

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



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Our Attitude Towards Social Evils

There have been many evils in human societies that have been disrupting the smooth development and improvement. Though there have been efforts to overcome them, they have kept on existing in some way or the other. They clearly depict that human societies are never perfect and there are always certain shortcomings. It is important to understand those shortcomings and strive to find out the main causes of those evils and their appropriate solutions in order to support the societies move towards perfection.

Though it is a matter of concern that a social evil erupts in a society, more concerning, however, is when the evil keeps on increasing or gaining strength and starts penetrating within social fabrics. One of the basic reasons that any evil gets promoted within a society is the appreciation and support it gets from within the society members. Or there may be indifference on the part of society members towards the evil. The members of the society may neglect the evil and thus support in promulgating it.

The example of Afghan society in this regard is very much relevant. There are different social evils that get no proper attention by the members of the society. For instance, the evil of corruption has penetrated deep within Afghan society and most of the institutions in the country are being influenced by it in some way or the other, yet it is not being taken as much seriously as it should be taken. People consider it an integral part of their social life. They complete their tasks through corrupt ways without even feeling guilty. Corruption, unfortunately, is a now a routine. It is no more weird to find corruption; the weird incident is to find someone being honest. Such a social value is really very much pathetic and it has kept on feeding corruption to a great extent.

People's indifference towards corruption around them is really very sad; there has not been any comprehensive movement or there have not been series of protests to condemn corruption within Afghan society. Though there have been many protests and demonstrations on the issues that are not vital for the people of Afghanistan at all, but, unfortunately, the evil of corruption which is crippling the social system within the country has faced no comprehensive protest.

It is common to find people, who complain against corruption, getting involved in corruption easily. It is easier for them to get their tasks done through some bribery and recommendation than to follow the honest, lengthy and tiring process of 'honest means'. They quite easily forget their demands for corruption-free society and higher standards of honesty.

It is not to deny that the people responsible for controlling the corruption must play a role in controlling the corruption, but the importance of social movements is very much vital in facing a social evil. The control mechanism within a society can enforce a law and can control a social evil by force to a certain level but if the society members do not support the mechanism it is very difficult to control the situation. For example, the violence against women in Afghanistan has been identified as social evil by the control mechanism, yet it has not been controlled as Afghan society is not yet ready to accept it as social evil. The society members do not consider it inhuman and unlawful to carryout violence against women. It is very much normal in patriarchal Afghan society to find husbands beating their wives, fathers beating their daughters and brothers being violent to their sisters. And when there are cruel incidents of violence against women, the society members, except few, do not come to the roads to protest and shun such incidents as social evils.

Same is the case with the evil of drug use. The people of Afghanistan use drugs as if they are part of their normal lives. People use it as painkillers and as medicine to fight against cold weather. Though in some cases people do so because they are not fully aware of their negative consequences but at others they just do so because they are totally indifferent towards the issue. They know that using such drugs may lead them towards negative consequences, yet they are not ready to avoid them and find out ways of getting rid of them.

It is really imperative to note that the sustainability of any social evil within the society largely depends on the attitude of the society members towards the evil. If from the very beginning the society members realize that social evils are negative and they are hindrance for the development of the society and may generate problems for them, there are possibilities of fighting the social evils properly, but if the society, either due to ignorance or negligence or individual considerations, remains indifferent towards evils, it would be very difficult to control them. Therefore, it is necessary that as a part of society, we must feel our responsibility and be very much vigilant. It is our responsibility to rise against the social evils, stand against them and raise our voice. Unless we respond to those evils we do not have the right to complain about them and we do not have any way of avoiding them.



A Contemplation on the Development Obstacles in Afghanistan

By *Mustafa Nasiri*

Why USA and Canada improved and the Latin American countries remained backward? How did the Great Britain develop? Why and how did Western Europe develop rapidly while others lagged behind? How come Japan emerged as the first developed country in Asia? Which pathway did today's developed countries follow? And how is China pushing forward to complete the full circle and catch up with the west?

Shuffling the pages of history and studying the development pathways of developed countries, we will come to know that all these countries have followed almost the same principle. The principle which made United states of America not only the super power, but also the biggest economy and the beckon of modern technology. The principle that differentiated Western Europe from the rest of this continent. The path way that made history to the long and severely poverty in Tsarist Russia. The formula that turned Japan as the first Asian advanced country before the World Wars and the second largest economy within just three decades after the World War 2. Now what is this principle and formula that changed the world from an agrarian to industrialized and commercialized world? This is nothing, but a set of four policies which was prioritized by the Western Europe and the USA to catch up with the Great Britain. This is the Standard Development Model with the following four principles:

- 1- Creation of a unified national market by eliminating internal tariffs and building transportation infrastructure;
- 2- The erection of an external tariff to protect their industries from British competition;
- 3- The chartering of banks to stabilize the currency and finance industrial investment; and
- 4- The establishment of mass education to upgrade the labour force.

