possessions of the Hazaras of Afghanistan. Rubabah says she loves hazaras culture and it is evident in many of her works.

The situation of Kabul after the Taliban take over was painful for Rubabah. Apart from the fact that she had to visit no art gallery, stay at home and have no voice to protest, her artistic concerns were also forbidden. She loved to paint women's faces and bodies, but she lived in a time when women were housewives and painting pictures of women was a crime. In her artistic work, she paid attention to Hazaras and their culture, but the times were such that Hazaras were the most vulnerable and in danger of genocide. As she herself was a victim of ethnic, religious, sexual and class discrimination; Hazaras collectively suffer from these issues. For the past two or three months, Rubabah has decided not to live in a country whose ruler is an absent mullah with primitive orders. She joined the three or four million refugees in Pakistan who try to reach to a prosperous country and starting a new life (Now she is in Canada). Of course, they suffer to realize their dreams. Though Rubabah loves Afghanistan and its people, she does not want to live under the rule of Taliban.

My Lover Sings From The Point Of A Gun

Female voice saves literature from monotony

An interview with Mahtab Sahil, a contemporary poet of Afghanistan

By: Esmat Altaf

Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

SWW: Ms. Sahil, thank you very much for providing the opportunity for this conversation to talk about the poetry and literature of Afghan women, and especially about your works. On the occasion of March 8th, International Women's Day, Silk Way Weekly is going to publish a special issue about the situation of Afghan women. Therefore, Silk Way Weekly appreciates you to have a chat about the poetry of Afghan women in recent years.

I remember, in 2018 When we were working on the case of women's literature in the Adabiat -e- Moaser Quarterly, there was no opportunity to have a conversation with you. Apparently, you didn't have time. Now I am glad that this opportunity was provided. I would like to start with your biography so that our readers can get to know you and your works.

Where were you born, until what stage, and where did you study and which of your works have been published so far?

MS: My father's hometown is Borjagi village, Nahor district, Ghazni province. I was born in Kabul on 28 October 1990. During the civil wars, I was three years old when our family went to Borjagi to save our lives. We lived almost during the civil wars in Barjagi village. We spent part of the previous Taliban era - I think it was two years - in Ghazni city.

After the fall of the Taliban, we went to Kabul again. When the Taliban fell, there was no specific war, at least I don't remember. It was just bombarded a little and the next day we saw that there was no Talib. It was as if the earth had swallowed them. None of them existed. The republic period came and I completed the school period. I received my bachelor's degree in law and my master's degree in criminal law and criminology at Islamic Azad University, Kabul branch.

Also, three collections of my poems have been published so far. These three collections are "Tulips are my wounded lips", "Surah of Gisoo and "Forty poems of Hamzakham (the common pain).

SWW: In which institutions did you work during the republic?

MS: My life has always been torn between two disciplines; One is the field of literature, which includes cultural activities, and even human rights activities, and the other is the field in which I studied. I have had activities in both fields.

For some time, I collaborated with the "Dariache" literary and cultural association, which was the association of poets of Northeast Afghanistan. My government work started with the Afghanistan Presidential Administrative Officine. That too after the publication of the collection of "Surah of Gisoo". Before starting my work with the Afghanistan Presidential Administrative Officine, I came to an Iranian festival. After returning, the president invited those who had been cheered or awarded at that festival and had a party. In that party, he told us that you should work with us and a number of us were appointed. I was one of those who joined the work there. I worked there for five years.

I also cooperated little with the Ministry of information and Culture. I Also cooperated with a number of human rights

institutions; I cooperated with the "Institute of Human Rights and Democracy in Afghanistan" which built a museum of the remaining works of war victims in Pule Sorkh. From the beginning of my literary career, I was a member of the "Qalam", Pen Association and my cooperation continued until the last days. The last poetry session of the association was my poetry reading session. After that, Kabul collapsed and the Taliban came and everything was destroyed.

SWW: As we can see, you were involved in two fields and continued both and worked in both fields. In the field of literature, we have seen the publication of three collections of your poems. I would like to ask when did you turn to literature, especially poetry? That is, when did you feel that you can arrange words in an artistic way that becomes a poem and finally, the poem becomes your identity. In that format, speak your mind and be recognized with poetry; So that today Mehtab Sahil the poet is more known than Mehtab Sahil the lawyer.

