

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 25, 2015

The Dilemma of our Society

Every society is recognized from the types of its problems and the nature of its values and habits of its people. The great societies of the world that achieved the zenith of development and success and the ones that have dominated the contemporary socio-political and economic spheres of life are the ones that discuss and value new ideas, knowledge, scientific developments, philosophical questions and modern thoughts. Their considerations and problems are the ones that are related to human development and advancement and the progress of human societies. They do not prefer the issues that are obsolete, have no value in human life and society and can in no way benefit them.

They strive to discover the universe, the living beings in them and try to uncover the reasons of different phenomena. They have reached to other planets and have extended their knowledge and research to the limitless expansions of the universe. They prefer education, educational institutions and respect teachers and students. They spend their whole lives in discovering ways to fight different diseases. They, as a matter of fact, have kept on evolving and developing with the changing nature of time. On the other hand, if our society is recognized by its immature behavior, it is not really weird. Insignificant thoughts and false displays are within the roots of our society. Actually, we are suffering from the stagnancy of thoughts and there is no thirst for knowledge and wisdom within our people. We, as a matter of fact, are the dwarfs who, even standing on their own shoulders, appear to be dwarfs.

The traditions and values in our society are really odd and out of understanding. A limited number of people have decided to devour the entire wealth of the nation. Another group is busy only in the false display of wealth and status. Certain old men have shouldered the responsibility of proving the wrongs of the ruling elite right through holy scriptures; while another honorable group is striving tirelessly to earn fame in every possible manner.

They have, in reality, lost their connection with the actual problems of the time. The most unfortunate fact is that the intellectuals have forgotten their responsibilities. Though they claim their rights from the society but they seem to have forgotten that the society which they ignore cannot be expected to understand their rights, as well. Has earning fame ever been a top priority issue for the same people of the society? Our society has adopted the non-issues and wasting time on them. As a matter of fact, we are far behind our actual social, civil and philosophical problems. Our people are behaving like the immature boys and it seems to be written on our foreheads that we do not have any serious issues at the moment and for the times to come God will keep us away from all the problems.

Though we are human, we have forgotten the habits of thinking and understanding. The fact is that our people have not been provided the required sanity and boldness to ponder upon the challenges of time and challenge the prevailing values and understandings. We are habitual of saying only those words that seem appropriate to everyone as we are afraid to make others angry. We, from the very beginnings of our lives, are taught to compromise and adjust. Even if there is a place for one person to sit in a car, we can adjust two persons there. We strive to fit ourselves in the mould of traditions and practices even though they may be obsolete and insane.

Someone had said that whenever I consider the problems of others as mine, they become angry and consider me their enemy. Same is the case in our society; if a person tries to divert the attention of others towards their actual problems, they mind it and consider it a lie.

We have only a single ideal to pursue and that is our 'past'. Unfortunately, the past has not always been glorious and our people seem to follow the same portion of the past that was inglorious. It is not understandable why our people do not live their own lives instead of living the lives of their forefathers. If they really want to make difference to themselves and to the world they need to start living their own lives - their present not past.

If we lack a serious consideration to our present and to the life, we would never be able to have a sincere relation with knowledge and even with our beliefs. Though we seem to have inhabited the cities, but we have deserted our conscience and our spirits. We seem like alien in our own world. We need to wake up; we need to understand that we are pursuing the wrong directions and the wrong destinations. We must realize that we are not using our humanly attributes in their full capacities and we are not fulfilling the responsibility of being true human being.



Yemen Conflict; Negotiations is the only option!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

The situation in Yemen is getting complicated like the situation in Syria and it is going to be one of the conflicts that are going to exhaust the resources of the region. Although Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies had announced the ending of the operation 'Decisive Storm,' claiming that, the operation had attained all its objectives but after a few hours of this announcement, the Arab allied forces started a fresh series of aerial attacks, which has left almost 33 dead. As per last announcement, the operation 'Decisive Storm' had destroyed all the threats of rebels by destroying their heavy arms. Saudi Arabia then announced the beginning of a new operation by the name of 'Restoring Hope' in which the reconstruction of the country has been taken into consideration. The US, Iran and international community had welcomed the decision of Saudi Arabia to halt the aerial attacks and to begin relief operations. In the same way, Iranian Foreign Minister had tweeted that, 'Iran has believed right from the first day in the peaceful resolution of this problem and that the use of power was not going to make good to anyone'. However, this problem does not seem to be ending so easily in near future and the already destabilized region is going to fall deep into destruction and destabilization.

