

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



April 27, 2017

## The Curse of Destitution

Destitution is a major issue that is being faced by almost all the countries in the world. Though there have been efforts on national and international levels by different countries, no considerable achievement has been made and billions of people still suffer from it in different ways. The destitute do not only suffer from aching of starvation but also from the discriminating behavior of the society. The society treats the destitute just like orphans. People try to avoid their company and thus isolate them in the worst possible manner. They do not seem to have any dignity and respect even among his close relatives.

They seem to go through a certain agony and in that agony there is hunger, disease, grief and lengthy days and nights. Hunger is the worst of them. It engulfs human senses and thinking. A hungry person does not seem to be thinking about anything else other than food to eat. All his thoughts, his attention and feelings are bound to be searching food.

Luxurious aesthetic sense, praise for beauty and work of art, social responsibility and religious obligations all seem to be negligible as compared to the agony of the hunger he is suffering from.

And then a country suffering from destitution tends to have more social problems. Consider the example of Afghanistan – there are many social problems that have their roots in this evil. Corruption, theft, drug addiction and even terrorism, in some or other, are connected to it. There are thieves who steal in order to feed their families who are suffering from starvation.

There are youngsters, who having found no job and having no sources of income join terrorists who promise them some money. There are many others of the youngsters who have become suicide bombers and can be bought for some hundreds of dollar. And then there are the ones who have given up struggling against the cruel poverty and opted for drugs – at least addiction minimizes their pain and make them more forgetful of their miserable lives.

However, these facts are never pondered upon. Corruption, theft and drug addiction are now being related to 'Criminal Genes' and 'Filthy Blood'. It is said that thieves, addicts and terrorists are so because of their nature.

However the actual fact is being covered.

The social circumstances and the irresponsible human attitude that are basically responsible for most of the poverty are not being discussed. Basil the Great beautifully quotes a reality, "When someone steals another's clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not?"

The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor."

It can be easily observed that there are many people in our society who work from dawn till dusk, with all the energies they have and still they suffer from destitution and their families do not have rudimentary requirements of life and then there are few others who are born in rich families, do nothing and still have all the luxuries of life. This is not even fortune or luck, it is the socio-economic setup that has made such a tragic reality possible.

It is supporting the rich to become richer and pushing the poor deeper in the abyss of destitution.

We, human beings, require to change our consideration. Why are we not able to see the suffering of the millions whom we experience every day, but we are able to focus our attentions towards the things that are less important and more destructive? We are ready to exert our energy for weapons, wars and ways of annihilating others but never concentrate on how we can help the destitute who are living from hand to mouth in our immediate neighborhood.

This is, in fact, the biggest injustice that we are doing to our own specie. Dwight D.

Eisenhower had said that every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists and the hopes of its children.

This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.

Our country Afghanistan also requires to fight the menace of destitution seriously as more than 20 million people live below the poverty line. All the other fights relating to insecurity, terrorism, corruption and crimes must be dealt as secondary and all the efforts must be diverted for slaying the giant of destitution; otherwise, all the efforts would end up in smoke.



## The Consequence and Solution for Child Marriage

By Zia Danish

Marriage has certain rules and regulations in Islam and other Abrahamic religions for establishing a sound community and cherishing sound generation. Getting marriage will not achieve its holy objective if it not based on mutual satisfaction and willing. Both life-partners have to be matured physically and mentally, which is highly underlined by Islam, so that they would be able to decide about their marriage. According to Islamic tenet, under-aged marriage or forming a matrimonial life without mutual satisfaction and understanding will be of no value.

Under-aged and forced marriages, however, are rife in Afghanistan which have led to social and moral challenges. Such kinds of marriage are void of individuals' willing and volition. To campaign against this fact, the National Unity Government (NUG) has approved a five-year strategy. National Program for Campaigning against Under-aged Marriages

The NUG, along with national and international supports, has approved national agenda for campaigning against under-aged and forced marriages with the aim of putting an end to such kinds of marriages within five years (2017 - 2021). The ministries of Women Affairs and Information and Culture, supported by United Nation's Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and Embassy of Canada and other national and international organizations, have planned this program.

The National Program for Campaigning against Under-aged Marriage will form committee in provinces to operate in this regard and spread public awareness. Similarly, to catalyze this plan and eradicate under-aged marriages, this organization will work systematically through: empowering women, training job professions, giving awareness to parents and citizens regarding marriage, promoting teaching quality in girls' schools, and strengthening legal frames. Although there is not a certain statistic, it is said that the graph of forced and under-aged marriages will reach 57 per cent. The age for marriage is approved 16 for females and 18 for males in Afghanistan's Civil Law.

It is worth mentioning that forced and under-aged marriages are not rife only in Afghanistan, but it has been changed into a global challenge.

Reason behind Under-aged Marriages:

There are several reasons behind forced and under-aged marriages which are stated as blow:

(1) Poverty: misery and financial constraints have led to forced marriages across the country. For instance, a number of poor families forced their small daughters, who were not ready physically for matrimonial life, to get married so

that they could find a morsel of bread or survive hunger. Similarly, they have made their daughters, perhaps they were mature physically, get married without the men of their choice.

(2) Lack of knowledge within families: a large number of families, mainly those who live in remote areas, are not aware of the social aspects of under-aged marriage. In addition, they are not aware of women's rights from religious and legal perspective.