MS: I have memories from the early days of joining literature. One of the cold and harsh winters in our village in Hazarajat, my mother went to the wedding of one of our relatives. It snowed heavily that winter and my mother could not return home. She had to stay there until spring. It took several months to see our mother. One day I was very homesick and in the seventh grade, I was crying and writing things. The Dari literature teacher noticed me. He came near me and read my writing and encouraged me a lot. I remember that everything I had written had meter. This is the only memory I remember from the beginning of writing. Six or seven years passed since this incident and I always practiced writing. I was reading my writings and I was hesitant about whether anything could be gained from them or not. Are they poems at all and are considered literary texts? Fortunately, I came to a conclusion after six or seven years. The Afghan Pen Association took the initiative to publish my first poetry collection. This was the beginning of my joining the world of literature.

Due to the fact that women in Afghanistan have always been deprived of their most basic rights, there has always been a difference between women and men and between girls and boys, and we witnessed these issues even during the republic. Therefore, one of my concerns has always been to know where it says that I have less rights than my brother. Although our family was a bright family, it did not differentiate between us; But I saw these differences at school and in our neighborhood. This concern made me go to the field of law and take a scientific step in this direction.

I wanted to understand why women are given less rights and why women are considered inferior. Where does violence against women come from and where do its roots come from?

On the other hand, literature has always been my concern. Every time I have finished my homework and practice, I have seen that my protest, romantic and socio-political poems have a more feminine language.

SWW: Yes, Mrs. Sahil. We will come to the language of your poems and I will ask questions. One of the issues that is



important and influential in the formation of the literary identity of every poet and writer are the great poets and writers before he and her contemporaries, and even the active literary institutions of her era. I want to ask if there was someone or people in your literary life who helped you in this direction and showed the flaws of your work?

MS: In the last twenty years, there was freedom of social media in Afghanistan. The gates of educational centers, schools and universities were open to everyone. Very good opportunities were provided. Many institutions regularly had poetry sessions. I remember in 2015 or 2016, I went to three poetry sessions in one day. For example, two or three poetry sessions were held in Pul Sorkh, poetry sessions were also held in Dasht Barchi, and such sessions were also held in the Afghan Pen Association.

Although these sessions gradually changed its form and only people read poetry, without saying anything about the poem; But at that time, these meetings had an educational aspect. You would read poetry; your work would be criticized. You used to hear reviews and comments from

poets that were very influential.

Another thing that was very common and influential was Facebook and other social media. I first started the poem with a couplet. We had groups called Dubai-ti, Charane and Rubaei or Quartet. I was a member of these groups; How beautiful these groups were. There were several poets from Iran who are not well-known names here; But at that time, they had an influence on our youth and criticized their work. Regarding meter, rhyme, and order, they reminded valuable points that were undoubtedly effective in improving work of the new poets. A number of Afghan friends were also members of these groups.

My first couplet, which was included in the collection, is from that time. After that, I collected everything I created and did not throw it away. While I threw away the exercises before that. That couplet is: May all my strength be fever and the night/ be silence on my lips and the night/ they created me as the moon so that my portion/ of this world is only night and night.

After that, I felt that my poems had reached such a level of strength that I would keep them and present them as examples for my practice.

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All these had an effect in their place. There were good friendly and intimate groups where everyone would post their new poem and everyone would read and criticize it.

SWW: Another issue that is influential in the literary life of anyone is their dealings with other writers and poets. This interaction can be with the writers and poets of the past and with the poets and writers of their time. Even among these poets and writers, everyone likes the works and words of a certain person more. With this introduction, I would like to ask, among the classical poets, who do you have the most affinity with, and among the contemporary poets of Afghanistan and Iran, whose works do you feel most close to?

MS: Well, classic texts or classical literature are important to read for several reasons. If you can write, you really need to read and communicate with them. I think that poetry and fiction are the unofficial history of nations, and when you don't want to reconcile with your past history and don't want to deal with it, it's definitely difficult to claim that you pick up a pen and write about your present. This is a topic.

Another issue is that classical literature has very bright and pure teachings that are not outdated and can always open the way for people's lives. Especially we who have a society full of adventures. Sometimes they act as a sedative and calm the person down.

Also, linguistically, your language will become more fruitful and rich. You also become aware of your own cultural background. Therefore, it is necessary to study classic texts; But unfortunately, my field of study was something else. I had to study law and work in that field. On the other hand, I studied and read as much as I could; But I do not claim that I am a well-educated person. I read from time to time. I love the romances of Saadi, the poems of Hafez, Rumi, Sanai and other Persian literary greats. Whenever I feel depressed due to the situation, I take refuge in them.

