

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



January 03, 2018

The Significance of Teachers' Role

The teachers in a society can rightly be considered as the builders of a nation because of the important role that they play. They disseminate education and support the young generation in building their characters, personalities and minds. They guide the students through a very important phase of their lives, which can decide their whole future; whether they become well-educated and positive members of the society or they remain illiterate and have negative impact over the society largely depends on the way they are educated by their teachers.

Teachers have the responsibility of not only stuffing the curricula in the minds of the students but supporting them in having better mentality. They have the responsibility of making the students think wisely and stand on their own, instead of making them rely on the words taught to them by others. Students must learn the ways to change their lives and the lives of their fellow beings from their teachers, not only the mathematical formula or the grammatical rules. Teachers must teach the students what paths to follow, instead of making them follow the path they themselves are following.

Unfortunately, that is not what we always see from the teachers. The teachers in our society do not always seem to be the ideal teachers. They lack the skills and the talents that are required by a teacher. They, on certain occasions, even lead the students astray and on many other occasions make them follow everything blindly. They want their students to be obedient and dumb and do not like them questioning much. They consider the agile, motivated and enthusiastic students as ill-disciplined and worthy to be standing outside their classes most of the times. They, in some cases, even beat the students and insult them verbally. They do not treat the students the way they should be treated.

At the same time, there are observations that show that our society does not treat the teachers the way they should be treated. The teaching profession is not given the worth it deserves. Teachers are not paid properly for their tiring job. They cannot feed themselves and their families properly with what they earn through teaching. The training opportunities are very much limited for the teachers. There are only few schools, colleges or universities that pay so that their teachers can be trained. Teachers are expected to be super-humans; much is expected from them while they are not given much as a reward. It is forgotten that teachers have families and they have lives just like all the other people.

It is important that both the responsibilities and the rights of the teachers must be highlighted and debated so that measures can be taken to deal with deteriorating situation properly. Different seminars and workshops can be organized in this regard. Taking advantage of these opportunities, the government authorities, the teachers and students can highlight the issues pertinent to the rights and responsibilities of the teachers so that they are able to have better role and contribution in the society and can truly play their role in the lives of the students.

Afghanistan is one of the countries that have been suffering from insecurity and economic instability. The teachers have been suffering from lack of facilities and they have been facing gigantic hurdles in performing their responsibilities with full devotion and justice. Ultimately, the students have paid the price. It is high time for Afghan authorities to take serious decisions in this regard.

The new government has to play a very imperative role regarding heightening the position of teachers and of modern education in our country. Initial commitments by the President Ashraf Ghani were appreciable. He had directed governors to allot land plots to teachers. He also promised an increase in salaries of teachers and other privileges. He pledged that no one would be allowed to grab the land plots allocated to teachers by the Ministry of Education.

He ordered the Ministry of Interior to take concrete action to vacate the land plots that the Ministry of Education had allotted to teachers, but were grabbed by powerful individuals. Though considerable measures were taken in this regard, it is imperative that other facilities for the teachers must also be improved. Most importantly, the salaries of the teachers must be increased as per the salaries of other government employees.

They should also be provided opportunities and training and development. Proper facilities to improve themselves will not only benefit the teachers, but it can play a role in improving the overall standard of education that they impart to the students. Moreover, commitments alone would not solve the problems of the teachers; it would require real commitment to make promising changes. The relevant authorities would need to monitor the progress in this regard and make sure that the promises do not remain promises alone because if these promises are fulfilled, it would be of great support in lifting the morale of the teachers.



Justice – The Backbone of a Society

By Hujjatullah Zia

Life of just man is better and happier. There is always some specific virtue in everything, which enables it to work well. If it is deprived of that virtue, it works badly. The soul has specific functions to perform. When it performs its specific functions, it has specific excellence or virtue. If, it is deprived of its peculiar virtue, it cannot possibly do its work well. It is agreed that the virtue of the soul is justice. The soul which is more virtuous or in other words just is also the happier soul. Therefore, a just man lives happy. A just soul, in other words a just man, lives well; an unjust cannot."