Countries that adopted this set of four policies completely, developed rapidly, caught up with England and changed the living standards of their people. Some nations like Russia and Mexico adopted these principles incompletely, and thus improved, but not to the extent to catch up with the west. Therefore they lagged behind USA and Western Europe, but far better than the rest of the world. However, some others, like Japan modified the development model in accordance to their own circumstance and the modification worked for them. Some others followed on heels of these now advanced countries, but those suitable to their own conditions to catch up to the west. South Korea and Taiwan followed close on Japanese modified model which gave them an ambiguous start. China's rapid growing economy which is the result of free-market reforms, the planning period (1950-78) and reform period (1978 to present) is another great example of modifying this model.

So China is on course to catch up with the West. Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, some of the Arabic countries such as Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, etc. are special cases with large oil and diamond reserves. Singapore and Hong Kong are city states, and that makes them special since there was no peasant agricultural sector to swamp the city with migrants when investment rises. But what of the large agricultural countries in Africa, Latin America and the rest of Asia? What of my country, the beloved Afghanistan with its large agricultural sector? These poor countries, including Afghanistan would have to grow at 4.3% per person per year to catch up to the rich countries in 60 years. The total GDP of these states have to grow at least 6% per year for 60 years. Much poorer countries, like many in sub-Saharan Africa, would have to grow even faster, or it would take even longer to catch up. For that to happen, these countries must apply the standard model and follow on the heels of those advanced countries with similar contexts. As for Afghanistan, the market economy system which has been enacted after the fall of Taliban regime in 2001, created the opportunity for the adaptation of the standard development model. However, the application of these four policies in the framework of new economic system and in the new era, is highly under question. First, there was no tariff on internal and domestic goods being transported among the provinces and domestic markets even during the kingdoms. But the existence of a unified national market is under question. There are at least 5 separate markets in 5 different zones; namely the Kabul market in central zone, Mazar in the north, Jalalabad in the east, Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south. The transportation system among these markets is only based on high way roads. These high ways, that link the different regions of this mountainous country,

were completely destroyed during the civil war. Though they are asphalted during the Karzai regime, but have never been expanded. The Heart-Kabul high way has even been exacerbated in terms of security in the past 13 years. The bridges along the high way are being blasted, trucks carrying staple goods, fuel and other groceries are being rocketed and burned which rises the prices for the consumers even higher than internal tariffs and excise taxes. Railways were planned in Afghanistan since the 19th century but never completed. At least one rail track was built in the capital, Kabul during the 1920s but was dismantled as Afghan leaders resisted the railway age. Currently there are only two railway tracks between Hairatan and Mazar-e-sharif, connecting northern capital with Uzbekistan, and the Mashhad - Herat highway (freight only) in the west.

Second, although private sector has played its role to some extent to produce the goods which can be produced domestically, but most of the private companies inside the industrial parks have been bankrupted. These newly established companies couldn't compete with neighboring companies. A good example is our publishing sector. Currently there are 180 publishing companies in the country, but only 20 of them are active. The rest are all out-competed by neighboring companies. This is definitely the fault of Afghan government in general and Ministry of Commerce and Industries in particular. The government could enact tariffs on those imported goods which could be produced domestically. Unfortunately it has never taken a giant stride to do so. Lack of good and conservative trade policies, smuggling of goods across the border, bribery, insecurity and poor government, all and all play role in the failure to protect Afghan industries from neighboring competitions.

Third, the chartering of banks were also started in 20th century. Based on market economy, the law of Da Afghanistan Bank was passed in 2003 as the central bank to stabilize the currency and control financial system. Several other banks have also been established during the new era. But due to administration and financial corruptions, none has been supportive in financing industrial investment. Kabul Bank fraud, which resulted in almost \$1b loss and its collapse (which is said to be one of the largest banking fraud in the world) and the recent robbery by the managers of a branch of central bank in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar, are the two clear examples of corruption and poor banking system in the country. These banks are no longer reliable for creditors and thus can not finance industrial investment in the near future at least.

Fourth, education which plays the most vital role in all parts of human life, improved in part in secure areas during the new regime. Thousands of new schools and dozens of private universities have been opened. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls are enrolled in school during the new era. Thousands of high school and bachelor degree holders are being sent abroad for acquiring higher education every year, which carries a great beam of hope for the future of the country. However, on the other hand the education system, still faces big challenges. Thousands of schools are closed, hundred other burned in provinces under the influence of Taliban and insurgent groups. The most dangerous and tackling challenge, however, is the presence of prejudiced, dogmatic and illiberal figures as the top officials in the education and higher-education ministries. Teaching, which is the most supreme job in the developed world, is unfortunately deemed as a third-class job in our country. Teachers are the nobles of advanced societies.

