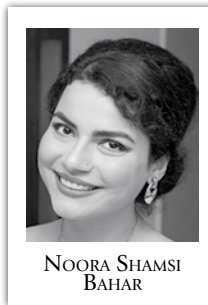


# Schools must teach more than academic syllabus

A schoolgirl's rape and murder highlights the inadequacies of conventional education



NOORA SHAMSI BAHAR

THE recent rape and consequent death of a school-going, 17-year-old girl fills one with rage and helplessness. Initially there were

conflicting reports in the media and it was uncertain if she was raped by one or multiple boys—her alleged boyfriend, Iftekhar Fardin Dihan (who has confessed to the crime) and three of his friends who were later released by police. The head of the forensic department at Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she was taken has confirmed that the student was raped and died of haemorrhagic shock and excessive bleeding due to injuries to the private parts. The accused, according to reports, has passed his A levels recently.

What does this tell us about the education that such boys from relatively privileged backgrounds receive? Is there something missing in it that has caused this young man to commit such a horrible crime? The education system, in my opinion, is a failure. What is the point of educating our sons in the sciences, mathematics, social studies,

languages, and arts if they cannot develop a conscience and if they cannot develop a sense of empathy?

My thoughts are inspired by the following words of Abdu'l-Baha, son of Baha'u'llah (founder of the Baha'i Faith): "Training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well-behaved—even though he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts. The reason for this is that the child who conducts himself well, even though he be ignorant, is of benefit to others, while an ill-natured, ill-behaved child is corrupted and harmful to others, even though he be learned. If, however, the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light" (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, pg. 135).

Some may argue that schools are supposed to teach academic subjects while morals are supposed to be taught at home. Well, of course. However, let us take the following points into consideration: i) Children spend about one-third of their time at school. ii) Some children are raised by maids/nannies because both their parents are career-driven or need to work for being able to bring food to the table. iii) Some children come from broken families and



may be raised by a single working parent who may not have the time or the energy for the proper upbringing of a child.

Doesn't it make sense then, to have moral education classes at school, even if it is for a small part of each day? I am not referring to religious studies here. Secular moral education is for all, irrespective of which religion one belongs to. And such moral education classes should include carefully planned lessons on how to develop empathy, which is what rapists are devoid of. While discussing the subject with my partner, I was

asked: How do you teach a child to be empathetic? I did not and do not have a solid answer to that. But maybe the educator could share stories with them, ask them to do artwork, teach them songs, do a little skit with them, play a cooperative game with them, get involved in a community service project together—all on the subject of empathy?

The course materials of such classes should be developed and taught by highly trained educators (not the religious clergy) and this should not be seen as just another job that pays,

but rather, as a job that helps to build upright characters, a job that helps teach humans to be just that—humans and a job that helps instil compassion, kindness, honesty, trustworthiness, love, tolerance, justice and other such noble characteristics.

I am not implying that moral education classes will completely obliterate the existence of rapists. Another simultaneous plan of action would be to introduce special courses at every school, in every hamlet, village, town, and city across the nation that will teach children the difference between "the right touch" and "the wrong touch", how to say no to the latter, the concept of consent, etc.

Rapists will thrive and will continue to rape even if convicted rapists are hanged. After all, don't we have new cases of murder every day, despite the capital punishment for murderers? Capital punishment will never be a permanent solution even if it may provide justice to some victims. Legal loopholes and influence, moreover, may allow rapists to go scot free. The rapist mentality will remain in the minds of potential rapists unless children are nurtured to be like strong, upright trees, and not crooked ones.

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# Impeach Trump or Invoke the 25th Amendment?

BAHZAD JOARDER

INSPIRED by Mussolini's march to Rome, on November 9, 1923, Hitler and his SA goons attempted the "Munich Putsch"—what Hitler thought would be a triumphant march to seize power from the Weimer Republic reeling from economic crisis. The attempt was foiled, and Hitler was prosecuted for "high treason", yet, given a lenient sentence of five years imprisonment. He spent his time in prison writing the "Mein Kampf" and setting out his political beliefs. What will remain one of history's great unknowns is, what if he was given a harsher sentence or prevented from ever holding public office?