I also read contemporary literature. Among the contemporary poets, the one who has influenced me the most and whose poems I read a lot is Forough Farrokhzad. Forough has a new world for me. In one day and night, if I go to Forough twice and read her poems, Forough still has something for me and it is fresher and fresher.

In my first collection, Forough had the greatest influence, and in my second collection I have some charparas (castanets), that I feel were influenced by Forough Farrokhzad's poems in terms of format, structure and content.

SWW: I wanted to ask a question about this. It's good that you mentioned it. Although it is the work of literary critics to show affect and influence; But sometimes the author can be their own critic. Among the male poets, whose poems do you like and read most? Do you feel that any of them have influenced you?

MS: Well, in Iran and Afghanistan we have good poets who sing ghazal and other classical forms. I do not feel influenced by anyone. However, I read the poems of all the contemporary poets of Afghanistan. I have also read a lot of contemporary Iranian poets, whose number is so large that it is impossible to name one.

SWW: You are familiar with the po-

etry of female poets of your time, and you must follow their poems either online or in magazines, literary circles, and festivals. From your point of view, how familiar are they with the texts of the past and how much do they relate to?

MS: Look, it is not possible to distinguish between men and women of the young generation of Afghanistan; But in general, there is little study among them. Perhaps one of the reasons for this situation is being in the virtual space, which on the one hand takes more time from them, and on the other hand, because this medium is so accessible that, for example, a poet is still not sure of their words whether they are complete or not. Shares it online. In my opinion, this is one of the plagues of our young generation. Because it takes a lot of time from them and does not give them the opportunity to study ancient texts. This is how we are witnessing the emergence of poets who, it is true, are known as poets in literary circles and cyberspace, and who capture people's attention. But we see that their study experience is little. They have not read classical literature or contemporary literature. Therefore, being undereducated is one of the problems of our peers.

SWW: In order to make your answer more complete, I would like to ask in parentheses what consequences this situation can have on our literary current.

MS: This issue cannot be raised only in the field of poetry. In all aspects, when you come to the stage with an empty back, you remain like today's celebrities. You stand out, you fill a lot of space in society, you get time in programs; But in general, lasting and significant work or works are not created.

The history of literature will not remember these. In the history of literature, there are those who have thought in their poetry. These are the thoughts that last and remain in the memory of history. Otherwise, works that are created without rich cultural, historical and intellectual supports are doomed to decline and be forgotten. The space that these works have occupied, in fact, have taken an opportunity from others.

SWW: Before the recent transformation and domination of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, women's literature, both in the field of fiction and poetry, was in a good direction. Both in terms of quantity, many people came to the field and created good works, and in terms of quality, impressive works were created; works that can be the light of the future. Even now, good works are definitely being created. In the past twenty years, poets entered the field of contemporary literature whose individuality and identity of the poet and the society they lived in are visible in their works. What do you think about this?

MS: I emphasize again that the past twenty years, despite the problems, I am not saying that everything was good and ideal; But it was a good ground for such women's activities. That is, in these twenty years, women tried with all the strength they had to reach somewhere, and according to the situation they were in and the background they had, they got a good result to some extent.

If we study the history of Afghan women's literature, we can clearly see that they

have always been influenced by male language, atmosphere, and sense. Maybe they have spoken in one or two hemistichs in such a way as to show that. been like the world of men. Their vocabulary and mood, vocabulary and aesthetics have been masculine. In a sense, Afghan poetry was monophonic. We cannot distinguish male and female poetry based on their language and content. Because of this, the beloved did not always have an appearance. Emotions were not revealed as much as they should be;

But in these 20 years, each poet, in recognition of their talent, used courage and removed the curtain from their own world and was the narrator of their own world. Also, many taboos were broken in Afghanistan. The pioneers of this type of expression also made sacrifices that I can mention Shukrieh Erfani, Maral Taheri, Karima Shabrang, Sada Soltani, myself and many others. I am well aware that each of them suffered from the society because of this type of expression.

In The first decade of the 2000, new figures entered the field of poetry who are still active and sing poetry. If we examine Afghan women's literature from the beginning of the 90s, we can see prominent features in it. First of all, it is feminine, then we can even recognize anyone's poetry. This shows that women's poetry has reached a good stage.

