

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



August 24, 2017

## The Menace of Poverty

Poverty is one of the meanest of the menaces in human society. It is responsible for myriads of social evils and disturbances. It is a quagmire that not only grasps the society from its legs but also clasps an individual from his throat.

A poor person does not only suffer from aching of starvation but also from the discriminating behavior of the society. The society treats a poor person just like an orphan.

People try to avoid his company and thus isolate him in the worst possible manner. He does not seem to have any dignity and respect even among his close relatives.

All a poor person goes through during destitution is the agony of poverty. 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.

And then a country suffering from poverty tends to have more social problems. Consider the example of Afghanistan - there are many social problems that have their roots in poverty. Corruption, theft, drug addiction and even terrorism, in some or other, are connected to poverty. 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 are poor 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. I don't know how we are 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 a poor person who is 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 beautifully clarifies this fact, "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, 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 poverty 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 poverty; otherwise, all the efforts would end up in smoke and the giant of poverty would stand victorious over the corpses of the poor!



## Society Void of Human Dignity

By Asadullah Azimi

The germ of the idea of human dignity as the basis of human rights has long history in social life, but it was first used in 18 century in its academic concept. The discourse of human dignity was outlined due to the widespread violation of human rights, particularly their rights to life and liberty throughout the history and in World War Two and for frequent use of humiliating terms such as inferior human, reforming the race of mankind and objective exploitation of human being.

Although there is not an agreement about the definition of human dignity among scholars and philosophers, yet human dignity will be put as an inherent status of mankind that one will be entitled only for being human regardless of their race, faith, idea, etc. It is also inalienable and is the basis of other values for mankind.

There are mainly three kinds of idea regarding human dignity: First, a number of individuals believe that one will bear inherent dignity merely for being human and all are equal in this regard irrespective of their religious, racial, ethnic, linguistic, social or political tendencies. Based on this idea, human rights originate from human dignity without attention to one's virtue and religious practices.

This idea is also supported by Islamic view as inherent dignity is frequently stated in Islamic tenets. For instance, Amir-ul-Momineen (the commander of the faithful) Hazrat Ali (A.S) writes to one of his governors, "Develop in your heart the feeling of love for your people and let it be the source of kindness and blessing to them. Do not behave with them like a barbarian, and do not appropriate to yourself that which belongs to them. Remember that the citizens of the state are of two categories. They are either your brethren in religion or your brethren in kind."

He reflects the fact that mankind has natural dignity on the basis of being human. Furthermore, humanitarian law was practiced in Islam. For instance, religious leaders treated the wounded and detainees appropriately in battlegrounds and did not allow soldiers to violate their dignity through inhuman practices.

The second idea views human dignity from religious perspective and suggests that one is able to acquire dignity for practicing religious tenets in the best possible. That is to say, the more virtuous you are the more dignity you have acquired. Take, for example, the practices of an individual in the society. One will be valued more for playing a constructive role, whereas the next will be

treated as pariah for their destructive role in the society. In brief, dignity is either by nature or nurture. The opponents of inherent dignity (dignity by nature) believe that there will be no human behavior in the society without human dignity.

However, the third idea suggests that one will not have dignity merely for being human. According to this belief, one's dignity depends on their obedience to government. In other words, the government has the right to decide about one's life and death or bestow them freedom or restrict their freedom.

In other words, subjugation to government is the criterion for your dignity - this school of thought is called fascism. Based on this idea, all practices by the state is legitimate and might is right. The opponents of this school of thought - which came to existence against Marxism and socialism - sought to remedy the pain of nation believing that only a powerful state will be able to save the society.

However, this idea was proved counterproductive and did not only not mitigate the sufferings but led to great pain and anguish in human societies.

The real dignity of mankind was reduced dramatically in this school of thought and human's status and natural values were downgraded.

Ill-fatedly, Afghanistan was also the casualty of this idea - which is still as infected wound in Afghan nation. Unlike many commentators, I believe that this sort of thinking did not only sacrifice ethnic or religious minorities in the country but also all tribes of this land suffered in one way or another.

History shows that an Afghan did not bear dignity for being human but for other issues. For example, one who dared jeopardize the state's power had to be suppressed in the worst possible way no matter which ethnicity they belonged to. On the other hand, whoever could suppress a group would be deemed more honorable and treated with dignity.

