

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



November 08, 2015

Withholding Corruption Slackened!

Afghanistan stands among the poorest countries of world with more than 60 percent of its population living below or slightly above the line of poverty; still some officials do not sympathize with Afghans. The most prior reason behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption. Aided with government's intangible plans to eradicate unemployment –the insecurity and despondency have forced large number of youth flee the country in the search for better life.

It was grand conference where the President Ashraf Ghani once again promised to create jobs for the citizens amid alarming flee of Afghans to Europe in a bid to seek employment and peaceful life. Ghani announced at the 5th National Community Development Councils Consultative Conference in Kabul that a number of programs will be launched in weeks to create employment for the citizens. National Solidarity Program (NSP) is a government-run program aimed at developing the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. Stressing the need for implementation of National Solidarity Program (NSP) across the country, he said the programs of all the ministries would be run through NSP in order to develop the Afghan communities in all corners of the country. Ghani admitted that Afghanistan is a rich country but the citizens are facing economic issues. Undeniably, Afghanistan is resource rich country, the timeless abuse and misuse of these resources could not take it out of burden of problems.

Afghanistan's economy is the worst hit by consecutive quacks of corruption. Admittedly the core reason underlined behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption. It is anticipated the government will work out a plan to eradicate this great menace. As the problem of security and corruption persist, there seems to be a declining chance of betterment, and people will still have to wait for actual prosperity. This is a grave state of worsening affair that presses hard the already wrecked economy of Afghanistan and utter negligence of government to tackle the peril of corruption. This is an undeniable fact either government is unwilling or hapless before powerful power abusers –despite the fact, president has been showing interest in lodging cases against power abusers.

Earlier the government launched the 'Smart City Township' Project which was attended by President Ashraf Ghani's legal adviser Abdul Ali Mohammedi, Ghani's special representative for reform and good governance, Ahmad Zia Massoud and other government officials. Surprisingly, the projects are handed over to those individuals whose fame in manipulating public offices could not be earthed. Reportedly, Khalilullah Ferozi, one of the biggest convicts in Kabul Bank scandal, shares a big part in the project. In the wake of renowned bank scandals and financial embezzlements, the international institutions had lost their confidence, undertaking any consignment with Afghan banks and donor countries hesitant to grant financial supports to poverty stricken country.

Kabul Bank, once the country's largest financial institution, was badly shaken and collapsed in 2010 in one of the largest banking schemes in the former history. Given everything ruined the Bank is put on auction, seem an unhesitant act of financial self-immolation. The former chairman of Kabul Bank, Sher Khan Farnood, and CEO Ferozi were sacked from their positions and arrested over the embezzlement of more than \$900 million USD in cash and assets. Ferozi and Farnood were sentenced each to 15 years in jail in a court verdict last November after they were found guilty in the collapse of Kabul Bank, now run by the government. Although, President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday issued a decree invalidating the contract recently signed with a bankrupt debtor of Kabul Bank. After assuming the office president Ghani had pledged last year that he would pursue the manipulators and recover the stolen money of Kabul Bank scam. The move undoubtedly marks the government's unwillingness than negligence using the case and bringing the culprits behind the bars until all the stolen money is not returned. This off-course earns infamy to the leaders of National Unity Government erodes their commitment to fight corruption body and downs their credibility, the significant worst. This stance depicts government is dispensing exceptional confidence on those who ruined a well built institution. This is a grave state of worsening affair that presses hard the already wrecked economy of Afghanistan and utter negligence of government to tackle the peril of corruption. This is an undeniable fact either government is unwilling or hapless before powerful power abusers –despite the fact, president has been showing interest in lodging cases against power abusers. Despite these measures the corrupt officials enjoys misappropriating their positions, provided the system of general amnesty to potential power abuser are chained fast to the ground, given number of influential personalities involved in money embezzlement from public offices, heinous crime against citizens and power misuse were given amnesty without being subjected to strict measures entailing answerability. This attitude of government had discouraged new investments with remnants intended to downsizing and withdrawing a dire omen for progress of country needs immediate reversal by practical measures. This implies that the expanding role of government in development has placed some officials in a monopolistic position and has enhanced the opportunities for unlimited administrative misappropriation.

