

EDITORIAL

Reflecting on 9/11 Twenty Years Later”

by Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’



It was a beautiful Fall morning in Michigan. Life was normal and peaceful. I entered the lobby of my office building in Pontiac around 8:45 am EST. Lo and behold! I saw a plane approaching the North Tower of the World Trade Center on the TV screen. OMG! What’s happening? The pilot must be on drugs I thought. Then there was a big smoke. Yes, the plane had hit the tower right on. The security guard (a woman) screamed at the top of her voice,” What the f*%#\$!!”

While we were frozen in shock, I saw another plane approaching the South Tower. I knew exactly then that it was a terrorist attack. No kidding! Both the towers fell creating a pile of dust and debris one after another. 3,000 folks perished in that disaster. Hundreds of firefighters knowing that they won’t come back alive rushed inside the collapsing towers to rescue people. The most heart-wrenching moment for me was watching a person jump in desperation from the 100th floor of the tower to his death.

The twenty-first century had just begun nine months ago. What a disastrous way to start the new century. Things have never been the same since then. To take revenge on the enemy USA went into Afghanistan to cut off the head of the snake. The War on Terror was started by President George W. Bush and ended by Joe Biden twenty years later. On the twentieth anniversary of 9/11, I feel shaken again. I will never understand why someone will kill 3000 innocent people. I know people have lost their lives before also. 9/11 was not the first time that it happened. 450,000 died in the American Civil War. Approximately 85,000,000 died over the course of WWII, including the single-day death tolls of 1,177 at Pearl Harbor, 145,000 in Dresden, and 60,000 at Hiroshima. But I was not a witness to those mayhems nor were those scenes played on live TV for me to watch. That was then. We are in a new century now.

The Al Qaeda hijackers were not paid soldiers. They did not use any of their own weapons to attack us. The whole plot and action were at our cost. They used our planes as missiles, they consumed our fuel and destroyed our landmarks along with killing thousands of us. They left permanent scars in our hearts and souls. That was quite remarkable. They did to us what we could not do to them after spending trillions of dollars, losing thousands of lives, and deploying the most sophisticated weapons mankind has ever known. They hurt us. We couldn't hurt them because they have no conscience. They are devoid of emotions. Above all, they don't have much to lose, anyway. They stone their women to death in front of cheering crowd; they marry their daughters as young as ten years old to terrorists; they massacre and behead their own people mercilessly in the name of religion.

Mr. Bush, who threatened and came through on his promise of 'bombing Afghanistan into the stone age didn't realize that millions of Afghans

were already living in stone ages on 9/11 and they still are. Folks ask me, "Where were you on the day of 9/11?" I was in fear then and I am in fear now. Ruthless people and clans emerge in all ages. We all know about the Huns, the Barbarians, the Mongols and the Nazis. They will not cease to crop up in the future either. 9/11 just happened during our time on terra firma.

Life at twenty-five

Ashok Kumar Lal

A time comes when boy is five,
He learns how to walk,
How to smile, how to talk,
How to run, how to fall.

When he becomes ten,
Writes with pen,
Looks up to men,
Who've sustained.

When sixteen going on seventeen,
Flowers bloom, nature is pristine,
Sun shines brighter, sky looks blue,
He finds love, a constant déjà vu.

At twenty problems are plenty,
Worry of future, makes a bit dainty,

Then comes twenty-five,
He enters into life.

He deal with strife,
Just like bees and hive,
Those who survive,
Really thrive.