The clamour to remove President Trump is increasing after his incitement led to unprecedented "insurrectionist" scenes at the Capitol aimed to upend a democratic transfer of power. This has received bi-partisan condemnation, with several members of the cabinet resigning and senior figures of the GOP, complicit in the president's peddling of misinformation, belatedly, distancing themselves. The administration is in its death throes, with Trump, finally, changing his rhetoric from "you are special" and "we love you" to a straightforward condemnation after a day. The election winners have been certified and on January 20, Trump will leave the White House. Yet, the danger he presents remains.

Democratic leaders have called on Vice President Pence to invoke section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution. This will only work, if the VP and majority of the cabinet declares in writing that the president is unable to discharge his powers and duties, thus removing him from office temporarily, with the vice president assuming the role of acting president. Trump may declare himself "able", in which case the VP must issue another declaration of incapacity within four days (he remains acting president for four days and if a declaration is not issued, Trump resumes presidential role). If a second declaration is issued, then the matter goes to Congress and both houses have 21 days to make a decision. Since Trump's presidency is

numbered, the clock will run out. Thus far, there is no appetite to do so, despite the clear evidence of Trump's unhinged behaviour, fomenting his base and a detachment from reality that he lost the election.

Failing the invocation of the 25th Amendment, Democrats have threatened impeachment—a second time. This is the right course of action. Impeachment does not only entail removal from office but can also disqualify Trump from holding future public office. Article 1 Section 3 clause 7 of the US constitution allows the Senate to impose a penalty preventing

judgment and one which has been decided by simple majority rules in the Humphreys trial and again in 1913, in the trial of federal judge Robert Archibald for enriching himself. The Senate used the Humphreys trial as a precedent in the trial of Judge Ritter for attempted embezzlement, filing false income tax returns amongst other allegations of impropriety in 1936 and found guilty of "bringing the judiciary into disrepute". The Senate held that a simple majority requirement would be sufficient for disqualification from holding future office but decided not to impose the penalty.

Vice President-elect Harris holding the tiebreaker vote. However, it would be a fallacy to think that he is defeated. He has fractured and debased Lincoln's party to a point where Republicans are afraid of his base and their electoral chances, keeping silent and adopting a policy of appeasement. Just days before the Capitol riots, Trump has asked elected Republican Secretary of State of Georgia to "find" him 11,780 votes. He has incited a violent riot against the most important tenet of a democracy—that of a peaceful transfer of power. This is a "high crime". If federal judges can be disqualified upon conviction and in Humphrey's case, for inciting revolt, then why not a US president?

There are different theories amongst scholars if a president can be impeached when he leaves office. Congress should not wait. It has a duty to protect the Republic from insurrection, even one directed from the White House. Trump should be held accountable and rightly impeached and if convicted on a two-third majority, should be disqualified on a simple majority from ever holding office. Invoking the 25th Amendment will remove him temporarily, leaving open the possibility of a return.

An errant Trump action in the last days of his presidency has global implications. Since the killing of Qassem Soleimani and Abu Muhandis by drone strike, an Iraqi court has issued an arrest warrant for Trump. Iran has already asked Interpol to issue a 'red notice' for US officials including Trump. Recently, Trump sought military options against Iran and had to be dissuaded from ordering a full attack but he may already have allowed covert forms of actions. The assassination of Mohsen Fakhrazadeh-Mahabadi, Iran's leading nuclear scientist is unlikely to have taken place without US knowledge. Iran blames Israel for the assassination. The timing of the assassination is eerily similar to the events of 2009. In the last days of the Bush presidency, Israel requested air strikes against Iranian nuclear installations—a request which was refused. The incoming Biden administration is inclined to re-join the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action—a move that is being anticipated and thwarted by Trump loyalists. Netanyahu,

already indicted on corruption charges, is facing the fourth national elections in two years in March. It is a volatile situation in the region even without considering the wars in Yemen and Syria. Daniel Ellsberg, the former military analyst who leaked the Pentagon Papers showing US lies in the Vietnam war, fears Trump may provoke a war with Iran. House Speaker Pelosi spoke to chairman of joint chief of staff to ensure that Trump cannot launch a nuclear strike in the dying days of his presidency. In an unprecedented move, all living former US defence secretaries have written an op-ed to not involve the military in election dispute. Those who served in the upper echelons of the power structure fear the erratic behaviour of a desperate Trump which may have severe geo-political consequences.

