

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



February 02, 2016

CEO's Visit to India

CEO Abdullah Abdullah is on a five-day visit in India to participate in a Counter-Terrorism Conference in Jaipur. The Conference is organized by India Foundation in association with Sardar Patel University of Police Security and Criminal Justice. The conference is considered as one of the most high-profile events on counter-terrorism, and it is expected to have attendance of at least five Indian Union ministers along with foreign secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and national security advisor Ajit Doval. It will also bring together counter terrorism practitioners, policy makers and public intellectuals from India and abroad. The first Counter-Terrorism Conference was held in March, 2015 in Jaipur. This is the second edition of the conference and its theme is "Tackling Global Terror Outfits".

Afghanistan is one of the countries that have been suffering from terrorism to a large extent. The counter-terrorism efforts in the country have not been able to bear ripe fruits. Now, that country is striving to stand on its own, counter-terrorism policy and efforts would play a decisive role; therefore, every sort of support regarding both of theoretical and practical nature must be sought and appreciated. If there can be any sort of guidance and support from the Counter-Terrorism Conference, Afghanistan must get it readily.

CEO Abdullah also met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday and thanked him for India's economic and military support to Afghanistan. He reiterated that the foundation of the relations between the two friends (Afghanistan and India) is strong and these relations and cooperation must further expand; and the strategic agreements between the two countries must be implemented as Afghanistan is prepared for this.

Indian Prime Minister Modi also stressed the need for relations between the two countries to be strengthened and said that his country will help Afghanistan in economic and security sections.

It has to be realized that India has always strived to guide its support for Afghanistan's stability.

People of Afghanistan also consider India as its friend. The public opinion in Afghanistan is highly in support of greater Indian influence in the country, and it is because of the fact that through most part of its relation with Afghanistan, India has been a true friend.

India seeks to expand its economic presence in Afghanistan in the post withdrawal era. In particular, it wants to improve transport connectivity and economic collaboration with countries in Central and South Asia. More such projects are likely to come up, which includes setting up Iron ore mines, a 6 MTPA steel plant (by SAIL-Steel Authority of India Limited), an 800 MW power plant, Hydro-electric power projects, transmission lines, roads etc.

Undoubtedly, India has played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process in Afghanistan. India's extensive development assistance program, which equals around USD 2 billion, is an indicator of its abiding commitment to peace, tranquility and prosperity in Afghanistan during this critical juncture of security and governance transition. This makes India one of the leading donor nations to Afghanistan, and by far the largest among the regional countries.

India seems to believe that development of Afghanistan requires reliable and lasting investment in Afghanistan that can help it exploit its natural resource properly. Therefore, India stands at the forefront of the promotion of investment in Afghanistan and a consortium of public and private Indian companies has been selected to make one of the largest investments in the country's mining sector, in the Hajigak iron ore reserves.

India also realizes the fact that there can be stability in Afghanistan only if all the major actors and countries have a stake in its stability, development and growth. Realizing this India has been increasing efforts to attract regional and trans-regional investment into Afghanistan that provides a reliable alternative to the dominant narrative of extremism and offers job opportunities to its population, by initiating events like the Delhi Investment Summit on Afghanistan in June 2012. Recognizing that the region holds the key to peace in Afghanistan, India has an important role in confidence building measures in the region in accordance to the Istanbul Process.

It also helped initiate a dialogue on Afghanistan through different platforms like the Afghanistan-India-US trilateral and the Afghanistan-India-Iran trilateral platforms that seek to bring together international partners with disparate worldviews to follow the common goal of securing peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. India also expressed its assistance to international cooperation on Afghanistan at the UN and at various international conferences that are focused on the future of Afghanistan, including the seminal Tokyo Developmental Conference in July 2012.

In the post withdrawal Afghanistan, as there are security, financial and political challenges, Afghan people and government would require true support and assistance; therefore, India's support for Afghanistan is of immense importance and the people of Afghanistan also realize this fact and they wish that India should keep its assistance continue until it is able to stand on its own.



Lack of Tolerance Poses Threat to Human Societies

By Hujjatullah Zia

History shows that violence and bloodshed on the basis of religious beliefs will only lead to casualties and ravages. Shedding one's blood for a particular ideology will foment trouble in a community rather than ending the issue. Crusading against one's religious convictions has shown its ugliest face throughout the history. Historical bloodbath over religious beliefs left heavy casualties behind without a positive change. No doubt, the more a conflict continues the more it will lead to destructions.

It is believed that man has estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts - but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship.

The alienated person is out of touch with human dignity and moral standards.

"Man is alienated from other men. When man confronts himself he also confronts other men. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men. . . . Each man is alienated from others . . . each of the others is likewise alienated from human life."

The golden rule is best interpreted as saying: "Treat others only as you consent to being treated in the same situation." To apply it, you'd imagine yourself on the receiving end of the action in the exact place of the other person. If you act in a given way toward another, and yet are unwilling to be treated that way in the same circumstances, then you violate the rule.

To apply the golden rule adequately, we need knowledge and imagination. We need to know what effect our actions have on the lives of others. And we need to be able to imagine ourselves, vividly and accurately, in the other person's place on the receiving end of the action. With knowledge, imagination, and the golden rule, we can progress far in our moral thinking.

The golden rule is best seen as a consistency principle. It doesn't replace regular moral norms. It isn't an infallible guide on which actions are right or wrong; it doesn't give all the answers. It only prescribes consistency - which we not have our actions be out of harmony with our desires. It tests our moral coherence.

If we violate the golden rule, then we're violating the spirit of fairness and concern that lie at the heart of morality.