They are the brightest members of a society, and the facilitators of a prosperous future for its next generation. But unfortunately, in Afghanistan the government has never recognized the seriousness of this issue. Neither has it taken a serious stride to improve the livelihood of these noble members. The salary being provided to teachers and professors in national schools and universities are too low to be adequate for them to feed their families and improve their economic conditions. As a result they feel irresponsible towards their profession, take part in bribery and contribute in corruption. Finally, I would only recommend two things for the government and people of my country in order to catch up with the west in 60 years. For the government to undertake a universal reform, and for the people to burn the candle of their minds with the light of education. Every single problem can be attributed to lack of education, literacy and knowledge. Fight against illiteracy, educate the future generation, and they will find themselves on the right track towards development.

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A Decade of Counter-terrorism Fails

By *Hujjatullah Zia*

The macabre stories of violence and carnage fill our bleeding nation with a great sense of anguish and disappointment. The recent police and civilian casualties in Badakhshan and Jalalabad came as a complete shock to our people. To the Afghans' unmitigated chagrin, the untoward incidents seem to be forebodings about a bloody year. Terrorism looms large again despite being countered for the last decade by Karzai's government and US-led NATO forces.

The revival of the Afghan Taliban as a powerful insurgent force that was apparently routed in 2001 should not come as a surprise. In fact, the radical group was never really defeated. Their fighters melted away into the population or took sanctuary across the border.

In that initial period, senior leaders were fragmented and disunited over what they should do. The shock and trauma of the fall of their regime had paralyzed the leadership. The organization had crumbled. There was no structure under which to regroup and revive. While some were determined to fight, others were more inclined to explore negotiated political options.

It took less than two years for the Taliban leadership to recover and rebuild its structure. In June 2003, a 10-member leadership shura council was formed and given responsibility to formulate a political and military strategy for the resistance. The period from 2003 to 2005 was a turning point as the Taliban consolidated their organizational structure and expanded their activities.

"One of the biggest mistakes was the failure of the West to avoid the perception that it was a party in the Afghan civil war. As a result, this phase of the war, that came to an end last December, saw the winding up of the US combat mission with no victory, illusory or otherwise."

According to some reports, the Afghan army lost more than 17,000 troops and civilian employees as a result of desertions, combat deaths and discharges, leaving the force significantly weakened in the fight against the Taliban. Such attrition levels appear to be unsustainable.

"But it is not clear how slowing the drawdown of the US troops in Afghanistan could help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, the goal that has remained elusive for more than one decade of conflict. It is unlikely that a limited US presence can guarantee the stability that more than 130,000 American troops at one point could not achieve. 'It would be a mistake to change the withdrawal schedule without strong evidence that it would make a difference.'" Currently, the deteriorated security situation is a cause for great concerns for Afghan people. A spate of odious incidents reveals the critical

situation across the country. As a result, the unknown fate of 31 passengers who were abducted in Zabul province more than two months ago, the decapitation of 4 abductees in Ghazni, the death of about 30 Afghan soldiers in Badakhshan, the suicide bombings which left 33 dead and 125 wounded behind in Jalalabad and the abduction of 19 minefield workers in Paktia raised the public concerns.

The IS (Daesh) is said to claim responsibility for the suicide bombing carried out in Nangarhar province, however it is believed that a group of the Taliban ragtag militants have "changed their white flag into black one" labeling themselves as "Daesh". This deadly attack, targeted the civilians, has revealed the sinister face of the Taliban once more. The militants terrorize indiscriminately the combatants and non-combatants alike to put the government under question and display their puissant force. If this trend continues, the government will lose its trust more than ever before.

People are in a state of utter confusion and frustration. The instability has led to a mass of unemployment and lack of investment. How a businessman can dare invest in a country where vendors and taxi drivers lose their lives on the streets, students are killed on the way to schools, passengers are abducted and soldiers are decapitated. In such a chaos, there is no assurance for the tradesmen to enjoy peace and security.

The government's responsibility is stated in the preamble of the country's Constitution as, "In order to: Strengthen national unity, safeguard independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country; establish an order based on the peoples' will and democracy; 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; strengthen political, social, economic as well as defense institutions; 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." In the face of these sacred but idealistic purposes, people suffer in the worst possible way. A myriad of Afghan citizens are bereft of their fundamental rights - the rights to life, liberty, property, education, etc. Democracy is in a moribund state and social justice and rule of the law were never applied in the social life. Hope, the government's responsibilities stated in the Constitution be put into practice so as to heal the wounded hearts of the citizens, who are victimized constantly. In short, Afghans are in urgent need of the "civil society void of oppression, atrocity, etc." promised in the Constitution.

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