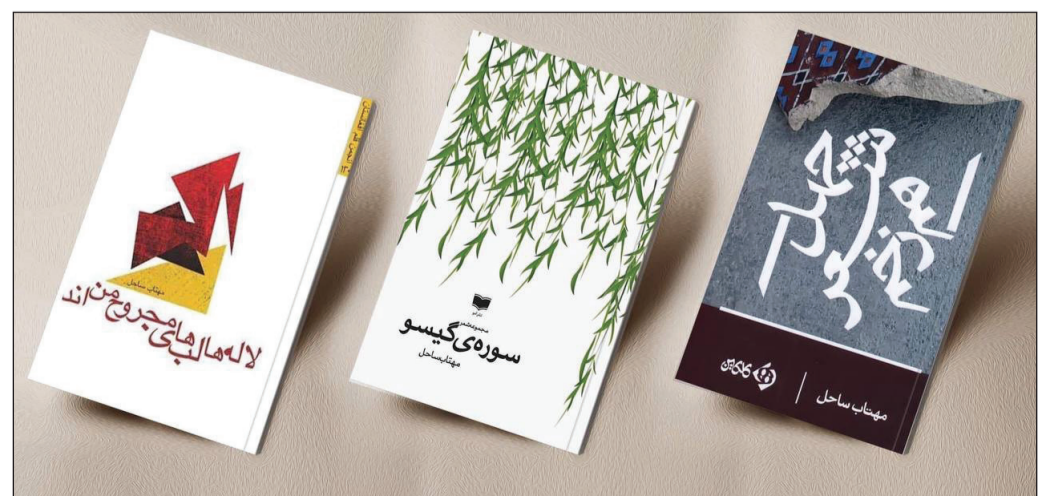
SWW: Although it is somewhat difficult to judge now; But what can be seen is the coming to power of the Taliban, which led to the ban on girls' education, the migration of poets and writers and cultural figures, and the suspension of the activities of literary and cultural circles inside Afghanistan. This situation will create a break; Especially if we imagine more years that the situation will continue like this. However, how do you predict the future of women's literature in Afghanistan? Especially since women and girls do not have the possibility to study and work, nor the possibility to attend literary and cultural programs; So the talents that should be nurtured and flourished in these years will not be.

MS: Yes, I agree with you. If the situation continues in this way, we will definitely see a rupture. Even the tragedy is deeper than this. The fall of the republic and the rise of the Taliban was not only the fall of the political system. The generation that studied and grew up under the shadow of the republican system is now facing destruction. If we look closely, it is very scary. The world has closed their eyes to all these inadequacies. They look at the matter as if Taliban were on the other side of the coin in

Afghanistan. Now the page has just turned. Maybe it doesn't matter to the world; But for those of us who lived in Afghanistan, we made dreams and laid bricks for our future, we made sacrifices and aligned ourselves with that system, we were destroyed. Cultures who worked and shone in Afghanistan, now became immigrants. In the new environment, firstly, they do not know the local language and secondly, they are not familiar with their culture. Learning and getting familiar with the second language and culture, they distance them from their own language and culture and naturally they also deprive them of literature and the creation of new literary masterpieces. The number of those who remain inside Afghanistan is small. They cannot have any activity. If they do something, they are so few that it is not much to hope for them. They live in secret. They can't get together and read poetry or have a wider artistic activity because of the fear of Talib. With all this, the only loophole that exists and may be a source of hope is that Talib is the same Talib of twenty years ago; But women are no longer those women. We have seen that in the two and a half years, Afghan women were the flag bearers of protest around the world, and the voice of Afghan women's protest was not only silenced, but in any situation, they took their lives in their hands and went to the streets. Despite the fact that women returned from Taliban prisons spoke of physical and mental torture; But still the protests did not stop.

Lately, I have been reading good poems from poets living in Afghanistan. For example, Masoumeh Mahshid, Limah Afshid, Tamna Mehrzad, Kamelah Kaihan and some other poets wrote good poems after the fall. These are the currents. But in general, according to your words, it is too early to judge and say where poetry is going today. I hope that the current situation in Afghanistan will not last long and we will be able to get out of this shock.

