

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



September 23, 2017

Achieving Balance in Society

Though human beings claim to have evolved and developed to a great extent, they have not been able to provide some of the very basic requirements to their own selves. There are millions of people around the world who do not possess the rudimentary requirements to live alive. This fact has made them suffer to a large extent. As, they are not able to find their basic requirements, they are not capable of thinking beyond them. Most of their lives are spent in struggle to fulfill those requirements, and stay away from the different sorts of achievements, which can only be a luxury for them.

The basic requirements of the human beings are their basic rights and the states wherein the people live must guarantee affordable supply of these needs.

Having acquired their basic needs, human beings can move towards their self actualization and personality development. In the process, they can prove to be positive members of the society as well. But human beings have badly failed to eliminate poverty and provide for the rudimentary requirements even in the presence of unlimited resources. Why have they failed in doing so? Though human beings consider themselves the best of all the creatures and believe that they possess wisdom, they have not been able to fight against their evident destruction. They claim to have developed complex societies that are run by well established systems of society, economy and politics, yet they remain impoverished. What can be the actual reason for this failure?

There are few who believe that human beings are so because of their nature. They are of the view that human beings follow the basic biological law - struggle for survival and survival of the fittest, and therefore only those, among them can achieve their basic requirements that are the fittest; while the other remain deprived.

Nevertheless, they fail to realize an important aspect of the theory that may apply to the struggle among the different species for the survival not among the members of the same specie for their individual survival and grandeur. Such a struggle would ultimately result in the destruction of the social life as a whole as every individual would be following his selfish desires not the welfare of the society. The ones who opt for social wellbeing and collectively and strive for the same have the maximum chances of survival and success. No human being on the face of the earth can survive alone. He would always need others to live with; therefore, he does not have any other option but to live and cooperate with others and strive for their wellbeing as well.

Unfortunately, human beings are not so. Human beings are divided into 'haves' and 'have-nots'. They are divided in the rich and the poor. The rich have all the requirements of life and they enjoy all the luxuries as well while the poor suffer because of the lack of basic requirements. This is not nature that has decided such an arrangement; it is human beings themselves. The nature does not differentiate the human beings into rich and poor.

The scented breeze in the nature blows for everyone without the distinction of race, community, poor and rich. The river that flows in nature provides everyone with same bewitching scene and cold water to drink. The fountains do not recognize the strata and the economic status. And even the natural calamities; like earthquakes, floods and deadly hurricanes destroys everyone equally. However, some may have developed better defense against all these calamities by the dint of their wealth, which is because of the economic system in society developed by human beings themselves, not the nature. It is the socio-economic and political systems in the country that divide the human beings in different classes. These classes are distinguished with vivid and sharp boundaries. The differences found in these classes are gigantic and one wonders how human beings are really satisfied with so much distinctions.

The examples are not difficult to find. There are millions of poor people in the world. They have not enough food to eat, no water to drink and no cloth to wear. The economic system developed by human beings, with the intentions to fulfill their requirements, has in fact cheated them and they are at a stage of misery. The class-based system and the vivid class disparities have neutralized the capacity of human beings to fulfill their basic requirements from the infinite resources. This has generated an imbalanced system. This imbalance has further created different sorts of evils in society. There are crimes and injustices because of the same system.

Poor, because of negligence and lack of basic requirements are bound to break the law and the rich, because of their authority to mock the law and order system, break it. Poor, to quench the thirst of their children and fill their stomach with few morsels of food, break the law; while the rich, to quench their thirst for luxury and adventure, break it. This system cannot guarantee sustainability and therefore, human beings must strive to change it for better.



Awake Conscience and Restless Hearts

By Mosini Ghafouri

There are several kinds of tendencies, including positive and negative, in human's nature if one views from anthropological perspective. "Sympathy" is also a sort of tendency which is underlined in Islamic mysticism. That is to say, sympathy and empathy are the mainstay of human nature. Love is a positive essence and a profound sense of feelings and burning desires which know boundary neither in creature nor in concept.

However, extreme love will often result in harshness and abnormality, which is detrimental. The true sense of love belongs to the Creator and those who bears faith will be in deep love with Him. Love to mankind is believed to stem from love to the Creator. Love to both the Creator and creature is found in pure spirit. In mysticism, all existence will be the subject of true love.

The tendency of showing kindness to other individuals is put in human's nature and one will engage in devotion and selflessness for the well-being of their fellows and accept to suffer for the satisfaction of others. These tendencies are also symbolized in literature, poems, music, etc. With the interpretations of such tendencies, the sense of responsibility will emerge. If you love one, you will make sacrifices wholeheartedly and shoulder each and every responsibility for attracting their satisfaction. Here, you will hold them in respect and treat them with humbleness.

The trust and confidence will be gained through love and the beloved will be your confidant. Sympathetic views will trigger a sense of care and empathy. So, you will feel this profound sentiment and sacrifice anything for the sake of your beloved. An overwhelming number of moral concepts about the human's attitude will be evaluated on the basis of the very tendencies. For instance, one's behavior will be tinged with honesty since true lovers will not play a wicked role rather their appearance and personality will parallel. Those who cherish love will close their eyes to negative attitudes. They will not seek revenge and find no reason behind nurturing hostility or hatred.

In another item, they are optimistic and will never yield to despair. According to psychologists, optimistic individuals will see the half full of the glass rather than the half empty one. Moreover, they are fresh and energetic and will motivate others, especially while meeting them. This will trigger an inner tranquility and sense of satisfaction. Those who love others are seeking purification and will uphold

moral values, too. Regarding anthropology, I discuss this topic with my students at university and try to illustrate the positive aspects and valuable inclination which were mentioned above.