There is not a single and absolute definition for justice. As a result, Plato in his philosophy gives very important place to the idea of justice. He used the Greek word "Dikaisyne" for justice which comes very near to the work "morality" or "righteousness", it properly includes within it the whole duty of man. It also covers the whole field of the individual's conduct in so far as it affects others. Plato contended that justice is the quality of soul, in virtue of which men set aside the irrational desire to taste every pleasure and to get a selfish satisfaction out of every object and accommodated themselves to the discharge of a single function for the general benefit.

Cephalus who was a representative of traditional morality of the ancient trading class established the traditional theory of justice. According to him "justice consists in speaking the truth and paying one's debt". Thus Cephalus identifies justice with right conduct. Polemarchus also holds the same view of justice but with a little alteration. According to him "justice seems to consist in giving what is proper to him". The simple implication of this conception of justice may be that "justice is doing good to friends and harm to enemies." This is also a traditional maxim of Greek morality.

There is an Arabic maxim saying that the government which cherishes justice, will last forever. Justice seems to be the soul of a society's law. In another item, if a society lacks justice, the citizens will resort to protest and force so as to get rid of unjust law.

Therefore, to set up social discipline and security, a government is supposed to establish law on the basis of justice. It should be noted that justice is a relative concept, a law which is considered just in a particular time and place, may be deemed unjust in another time or place. Since justice is defined with various political and social tastes, its concept will alter from time to time and condition to condition. That is why people sometimes use the term moral or religious justice or "social justice". Naturally, man shows great ten-

dency for justice. For instance, one likes to see that everyone is equal in the eye of law. Moreover, conflicts break out and blood is shed to seek justice and just law. The human history is formed with men struggling for just practices. In other words, mostly lives are sacrificed in conflicts with dictatorial regimes and cruel rulers.

Whenever a ruler resorted to violence and cruelty, the public feelings and conscience got hurt and they protested strongly at the cost of their lives.

The Arab spring is the best example for gaining justice. Cruelty, discrimination and injustice went beyond the public tolerance and they finally chose to protest which made the unjust regimes crumble.

This contagious flame of revolution against injustice spread to neighboring countries and yet burning strongly. It is believed that protest against cruelty and injustice will never end – due to the relative concept of justice.

Justice is a moral concept and morality – which differs from one place to another – also plays a key role in establishing law in a society. Willy-nilly, the law-makers are affected with their societal morality and have to consider the public moral rules for protecting law and order. They must command the facts which are in accordance with the moral norms of the public and prevent what the citizens assume inappropriate.

In current law, many rules such as the necessity of fulfilling promise, avoiding harming others and honoring contracts root in public morality which are observed by law-makers. Sometimes, honoring morality is considered obligatory by law-makers and a contract signed at the cost of its violation will not be validated. For instance, a contract signed between two companies, in our country, to trade wine will be invalidated in the eye of law.

Cicero says that if statute allows theft and fornication, it will be no more than the law of thieves and villains. He further believes that the people have the rights to protest against the law which are not in accordance with natural rights. So, it is construed that people can protest against the law which is in disagreement with a society's moral values and justice. However, Socrates, who accepted the law despite being unjust and drank the cup of hemlock, says that citizens have to comply with the law at any cost yet he allows the citizens to make the government reform the unjust law. Hence, according to him, one has not to disobey the law for being unjust but to make the government to reform it. So, justice is the backbone of a society and governments have to establish the law based on justice and fairness.