Religion not Politics Disseminates Peace

By Dilawar Sherzai

Modern human society is a complex outcome of thousand years of evolution. Complex cultures, economic systems, religions, philosophies and sciences have been inter-woven through the web of politics, which has shaped the so-called civilized human states, which are managed by the political governments. These governments practice economic systems and religious ideologies through the tool of politics and only and only politics can be credited and blamed for all the virtues and evils that are present in today's human society. One of the most dominating evils of the contemporary human civilization is war. War has been just like shadow with different forms of social and political setups of human history, and it still threatens human peace and security to a large extent, and again only and only politics can be blamed for it, because it is politics that has invigorated it and nourished it into a monster that is ready to swallow the whole human civilization in no time. The present nature of this monster is very horrible because it is highly equipped with modern scientific and technical capabilities and today international peace is ambiguous because of the threat of the same monster.

Currently, there have been many blames on religions and they are thought to be promulgating conflicts and wars but I don't think they are to be blamed as it is their political interpretations that make them spread hatred and give birth to conflicts. It is difficult to understand how the ones who oppose religion can fill the heinous figure of politics with the colors of innocence and incorruptibility? How can they find violence in the guiltless and demonstrative teachings of religion? How can they talk of peace through a system, which has its footings on the principles of hatred, egocentricity and greed? They fail to understand that in the contemporary world of ours politics is nothing except greed and intense quest for power and popularity. Every politician or political group strives to dominate others in order to gain strength and superiority. Politics in its nature is corrupt. It can never guarantee peace because it has to welcome war. Every political group rises with the downfall of others. Every political group flourishes with the extinction of others. Today, peace is impossible through politics. Politics has to be cunning, self-centered, egoistic, and violent in case of ideological differences. Otherwise, it would cease to exist. For its existence it has to generate issues and on certain occasions even disorder and instability. In words of Groucho Marx, "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies."

On the other hand, religion, in its true form, starts with love and ends in peace. It demands virtue from man and makes him capable of doing so. The very essence of religion is affection. It has to hate war, because its rudimentary teachings are based on welfare of entire humanity. Calvin Coolidge had claimed, "Our government rests upon religion. It is from that source that we derive our reverence for truth and justice, for

equality and liberality, and for the rights of mankind. Unless the people believe in these principles they cannot believe in our government. There are only two main theories of government in our world. One rests on righteousness and the other on force. One appeals to reason, and the other appeals to the sword. One is exemplified in the republic, the other is represented by despotism.

The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country. There is no way by which we can substitute the authority of law for the virtue of man. Of course we endeavor to restrain the vicious, and furnish a fair degree of security and protection by legislation and police control, but the real reform which society in these days is seeking will come as a result of our religious convictions, or they will not come at all. Peace, justice, humanity, charity – these cannot be legislated into being. They are the result of divine grace."

A person enters the kingdom of religion when he washes away his ego, selfishness, and hatred through the ablation of his spirit. Religion performs virtue; otherwise, it does nothing. Religion is determined to strengthen tranquility. As Mahatma Gandhi had said, "I came to the conclusion long ago that all religions were true and that also that all had some error in them, and while I hold by my own religion, I should hold other religions as dear as Hinduism. So we can only pray, if we were Hindus, not that a Christian should become a Hindu; but our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should become a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, and a Christian a better Christian."

As hinted previously, the present form of religion that we find around us is the political demonstration of religion. It is religion in the frame of politics. It is one of the manifestations of political hypocrisy. It is religion caught in the webs of politics, suffocating and striving to make its last breaths possible and history has witnessed that whenever and wherever politicians have raised the slogans of religion in their ideologies they have always wanted to dodge the people through sanctity and honor of the religious beliefs. This is not religion. This is politics, changing forms and means to discriminate innocent masses.

Frank Herbert, commenting on the same issue, had mentioned, "When religion and politics travel in the same cart, the riders believe nothing can stand in their way. Their movements become headlong - faster and faster and faster. They put aside all thoughts of obstacles and forget the precipice does not show itself to the man in a blind rush until it's too late."

If we want to experience religion we have to apply it without any political intentions. Religion itself is a self-perpetuating system. Pure religion is destined to guarantee peace and it will because it starts with love and ends in peace. Anna Sewall puts it beautifully, "There is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast, it is all a shame."