According to Saudi officials, Iranian government is supporting the Shiite Yemeni rebels in order to end the Sunni government in the country and increase its influence in the region. However, Iran has regularly been rejecting this and denies any involvement of Iran in the internal problems of the country. The Sunni president of the country is now in another Yemeni city of Aden, after the rebels captured the capital, Sana of the country.

The most unfortunate outcome of this conflict is the widening gap and perception between Sunni and Shiite in the region. It must not be forgotten that large numbers of rebel groups (almost all of them with Sunni background) were motivated to join the holy war against the government of Syrian president Bashar-al-Assad just because of the same factor; to finish the government of a Shiite ruler who was ruling on a majority Sunni population of the country. In the same way, the conflicts in Lebanon, Palestine and other parts of Middle East seems to be ignited and fueled using the same reason. It is unfortunate that the religion that had its objective of bringing peace to the lives of people is now being used to divide and harm others.

The involvement of a large number of Arab powers in the conflict also created a great rift in a number of countries of the region. These countries, all of them with Sunni majority population or ruled by a Sunni ruler, were all brought into the war just to stop the increasing influence of Shiite Iranian government in the region. These countries, including of Qatar, UAE, Egypt and others are now actively participating in this conflict while a number of countries thought loyal to the Saudi Arabia and the holy land.

The role of UN and other international powers in this case is also disappointing and objectionable. As UN is an international body to ensure the peace in every corner of the world while the US claims itself to be the champion and savior of democracy and

world order, have not acted properly. The role of other Western powers has not gone beyond issuing statements, criticizing the armed conflict and demanding both the sides to come on the table of negotiations and settle down the issue with peaceful negotiations.

The most benefit of this conflict is going to be enjoyed and benefitted by Israel as now, it has become safe of any kind of problem from Arabs as they are now busy in their internal conflicts and have no time to give attention to Israel. In the same way, the archival of Israel, Iran is also a major player of this conflict and has no time to say or do anything against the Jewish state.

In the long run, this conflict is going to result in even more drastic consequences for the people of Yemen and the region in general. As we have noticed in a number of other countries of region, monarchs, army generals, rebel leaders, dictators and other elements have not given opportunity for democracy to get strength, the end result of this on-going conflict in the region is going to be the same. Though Saudi-backed president Hadi was an elected president but in most part, he was considered a strong supporter of Saudi Arabia and good follower of policy and strategies of a number of international powers of the world. After this conflict, there are a number of possibilities of a new government. It is for certain that both Saudi Arabia and Iran are not going to easily give up the war and the advancement of rebels is still in progress in different parts of the country. Out of numerous possibilities, one possibility is that the rebels would completely control the country but then it would be difficult to expect the restoration of democracy or a government that should be acceptable for the different groups of the country. Another possibility is the return of President Hadi with the support of Saudi Arabia but this option also seems to be very difficult as the ground realities are not much in favor of the ex-president. For the time being, the aerial attacks of Arab allies might be problematic for the rebels but this strategy might be very risky to continue in the long run and allied forces might not take risk of entering their armed forces inside the country. The third possibility, which seems more feasible and reasonable, is to have a round of talks between the opposing factions and settle down on a government in which both the groups should have representation. After the restoration of peace and security in the country, efforts can be made by this coalition government to bring a true democracy and free and fair elections can be held to run the country according to the desires and wishes of people.

At present, Iran is increasingly pressing the world community on the importance of negotiations and this suggestion has not been warmly welcomed by either Saudi Arabia and its allies, or by the international community. Instead of waiting time and resources, efforts should be made to immediately start peace talks between the warring factions so that a permanent end should be brought to the conflict. Otherwise, this war would keep burning and might engulf many other countries of the region.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. he can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com

Will I Survive for Ever?