Yes, Mrs. Sahel, you are right. Two important events happened with the fall of the Republican system and the establishment of the Taliban Emirate; One was the massive wave of immigration and the other was the deprivation of Afghan women and girls from education. If we are optimistic about immigrants that they will continue their work, if not better than before, at least at the same level; But inside Afghanistan, the process of cultivating new talents has been interrupted. I personally see this. Because both schools and universities are closed to girls and literary and cultural circles and programs are not held. A girl who feels in the sixth grade that she has a taste and talent for composing and



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writing, if there is no context and possibility to develop this taste and talent, how will her talent be developed and how will she continue her way?

We see the future of the next generation very dark. I just hope this situation does not last long. There should be a system that recognizes at least some human rights.

On the other hand, in Afghanistan, it is not only about women. Even these men who go to school and university, their textbooks have either changed or are changing. Their educational materials are according to the standards and beliefs of the Taliban. They train them so that they act as their soldiers tomorrow and will have the same thinking as the Taliban have. What will this thinking do to the future of Afghanistan and the future of the world? Girls not going to school is a sadness; But raising boys with Taliban standards and teachings is another tragedy. The privacy of women and girls from education is a kind of blackmail that the Taliban want to get the approval of the world and cover up the rights of Hazaras and other ethnic and religious minorities and not discuss them at all. Those who are now on the stage are the product of the student-raising schools that existed before. But now all the schools and facilities are at their disposal. They expand their thinking and inject darkness into the minds of Afghan children and teenagers. This is terrible.

SWW: You may be more familiar with Afghan women poets and writers; Poets and writers who were in Afghanistan and created works during these twenty years. It is possible that some of them are the product of this twenty-year period. During these two and a half years, what is the status of literature production in Afghanistan, especially poetry?

MS: I've read very little lately from poets we've long expected to write and publish. It means that the production level of literary works is very low; Because some of them are involved in new problems in different countries to adjust themselves according to the conditions there and some of them are stuck in Afghanistan, their mental and emotional situation does not allow them to sit down and write poetry. The few poems that are created are protest poems by women, protesting the existing situation or expressing the problems they have encountered in the second countries. Some were written to support women's movements.

SWW: What effect do you think this situation has on the literary flow? Is this situation a limitation that binds their hands and feet?

MS: This is a difficult question. Let's see what history will judge in this case. Maybe there are those who create magnificent works in isolation; But in general, when there is no platform and there are no forums and gatherings where you can gather and be encouraged and motivated, exchange ideas, I think it is very unlikely that a good flow will be created. I don't think there is no opportunity now.

SWW: If we don't talk about others, how has the current situation affected your poetry, Mrs. Sahil?

MS: I don't really feel separate from others. It has had the same effects on me as it has on others. Since I came from Kabul, I have not been very active. My concern, like many, is the concern of bread and

the problems that arise every day. All these are burdened on one's mind and one has to try with new systems and new methods to continue life. In the current situation, it is enough for me that life does not stop. I have only written a few new poems in support of women protestors, which I know are very few.

SWW: The last work you published was "Forty Poems of Hamzakham", at the beginning of this year, by Kelkeen Publishing. This is your latest work after "Surah of Gisoo" which was published by Amu Publishing House and Tak Publishing House before. Were the poems in this collection written before the fall of Kabul?

MS: Yes, I had written these poems before the fall. The book was already collected, but its publication was delayed.

SWW: Why did you choose this name? Was it because of the common content of the poems? Do you think these forty pieces of poetry have a common wound that you named so? If so, what is this wound?

MS: Inside this collection, I have a poem called Hamzakham; It is a revolutionary poem. I composed it when the provinces of Afghanistan were falling one after the other and falling into the hands of the Taliban. The word Hamzakham (Common Wound) comes from this poem. When I saw that I have forty pieces of poetry in my hand and forty has many combinations in our culture. In this collection, these 40 can be 40 ethnic groups. The wound is the common pain that all the people of Afghanistan have. In this collection, I have poems that refer to different people of Afghanistan.

SWW: If we start from your first collection (Tulips are my wounded lips), as you said, it has naked and naked romances, and we reach "Surah of Gisoo" and finally "Forty Poems of Hamzakham", we see that in the first two collections, I am a very bold poet. And more prominent than me is his social; But in the second one, the poet's individual self becomes dim, and the social self becomes bolder and stronger. I may even lose color altogether. Meanwhile, two things are very prominent, one is the social and collective pains of the society to which the poet belongs, the other is the problems of women. Is this impression correct? If true, what made you so inclined?