Trump loyalists will not fade away. His rhetoric and dog whistle racism has unleashed the basest instincts in the form of xenophobia. Mainstream social media ban on Trump will incubate those sentiments in another eco-system that he promises to create. Already, droves of his followers have moved to sites like Parler, which has been asked to moderate its content or risk censure. Trump's war chest has been replenished in the aftermath of his election defeat, by peddling lies of election fraud and seeking donations for legal fights which were funnelled to his PACs. Post presidency, he is equally dangerous, plotting his return.

Hitler's 5-year imprisonment was a hiatus used to nurture and weaponize xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments in the body politic. While the Munich march failed in 1923, by 1933 the Nazis were in power, having won electoral mandate. 70 million Americans voted for Trump. More than 70 percent Republicans believe Trump's lies that the elections were fraudulent. Democracy will wither without citizen trust. If he is not impeached for his crimes and disqualified from ever holding office, he may well return with vengeance. Can the USA afford to take this chance? Can the world?

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Supporters of US President Donald Trump march through the streets of the city as they make their way to the Capitol Building in Washington, on January 6, 2021.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump from ever holding public office. Conviction in the Senate requires a two-third majority but there are precedents of impeachment of federal judges where disqualification from holding future office has only required a simple majority.

West Hughes Humphreys, a federal judge impeached in 1862, for supporting the secession of the southern states was convicted and removed from his post by the senate. One of the articles of impeachment against Humphreys was "inciting revolt and rebellion". Unlike conviction, disqualification is a discretionary

No US president ever had to face the ignominy of disqualification being imposed upon them as a penalty. But Trump is no ordinary president. He spoke of "American carnage" on his inauguration and during the tenure of his office have repeatedly eschewed customary norms expected of the office he holds. He is a narcissistic demagogue, a proven liar who would much rather lay waste to democratic practices than accept his failure. In the four years of his presidency, he has lost his re-election, the Congress and following the Georgia run off the Senate is now evenly divided with

### ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

January 11, 1935  
**Amelia Earhart's Hawaii-to-California flight**

On this day in 1935, Amelia Earhart, one of the world's most celebrated aviators, made the first successful solo flight from Hawaii to California, a distance longer than that from the United States to Europe.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**

- 1 Bring close to boiling
- 6 Irritate
- 11 Track horse
- 12 To - (perfectly)
- 13 Sports setting
- 14 Iron output
- 15 Pigeon sound
- 16 Guest's bed
- 18 Hydrocarbon suffix
- 19 Pole worker
- 20 Arles article
- 21 Greek consonants
- 22 Irish brew
- 24 Kid
- 25 Helping
- 27 Pesky insect
- 29 "Yes indeedy!"

**DOWN**

- 1 Keyboard bar
- 2 King of music
- 3 It might be half of 21 in blackjack
- 4 Cariou of "Blue Bloods"
- 5 Blood count?
- 6 Edit menu choice
- 7 "Addams Family" cousin
- 8 It might be half of 21 in blackjack
- 9 Oberon orbits it
- 10 Tangle
- 17 Golfer's cleek
- 23 Wee worker
- 24 Steady run
- 26 Remade
- 27 Like Parmesan
- 28 1998 Winter Games site
- 30 Hot dish holder
- 31 Solar system model
- 33 Merchandise
- 39 "My word!"
- 41 Seine water

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11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

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### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

M	O	P	U	P	D	R	A	I	N
A	R	O	S	E	E	A	R	L	I
R	E	S	E	T	A	Z	T	E	C
T	R	I	F	L	E				
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X	E	S	B	O	A	T	A	T	
M	A	C	A	W	L	I	M	A	S
A	V	A	I	L	E	N	E	R	O
Y	A	R	D	S	D	O	S	E	S

### BEETLE BAILEY

I THINK MILITARY SPENDING HAS FINALLY REACHED CAMP SWAMPY!

A CHECK?! OPEN IT UP!!

\$ 5 ?!

WELL, I DO NEED A NEW COFFEE MUG

### BABY BLUES

HOW'S THE SLEEPER GOING?

WE'RE TELLING SCARY STORIES.

MINE IS ABOUT FASHION NIGHTMARES.

THAT'S... INTERESTING.

COULD YOU JOIN ME FOR A MOMENT?