To sum up, all tribes in Afghanistan were affected by dictatorship and fascism in some ways. For instance, a group has been suppressed flagrantly and the next one had dignity before the state for being a slave to the state's demands. No individual or ethnic group had inherent dignity in Afghanistan. There are still some figures who stoke racial and religious tension for achieving their own objectives.

Asadullah Azimi is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

## The Ball is in Trump's Court

By Hujjatullah Zia

Hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum for terrorists, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, would instantly fill just as happened before Sept. 11. And as we know, in 2011, America hastily and mistakenly withdrew from Iraq. As a result, our hard-won gains slipped back into the hands of terrorist enemies. Our soldiers watched as cities they had fought for and bled to liberate, and won, were occupied by a terrorist group called ISIS.

The vacuum we created by leaving too soon gave safe haven for ISIS to spread, to grow, recruit and launch attacks. We cannot repeat in Afghanistan the mistake our leaders made in Iraq," these words were spoken by the US President Donald Trump on Monday.

In his inaugural speech on January 20, the US President said that he would eradicate "radical Islamic terrorism" from the surface of Earth.

However, terrorist networks sought to extend their reach and the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) carried out large-scale attacks and bombings in many parts of the world.

Afghanistan also sustained heavy casualties as a result of the Taliban's intensified attacks. The indiscriminate killings by the Taliban was a lukewarm response to peace talks and repeated calls of Afghan government for holding negotiation.

The Taliban's incumbent leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, who nurtures a radical ideology, is most likely to continue war particularly after being advised by his second deputy Sirajuddin Haqqani - the head of Haqqani network. On the other hand, the ISIS group has allied itself with the Taliban to strengthen its terrorist activities in Afghanistan and Afghan nation bore the brunt of their attacks. Thus, stability is at its lowest ebb. The Taliban also reacted towards Trump's recent statement declaring that they will increase their attacks against US soldiers.

Following the withdrawal of US forces in 2014 and the reduction of its combat mission into consultative one, the Taliban increased their attacks against Afghan government and inflicted heavy casualties on civilians and soldiers. So, the fact is that whether or not the US soldiers fight against terrorism in the country, the Taliban will continue their terrorist activities.

Afghans are most likely to be in favor of US soldiers' presence in the country since their withdrawal in 2014 was changed into a public nightmare. Similarly, a large number of Afghans including their representatives in Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) urged the Kar-

zai government to sign the security pact - which was signed with Ghani's presidency. The vacuum left by US soldiers was not filled despite the fact that Afghan soldiers combated terrorism with great bravery and paid heavy sacrifice in this way. On the other hand, their withdrawal emboldened terrorist networks as the ISIS group emerged in the country.

Trump's predecessor Barack Obama vowed during his second presidential campaign to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan regardless of its consequence. The war on terror began with Bush's administration in October 2001 ended in 2014 by Obama's government, but terrorism did not mitigate in Afghanistan in spite of the downfall of the Taliban's regime.

Both Obama and Trump pointed out that military power alone will not be the panacea for the issue of terrorism. Obama said in his famous speech in Cairo, Egypt, "We also know that military power alone is not going to solve the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan." In his recent speech, Trump also said, "Military power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan or stop the terrorist threat arising in that country. But strategically applied force aims to create the conditions for a political process to achieve a lasting peace."

A number of countries, including China and Pakistan, are believed to support this part of Trump's speech which reflects "soft power". Pakistan - which was lambasted by Trump and said to harbor terrorist groups - promised Kabul government to bring the Taliban to negotiating table but did not fulfill this promise. Subsequently, terrorism and the Afghan-Pak porous border changed into a bone of contention between Kabul and Islamabad and the blame game ensued.

Following the disqualification of Nawaz Sharif as prime minister who was succeeded by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Kabul and Islamabad sought to break the ice. But Trump blew the whistle on Pakistan which will stop the Afghan-Pak thawing relations.

With the statement that only military power will not resolve the issue of terrorism, the door of negotiation is open to warring parties. If Pakistan intends to build trust with Afghanistan and the US, it can simply host peace talks nudging the Taliban to come to negotiating table.

The 9/11 episode during Bush's administration started the ball rolling, the combat mission of US soldiers was ended by Obama and now the ball is in Trump's court - which is the last gleam of hope for Afghan people who suffered severely as a result of escalated militancy.

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



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.