However, the tragic and bitter incidents which happen in our surroundings have filled them with negative feelings. Heartrending events occur almost every day that remind one of Hobbes' statement that "man is man's wolf". The daily tragedies reflect the ugly face of mankind. So, one will assume that humans are villain inherently and wickedness rule their nature.

Despite the harsh practices and evil acts of those who are deeply involved in thinking sparking off violence and horror, there are thousands of other individuals who struggle to reflect the beautiful face of human beings. Indeed, there are a large number of people whose nature has not been polluted by corruption.

They listen to the call of their conscience. Their pure conscience are devoted to the underprivileged. It is worth saying that if you disregard the inhuman practices of the people who pursue their political objectives or self-interests, there are many others who leave no stone unturned for the well-being of their human fellows. Cherishing altruistic issues, they struggle from dawn to dusk and it is the product of purification and the essence of love.

There are also thousands of charities that make efforts to support their fellows in critical conditions and reduce their sufferings. So, it is strongly believed that humanity has not eroded completely and there is much sound and awake conscience. In short, there are still individuals when one needs a shoulder to cry on and kind hearts that sympathize us in critical moments.

On the other hand, this is our moral and religious obligations, beside inner tendencies, to support our human fellows and play our role as much as possible.

According to religious texts, the have-nots bear rights over the haves and this will be fulfilled when the rich help the poor. It is also said that those who hear one shouting for help, have to support them. Considering this inner sense and religious obligations, a large number of people have engaged in kind and helpful acts so as to reduce the pain and problems of the needy. So, there are people who listen to the call of their conscience and fulfill their moral duties.

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The Risk of a New Economic Non-Order

By Mohamed A. El-Erian

Next month, when finance ministers and central bank governors from more than 180 countries gather in Washington, DC, for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, they will confront a global economic order under increasing strain. Having failed to deliver the inclusive economic prosperity of which it is capable, that order is subject to growing doubts - and mounting challenges. Barring a course correction, the risks that today's order will yield to a world economic non-order will only intensify.

The current international economic order, spearheaded by the United States and its allies in the wake of World War II, is underpinned by multilateral institutions, including the IMF and the World Bank. These institutions were designed to crystallize member countries' obligations, and they embodied a set of best economic-policy practices that evolved into what became known as the "Washington Consensus." That consensus was rooted in an economic paradigm that aimed to promote win-win interactions among countries, emphasizing trade liberalization, relatively unrestricted cross-border capital flows, free-market pricing, and domestic deregulation. All of this stood in stark contrast to what developed behind the Iron Curtain and in China over the first half of the postwar period.

For several decades, the Western-led international order functioned well, helping to deliver prosperity and relative financial stability. Then it was shaken by a series of financial shocks that culminated in the 2008 global financial crisis, which triggered cascading economic failures that pushed the world to the edge of a devastating multi-year depression. It was the most severe economic breakdown since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But the crisis did not appear out of nowhere to challenge a healthy economic order. On the contrary, the evolution of the global order had long been outpaced by structural economic changes on the ground, with multilateral governance institutions taking too long to recognize fully the significance of financial-sector developments and their impact on the real economy, or to make adequate room for emerging economies.

For example, governance structures, including voting power, correspond better to the economic realities of yesterday than to those of today and tomorrow. And nationality, rather than merit, still is the dominant guide for the appointment of these institutions' leaders, with top positions still reserved for European and US citizens.

The destabilizing consequences of this obstinate failure to reform sufficiently multilateral governance have been compounded by China's own struggle to reconcile its domestic priorities with its global economic responsibilities as the world's second-largest economy.

Several other countries, particularly among the advanced economies, have also failed to transform their domestic policies to account for changes to economic relationships resulting from globalization, liberalization, and deregulation. As a result of all of this, the balance of winners and losers has become increasingly extreme and more difficult

to manage, not just economically, but also politically and socially. With too many people feeling marginalized, forgotten, and dispossessed - and angry at the leaders and institutions that have allowed this to happen - domestic policy pressure has intensified, causing countries to turn inward.

This tendency is reflected in recent challenges to several features of the economic order, such as the North American Free-Trade Agreement, as well as America's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the United Kingdom's renunciation of European Union membership. All are casting a shadow on the future of the global economic system.

America's inward turn, already underway for several years, has been particularly consequential, because it leaves the world order without a main conductor. With no other country or group of countries anywhere close to being in a position to carry the baton, the emergence of what the political scientist Ian Bremmer has called a "G-Zero era" becomes a lot more probable.

China is responding to the global system's weakening core by accelerating its efforts to build small networks, including around the traditional Western-dominated power structures. This has included the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the proliferation of bilateral payments agreements, and the pursuit of the "Belt and Road Initiative" to build infrastructure linking China with western Asia, Europe, and Africa.

These dynamics are stoking trade tensions and raising the risk of economic fragmentation. If this trend continues, the global economic and financial configuration will become increasingly unstable, amplifying geopolitical and security threats at a time when better cross-border coordination is vital to address threats from non-state actors and disruptive regimes, such as North Korea.

Over time, the risks associated with this shift toward a global economic non-order could have severe adverse effects on geopolitics and national security.

None of this is new. Yet year after year, top government officials at the IMF/World Bank annual meetings fail to address it. This year is likely to be no different. Instead of discussing concrete steps to slow and reverse the march toward a global economic non-order, officials will probably welcome the cyclical uptick in global growth and urge member countries to do more to remove structural impediments to faster, more durable, and more inclusive growth. While understandable, that isn't good enough.

The upcoming meetings offer a critical opportunity to start a serious discussion of how to arrest the lose-lose dynamics that have been gaining traction in the global economy.

The longer it takes for the seeds of reform to be sown, the less likely they will be to take root - and the higher the probability that a lose-lose world economic non-order will emerge. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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