By Hujjatullah Zia

Do you think that decapitating a number of men in cold blood is a movie's denouement? What about the bitter tears rolling down a woman's cheeks for the loss of her son? Won't you be frozen with fright to see the hot drops of blood oozing from a beheaded body? But I watched such a nightmarish scene in my real life, albeit I was livid with fear and hatred. A taut look appeared on the wan faces of my friends, who saw a headless body on the side of a road when our vehicle passed the Maidan Wardak province. The women grimaced nauseously with hatred and nervousness. Our hearts were beating uncontrollably. A shiver ran down my spine, and I thought that we were spending the last moments of our life. All the travelers fell silent and motionless as a statue and perhaps everybody was imaging their past which elapsed in the blink of an eye. No one dared breathe a word.

The lumpy shapes of rocks and woods looked like an armed man going to shoot at us and the road appeared as a hungry dragon going to devour us soon. We were deep in disappointment. "What if an armed man appear on our way and order us to get off", I asked under my breath. The pictures of hirsute militants, who searched me on the way to Ghazni province few months ago, flashed through my head. A thousand and one questions of such ilk arose in my mind.

The man was beheaded by the Taliban militants - who search the travelers every once in a while and murder those who are reported or suspected of working with government or NGOs. Therefore, people lose their lives without being involved in crime.

"I believe that the perception caused by civilian casualties is one of the most dangerous enemies that we face." These words were spoken in 2009 by then International Security Assistance Force commander, Gen Stanley McChrystal.

They are quoted again at the beginning of a report produced by a group called Physicians for Social Responsibility in collaboration with two others.

The report, entitled Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 years of the 'War on Terror' - Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, begins with what has been one of the most ignored aspects of the conflict: the fact that the US and international forces have made great efforts at counting their own bodies, but few such attempts have been made to count the total number of others killed in this decade of conflict. Citing an example of a German air strike in the Kunduz province, the report cites how a passive investigation reported only that 56 Taliban had been killed. When an active investigation was carried out, it was discovered that there had been in fact a 100 civilian casualties from the strike.

The term 'passive' refers to the limiting of casualties to those re-

ported by "news agencies, hospital registers, police records, etc". As opposed to this, "active methods", such as the ones used by the report, "try to determine all victims in a certain area by investigations on the spot, e.g. by asking families after relatives have been killed".

"The new system of counting bodies produces alarming results. The casualties are not just a few hundred or a few thousand more, but a staggering hundreds of thousands more. In Iraq, the report estimates, the number of civilian casualties between the 2003 and 2012 invasion have been close to a million, or 5pc of Iraq's total population. Furthermore, according to the report, nearly 220,000 civilians have died in Afghanistan and 80,000 in Pakistan.... Yemen now stands poised to be inducted into this club of hapless nations. Whether it is by dereliction or design, a failure to count the dead does not in turn eliminate the wounds they leave behind on the body politic from whence they are wrest."

In Afghanistan, only in the first three months of 2015, civilian casualties from ground engagements rose by eight per cent compared to the same period in 2014. Ground fighting between pro-government forces and anti-government elements caused 521 civilian casualties, with 136 civilians killed and 385 injured.

Total civilian deaths and injuries in the first quarter of 2015 followed the record high levels of 2014. Between 1 January and 31 March, UNAMA documented 1,810 civilian casualties (655 deaths and 1,155 injured), a two per cent decrease from the same period in 2014.

The civilian casualties and abductions have disseminated great fear among the Afghans, especially among the travelers. The unknown fate of the 31 passengers, abducted in Zabul province more than two months ago, augments travelers' worries more than ever before. They fear to encounter the unlucky fate of the abductees.

It was not adventure of me but I was compelled to travel in the throes of war going on between the government forces and the Taliban's ragtag militants. When a bullet struck our vehicle in Nani, aa close to Moqor District, the travelers' faces turned pale but we were fortunate enough to survive. Such incidents pale into insignificance when you see the head of an unlucky man cut and thrown on a side of a road. Whenever I intend to travel, I notice my mother's nervousness and anxiety and I realize what the pain and anguish my family, especially my mother, would suffer if I be abducted or lose my life. But I believe that my fate may not play nicely forever and I will be one of the victims as my compatriots - many other citizens think the same. Hope the national and international forces realize the pains being inflicted upon our nation and adopt a strong strategy to end terrorism.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at Zia_Hujjat@yahoo.com

Chairman / Editor in Chief: Dr.Hussain Yasa

Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: mail@outlookafghanistan.com, outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Omeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan

Sub Office: Shora Road, Street 10, District 6, Kartey 3, Kabul, Afghanistan