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Women – Culturally Inferior Creature

By Hujjatullah Zia

A clip run in local media shows a woman in a hole in the ground as turbaned men gather around and hurl stones at her with chilling nonchalance. The 19-year-old woman, Rokhsana, is heard repeating the shahada her voice growing increasingly high-pitched as stones strike her with sickening thuds.

The killing took place about a week ago in a Taliban-dominated area just outside Firozkoh, the capital of central Ghor province, officials said, confirming the video which went viral on social media.

The brutal punishment meted out to Rokhsana highlighted the endemic violence against women in Afghan society, despite reforms since the hard-line Taliban regime fell in 2001.

In March a woman named Farkhunda was savagely beaten and set ablaze in central Kabul after being falsely accused of burning a Koran. The mob killing triggered protests around the country and drew global attention to the treatment of Afghan women.

"Women in general have problems all over the country, but in Ghor even more conservative attitudes prevail." In September a video from Ghor appeared to show a woman – covered head to toe in a veil and huddled on the ground – receiving lashes from a turbaned elder in front of a crowd of male spectators. In Afghanistan's traditional culture, women are still considered inferior and therefore, they fall the victim of discrimination and ill-treatments. In restive districts, where Taliban mindsets hold sway, women are treated as pariah and subject to malicious acts. Similarly, girls are not allowed to go out without a male chaperone or attend school. Being arrested after eloping with the men of their choice – which happens to the girls who are forced to get married – the women or girls will be accused of adultery and destined to suffer Rokhsana's fate. It is said that Rokhsana's family had married her off against her will and that she was caught while eloping with another man her age.

In Afghanistan's patriarchal system, a number of girls are forced to live with the men of their parents' choice under the same roof for the whole life – it is mostly rife in remote areas. Our culture has surpassed religious edicts and the laws approved by the government. In other words, forced marriage is forbidden in statute and sharia and the girls are entitled to marry according to their own wills.

Constitutionally, male and female are equal in the eye of law. As a result, it is said in article 22, "Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law." Hence, there is no is-

sue of inferiority or superiority between men and women and both are entitled with equal rights and dignity. In a nutshell, the misogynistic views regarding women have no legal or religious basis; rather it is based on fundamental interpretations of religious texts.

After all, the Constitution of Afghanistan states in article 25 as, "Innocence is the original state. The accused shall be innocent until proven guilty by the order of an authoritative court." Neither a mob nor the tribal elders are constitutionally allowed to punish a criminal under the aegis of enforcing the law. It is only the authoritative courts to implement the law following a fair trial. Those who are involved in punishing one in a desert court are legally criminal and have to be pursued and prosecuted. Ill-fatedly, Afghanistan is in the grip of injustice and poor implementation of law.

Although, everyone is equal in the eye of law irrespective of their sex, race, beliefs and social status, nonetheless, the rich and the influential are considered beyond the law and bribery holds sway in judicial system. Earlier, the US-based non-profit association World Justice Project (WJP) released that Afghanistan is ranked the second-worst country in rule of law after Venezuela from 102 countries.

The violators of women's rights are hardly prosecuted. Many rape victims are called "prostitute" rather than being supported in case of filing charges against the rapists. Their voice falls of deaf ears. In another item, women suffer discrimination, on the grounds of their sex, in judicial systems too – though they are equal according to the law.

The fact is that the legislative and executive branches are not going parallel to each other regarding the criminal cases and it is one of the great challenges in the country. Our law is based on religious standards, justice and ethical codes but it is implemented unjustly; therefore, it fails to stop crime. The government has to enforce the law fairly and take legal action against the violators. In short, the government has vowed to "Form a civil society void of oppression, atrocity, discrimination as well as violence, based on rule of law, social justice, protecting integrity and human rights, and attaining peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights ... attain a prosperous life and sound living environment for all inhabitants of this land; and, eventually, regain Afghanistan's appropriate place in the international family," it is stated in the preamble of the Constitution. However, none of the said statements are achieved and the country is fraught with political, social and economic problems. Recently, the challenges have been escalated on a larger scale. I would like to emphasize that the crises will not be tackled unless the government implements the law fairly.

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