

**Opinion**

**Respect for Human Dignity**

It can be said without fear of contradiction that every religion, faith, philosophy of life, has not only stressed the need for respect of human life, but also guaranteed its security. Killing an innocent being or taking a life without reason has been considered to be equivalent of annihilation of the whole mankind. Defending one human life has been compared to safeguarding the whole mankind. This fundamental and universal principle of human civilization was put in the garb of faith, and all human beings without any discrimination or differentiation, were declared to be members of “God’s family”.

But, how tragic and bitter is the fact, that in our land the valley of Kashmir, including Doda, Poonch, Rajouri, such chilly wind of savagery, barbarity and callousness has been blowing that there is neither peace nor respect or dignity of human life anywhere. The truth is that human life has no value left.

**The rule of the Gun**

In Kashmir, the gun rules, for all purposes. Nobody has any guarantee of the safety of his life or dignity. Well, to think of such things (human dignity etc) in the din of gun-fire is like thinking of getting “milk” from the hard rocks of a mountain. Though, wherever an armed struggle is waged for the achievement of political objectives or goals, the human dignity is not shred into pieces, as it is done here, as a matter of routine. In our land, the people have to bear the excesses and tortures of the persons, who wield the gun, whether they belong to militant outfits or the security forces. A dreadful trend of faked encounters and vindictive killing has taken root here. Only God can save the people. On the one side, some ordinary citizen is given death sentence unhesitatingly on the basis of suspicion of being involved in militancy. On the other side, any person, high or low, is executed, on the charge of betrayal of the “cause” or *mukhbiri* – working as informer.

In this, the guns from both sides play a very active role. Caught in this helpless situation, the people have lost all the ‘meaning’ or ‘purpose’ of their life. On any trivial or frivolous complaint, they can lose their life at the hands of ‘trigger happy’ gun-toting persons. Sometimes they have to suffer the punishment for uncommitted sins, only on the basis of suspicion.

## **Incidents of terror**

In this scenario of two-sided rattling of the guns, such horrid incidents have taken place that makes it clear that the “soft targets” have been completely deprived of their right to live. Here are some examples — on 10<sup>th</sup> June, some unbridled gun-toting people mercilessly killed four unfortunate brothers in Mahore, Udhampur, adding another page to the bloody history of killings. The brothers were Abdul Gani, Gaffar Ahmed, Saif-ud-din, and Abdul Rashid. On 15<sup>th</sup> June, the target of the gun holding militants were the unarmed pilgrims in Sharda temple, Kishtiwari, and seven were killed on spot, which included three infants, eleven year old Sanjay Kumar, thirteen year old Rajesh and fifteen year old Lalita. On 16<sup>th</sup> June, the attackers launched an attack on a Hindu family in Mahore, Udhampur, and killed Shobha Ram, his wife Khatri Devi, and two children Panu and Uma very mercilessly. On 17<sup>th</sup> June in Sidhu, Shopian, the (killers) militants cut open the bodies of the old Chowkidhar Abdul Gani Ganai and Farooq Ahmed Agasi and gave them such a punishment that even the most stone-hearted persons can not help weeping. Not only were they beheaded, but their limbs etc were cut and thrown away. On 18<sup>th</sup> June, in Brenwara-Chadwra, the armed people entered the house of Ghulam Qadir and fired shots indiscriminately killing him and his wife Saira on the spot. Previously, in Bandipora and Bej Bhere areas two brothers, in each case were simultaneously beheaded. Similarly, these “Brave hearts” (militants) stopped a marriage procession in Rajouri, kidnapped the bride, dressed in bridal dress and killed her.

## **Where is Humanism?**

These are few specimens off the horrid and terrifying incidents that have become usual now in Kashmir. To whom can we plead to stop such incidents? There is no messiah in sight. Nevertheless, it is an extremely regrettable fact that the government has failed to provide protection to ordinary people. When an ordinary person is killed, it has no meaning for the government. But, if somebody connected with it, or some highly placed person becomes the victim of such horrifying killing, its calm is disturbed. Similar is the situation with the groups or quarters, connected with the movement. They do not take any notice, if an ordinary man is killed. But when somebody of their own circle is the victim, they will break their silence and nurse the wounds by ‘news-paper’ statements. The question arises – is the principle of the dignity of human life valid only for their own supporters? Is expressing sympathy or curbing the inhuman activities of such elements, not included in their frame of reference. Iqbal has rightly said.

*‘Humanism – respect for human dignity*

*Be conscious of Human Being’s status in the world.’*

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*Translated from Urdu by J.L. Raina*