Morality is not something innate such as parental loves or emotional acts. When you feel hungry you eat something or you just love your friends emotionally - they are not called moral acts. If you feel sympathy and help a criminal escape from the law or police, you have done even immoral act. Morality originates in

your reason and conscience. You follow the reasonable orders of your wisdom, which is not colored by your sensation, it is called morality. But it should be noted that if you help someone as a reaction to his support or expecting something in favor, it is not called a moral act. Rather morality is a selfless act that you do for others without any expectations - which draws people's praise.

In truth, all human beings have real dignity and rights simply because they are persons-entities with a natural capacity for thought and free choice. All human beings have this capacity, so all human beings are persons. Each human being therefore deserves to be treated by all other human beings with respect and consideration.

Currently, the social life lack morality and humanity. People's rights and dignity are violated to a large extent. Human dignity has also come under assault in the area of procreation. In particular, we now see children "produced" in a laboratory in order to help infertile couples achieve pregnancy. Since human beings are created by God, they have an equal dignity from the moment of conception. Every human relationship is one of equality between persons.

However, with the use of artificial fertilization, the relationship between parent and child does not truly achieve a communion of persons but is a relationship of producer to product. In essence this is "equivalent to reducing [the child] to an object of scientific technology." This is a direct assault on the dignity of the child.

It is rightly stated in the preamble of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people . . . it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law".

Therefore, "it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations".

The harsh ideologies, which lack moral standards and justify spilling the blood of mankind, must be fought against collectively. Men are born with rights to life, liberty and property, and no one is supposed to violate these rights but on the basis of law in certain conditions. We have to exercise the "golden rule" in our collective life and treat others with due respect regardless of their race, color and creed.

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Traditional Madressahs to Replace Modern Education

By Dilawar Sherzai

The concerns regarding the future of Afghanistan are increasing. There are many in the country who fear the return of Taliban-like system in the country; if not return of Taliban themselves. Though there have been considerable developments made in the country in different walks of life, the threat of return of conservative lifestyle still remains very much possible. In fact, the changes have been mostly superficial while the basic system has remained intact. Religious extremism and obsolete tribal values are interwoven in Afghan culture in such a way that it would require very basic social and culture changes to eradicate them or even to minimize them. Even, the flag-carriers of change succumb to these values, which is a very negative sign. Afghan government trying hard to reach a deal with the Taliban in accordance to which the insurgents will end attacks.

The history of modern education in Afghanistan has not been very rich. Prior to Soviet invasion, the most notable contribution for the growth of education was made by King Zahir Shah (1933-73). He made primary school available to almost half of the children of the country who were under the age of 12. He also made certain contribution regarding the improvement of secondary education and Kabul University. The second phase of educational development started with the government of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which designed many education policies in order to disseminate modern education among the people. Education was emphasized for both male and female. It was the first occasion when female education was given considerable importance. According to sources, in 1988, women comprised 40 percent of all doctors and 60 percent of all teachers in Kabul University. Keeping in view the discriminated status of women in our history in mind, these numbers are just extra-ordinary. Further, 440,000 female students were enrolled in different educational institutions and about 80,000 more were enrolled in some sorts of literacy programs and campaigns. One of the basic reasons of the rise of women participation in education sector was the support of the government by Soviet Union that believed in principles of socialism, not depriving any one of education on the basis of gender. The presence and role of Soviet Union in Afghanistan can always be condemned because of its imperialistic nature but its influence can never be ignored on the development of education sector and the numbers mentioned above favor the argument.

But the civil wars that followed the withdrawal of Soviet regime from Afghanistan proved to be havoc for the education sector. Because of absence of strong government at the center, the situation of peace and order was shattered into thousand pieces. Various educational institutions were affected by ugly manifestation of violent intentions. And in the mid 90's there were only 650

schools functioning throughout the country. And what could be the number of students who attended the classes during the days of such frequent clashes is not difficult to figure out. But the worst days for the education system of the country were yet to come.

With the rise of Taliban in 1996, the decline of modern education system which was already not in a satisfactory condition, started. Taliban banned the female education and promulgated the madressah system of education. In almost all the madressahs the curriculum included the Arabic recitation, without translation and further elaboration of the perspective of Quranic Verses. The students were confined to a single approach towards education and that was the Clergy approach, which depended on an extremist interpretation of Islam and Islamic concepts. Investigation and research were banned strictly, and students called as Talibs were not allowed to question their teachers. Rather, they were asked to blindly follow what the Clergy approach had to offer them. The basic purpose of education was thus non-existent in the so called education systems of Taliban. They were more like training camps for generating cadre for terrorist groups.

With the fall of Taliban regime, the education system in Afghanistan has been able to make important improvements. Literacy rate increased tremendously which is far better than the past, but keeping in view the modern world, it cannot be considered satisfactory enough, as the criteria for being included in that is only being able to read or write a bit. Further, the number of schools has risen to a considerable rate. Thousands of schools have been built but most of them lack proper facilities of education. And with the rise in the number of schools there has been 7-fold rise in the number of teachers as well, but unfortunately, less than half of them meet the minimum qualification of Grade 14, while only a negligible number has professional teaching training.

Another development that has been made in education sector is the addition of private institutes in the urban areas of the country. They, definitely, seem to have better education methodology regarding modern education but majority of the students can not have access to that education because of the high fees charged by them.

Provided that there have been appreciations of formal educational institutes, a large number of madressahs still exist in the country and people have the inclination to send their children to such madressahs. In addition, discriminating sentiments against females are very common in most parts of the country. It is still considered not appropriate enough to admit them in schools. Moreover, it is really unfortunate that the government authorities themselves favor madressah and push Afghan children to dark alleys of extremism.

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