(3) Violence: public violence and armed conflicts led to baad (a tribal tradition in Afghanistan that give a daughter to victim's family to reciprocate a man's crime) in many cases and small girls fall victims in this respect.

(4) Patriarchal system: patriarchy, traditional cultures and inappropriate outlook regarding women have resulted in violation of their rights vis-à-vis marriage.

Consequence of Forced and Under-aged Marriages:

The forced and under-aged marriages will lead to: relentless violence against women, disturbing individual and family peace, stoking social brawl, suicide, murder, escape, damaging social norm, violation of moral norms, etc. The worst aspect of forced marriage is violating religious and Islamic values. Similarly, such kinds of marriage will increase mothers' fatalities, catalyze imperfect birth, and harming one's emotions.

Ways to Prevent Under-aged Marriages:

It is believed that the government's national plans for eliminating under-aged marriages will not be an effective remedy for this issue. The nation, too, will have to fulfill their human and religious responsibilities in the best possible way. For instance, the clergy and Ulema Council are supposed to spread awareness over women's rights. Moreover, families are to be given awareness and social institutions are to be supported for campaigning against child's marriages. Meanwhile, the media should spread awareness in this regard, and the officials should implement the law and prosecute the violators of law. These factors are believed to support the national programs for eliminating child's marriages.

However, it is worth mentioning that under-aged marriage is deemed as violence against women as a statistics by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) suggests that the number of women who got married in early ages will be around 700 million. It adds that this number will reach to 950 million people in 2030.

It goes without saying that under-aged marriage has not taken place overnight. According to researchers, it has a long history about 2000 years.

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## The Relentless Violation of Human Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

The heart-wrenching picture of three-year-old Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi, who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea on September 02, 2015, reflected the pains and sufferings of Syrian nation. His family sought to escape civil war and the barbarity of the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group so as to exercise their rights in a society void of violence and bloodshed. Aylan's picture outraged the conscience of the world and prompted a global sensation. However, not only Syria but the entire region suffer from war and militancy.

With the start of Syria's conflict in 2011, more than 465,000 people have been reportedly killed, more than 1 million wounded and more than 12 million were displaced. Al-jazeera quotes the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that the US-led coalition air strike has killed at least 1,264 civilians since September 2014. It adds that government killed at least 10,915, including 2,393 children, and wounded 64,000 people within more than two years air strikes. A large number of Syrians are burning amidst violence in Raqqa province where conflict has escalated.

"The UN is deeply concerned for the safety and protection of over 400,000 people in Raqqa, in Syria. In past weeks, civilians have been exposed to daily fighting and air strikes which resulted in an escalating number of civilian deaths and injuries as well as damage to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, markets and water infrastructure," a press released by UN is cited as saying. The war continues taking casualties from civilians, including women and children, perhaps every minute in Syria.

No wonder, human fatalities and destruction of infrastructures are the ugliest and most common aspect of war in a country. Humanitarian law is disregarded especially when the fighters are the insurgent groups that show no respect to ethical code or international instruments. The ISIL group, which is globally known as the most radical and violent faction, kill women and children in cold blood on the grounds of their racial and religious backgrounds.

In short, Syrians bear the brunt of ISIL's violent ideology and slayed by all warring factions, involved in Syria's conflict, without in iota of mercy.

The Syrian freedom fighters resorted to arms so that they could bring democracy in their country through collapsing an illegal regime which was established by inheritance rather than public referendum or election. Their dream led to nonstop war that many parties, including the ISIL fighters, capitalize on it and seek to shed more blood. This war will be a pyrrhic victory for Syrians.

In fact, the violent practices of the ISIL group has gone beyond the Iraq and Syria's borders posing a serious threat to

the region, perhaps to the entire world.

It is believed that every individual is affected by war and violence in one way or another. Those who do not suffer physically sustain mental pressures. In other words, at least the world is shocked by the pictures and reports of war and feels the anguish of the victims. Whose conscience will not be outraged over the bodies of women and children riddled with bullets? Indeed, one's mind and senses will go numb over the Aylan-like tragedies and a thousand and one different kinds.

The recent terrorist attack on military base in Mazar-e-Sharif, which killed and wounded about 400 Afghan soldiers, was one of the highly heartbreaking incidents. The unarmed soldiers were slayed while offering prayer in mosque, a sacred place for all Moslems, and left grieving families behind.

Little wonder, human rights and dignity are violated widely, mainly by warring parties. Their radical ideology considers no moral and religious boundaries.

They seek either to impose their warped minds on people or simply spill their blood. There are many countries who are counting the fatalities each and every day such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq, to name but a few. Now the question is that will counting fatalities and shedding tears over dead bodies put an end to our daily sufferings?

The answer is negative. It should be noted that all countries are members of the UN families and will have to share their sufferings and challenges with one another. The world should find out the grounds for radicalism and militancy and launch a campaign in this respect.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – which has been approved after the Second World War with the aim of mitigating the pains of mankind – has pointed out the main reasons behind war as, "Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts". Underestimating or humiliating human rights stems from religious intolerance and practicing upon parochial mindset. Therefore, a large number of people is discriminated and murdered on the basis of their race, color and creed.

The panacea for this challenge has also been stated by the UDHR that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." To sum up, practicing upon the UDHR – which originates from golden rule (one should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself) and moral values rather than religious tenets – will alleviate the pains and sufferings of human societies.

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