MS: Yes, I feel it myself. This has happened. When my first collection was published, I believed that it was just effort and practice and poetry practice. Of course, all my work has been like this. One can never say that a work is perfect and flawless; But in the second collection, it was possible not to struggle with the templates anymore. I already knew that I could do classical poetry.

Just as you believe that poetry should arise from the poet's life experience, I also believe that poetry is the life experience and mental concerns of every poet. It is a poem that expresses the poet's inner self and introduces them to the audience. I myself feel that I was more involved with the issues of Afghanistan.

SWW: Mrs. Sahil, you say in poem number 30 of this collection, "Today's human beings are yesterday's monsters/ They tear and eat and go berserk." Where does this pessimistic view

of modern man come from? Where do you think it originates from in the social life people of Afghanistan?

MS: Your words are accurate, the look is pessimistic. Of course, this view is not only related to the people of Afghanistan. I'm not saying it doesn't exist in Afghanistan, maybe it's more prominent than in other places; But I remember the exact date of writing this poem. I wrote when the forests of Australia were on fire and I saw the animals as they burnt.

Several politicians from several countries were sitting at the table and had a meeting about it; But they didn't actually do anything. The videos that were released showed the animal with its baby in its arms and burning in the fire. This image affected me so much that I was ashamed to be human. This poem was written at that time.

SWW: In the same poem, you have said: "Sometimes I am a companion of my Kabul maidens/ I dance on a fire carpet/ My lover sings from a rifle/ He puts a yoke of gold on my throat, I dance." Here, we have the same previous view of female manifestations and tools. Why do you think that women's necklaces are women's yoke?

MS: In Afghanistan, we have people who have modern thoughts; But in general, the general tradition is that the boy's family should buy gold and give milk money (Money paid by Groom) to the bride. The groom should provide these. This makes the bridegroom to have complete possession of the bride by paying these. You must have heard the story of Setarah, a girl from Kandahar, who on the second or third night of her wedding, because of these issues, her ears and nose were cut off by the groom. This poem actually marks this tradition.

SWW: They consider literature as the artistic use of language. Or it is something that happens in language. I want to ask what is more important to you when writing a poem, words or meaning? Or do you not think of any? I ask this because it has been said that meter, rhyme, and formal issues are a burden for poets.

MS: I approve of the last option. Very rarely have I gone to poetry and tried to write something. A poem does not come out like this. For me it is like this; When I have a sense of poetry, I feel homesick and feel like running away from the crowd. I try to provide my privacy. Then I just write to edit later. It's like a tear that bursts out because of grief and pain, and you have to write it down.

SWW: Women's language is prom-



inent in women's poetry. Women's literature has been called literature that revolves around the lives, concerns, pains and characters of women. The same issue is sometimes interpreted as writing about women in this way can help the cycle of patriarchy. When we portray women in literature as being involved in cooking and washing and other tasks that are now the responsibility of women in our society, it is as if we are reproducing this situation. What is your perception of women's language and literature?

MS: Literature that revolves around women's lives and talks about women, if the narrator is a man, the same thing happens. The male narrator narrates his own world and his expectations from the woman; But when the woman herself opens up and talks about her world, it is very different from the previous case. We are now faced with the world view, look, language and concerns of women. Or rather, we are dealing with a female voice. Another voice emerges and saves literature from monotony.

This event remains as sound. How much does a man have to imitate to get a woman's voice; But for a woman, without any effort, she shouts, cries and shares her feelings with her own voice. The inner world is the same. A man cannot judge from a woman's point of view, he cannot tell what is beautiful and what is pleasurable. Only the woman herself can handle them.

SWW: Thank you, Ms. Sahil, for taking the time to conduct this interview. If there is anything left unsaid, please let me know.

MS: Thank you. I have no special point. I am very happy that this opportunity was provided and we talked. I hope one day, we will talk about the good things happening in Afghanistan.

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My father's hometown is Borjagi village, Nahor district, Ghazni province. I was born in Kabul on 28 October 1990. During the civil wars, I was three years old when our family went to Borjagi to save our lives. We lived almost during the civil wars in Barjagi village. We spent part of the previous Taliban era - I think it was two years - in Ghazni city.

After the fall of the Taliban, we went to Kabul again. When the Taliban fell, there was no specific war, at least I don't remember. It was just bombarded a little and the next day we saw that there was no Talib. It was as if the earth had swallowed them. None of them existed. The republic period came and I completed the school period. I received my bachelor's degree in law and my master's degree in criminal law and criminology at Islamic Azad University, Kabul branch.

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