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The US Donor Relief Act of 2017

By Joseph E. Stiglitz

Never has a piece of legislation labeled as both a tax cut and a reform been received with as much disapproval and derision as the bill passed by the US Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump just before Christmas. The Republicans who voted for the bill (no Democrats did) claim that their gift will come to be appreciated later, as Americans see their take-home pay go up. They are almost certainly wrong. Rather, the bill wraps into one package all that is wrong with the Republican Party, and to some extent, the debased state of American democracy. The legislation is not "tax reform" by even the most elastic reading. Reform entails closing distortionary loopholes and increasing the fairness of the tax code. Central to fairness is the ability to pay. But this tax legislation reduces taxes by tens of thousands of dollars, on average, for those most able to pay (the top quintile). And, when fully implemented (in 2027), it will increase taxes on a majority of Americans in the middle (the second, third, and fourth quintiles).

The US tax code was already regressive long before Trump's presidency. Indeed, the billionaire investor Warren Buffett, one of the wealthiest men in the world, famously complained that it was wrong that he paid a lower tax rate than his secretary. The new legislation makes America's tax system even more regressive.

It is now universally recognized that growing inequality is a key economic problem in the United States, with those at the top capturing almost all the gains in GDP over the past quarter-century. The new legislation adds insult to injury: rather than offsetting this disturbing trend, the Republicans' "reform" gives even more to the top.

A more distorted economy is not a healthy economy. The International Monetary Fund has emphasized that a more unequal society worsens economic performance – and the new tax legislation will lead inexorably to a more unequal society.

Much of the complexity and distortion in the US tax code arises from different types of income being taxed at different rates. Such differential treatment leads not only to the (correct) perception that the tax code is unfair, but also to inefficiencies: resources move to favored sectors, and are wasted as firms try to convert their incomes and activities into the more favored forms. The worst provisions of the old tax code – such as the carried-interest loophole, which allows job-destroying private-equity firms to pay taxes at low rates – have been retained, and new categories of favored income (earned by so-called pass-through entities) have been created.

The hoped-for spur to economic growth is unlikely to materialize, for several reasons. First, the economy is already at or near full employment. If the US Federal Reserve comes to view that to be the case, it will raise interest rates at the

first sign of a significant increase in aggregate demand. And higher interest rates mean that investment, and thus growth, will slow, even if the consumption of the very rich increases. Moreover, squeezing the "blue" (Democratic) states, including California and New York, by including provisions in the tax bill aimed specifically at them, not only further widens America's political divide; it's also bad economics. No sane government would undermine the most dynamic parts of its economy, and yet that is what the Trump administration is doing. Special tax breaks for the real-estate sector may help Trump and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, but it does not make America great or competitive. And limiting the deductibility of state income tax and property tax will almost surely reduce investment in education and infrastructure – again, not a sound strategy for increasing American competitiveness. Other new provisions will also hurt the US economy.

Because the fiscal deficit will increase – the only question is by how much, with my bet being that it will be far larger than current estimates of \$1-1.5 trillion – the trade deficit will increase as well, regardless of whether Trump pursues more nationalist/protectionist policies. Lower exports and higher imports will further undermine US manufacturing. Once again (as they have done with health care and the tax cuts), Trump is betraying his core supporters.

But the Republican Party is cynical. Its leaders are stuffing themselves at the trough – Trump, Kushner, and many others in his administration are among the biggest winners – thinking that this may be their last chance at such a feast. And no Republican believes the party can get away with it more firmly than Trump does.

That is why the legislation is structured to give individuals temporary tax cuts, with corporations getting a permanent reduction in their tax rate. The Republicans seem confident that voters will not see beyond the next paycheck. But voters are not so easily manipulated: they have seen through the trick, and are rightly convinced by the numerous studies, from sources in and out of government, showing that the lion's share of the tax cut goes to corporations and the very rich. Trump's tax legislation also attests to many Republicans' belief that dollars are more important than voters. All that matters is pleasing their corporate sponsors, who will reward the party with contributions, which will be used to buy votes, thereby ensuring the perpetuation of a corporate-driven political agenda. Let's hope that Americans really are smarter than the greedy corporate CEOs and their cynical Republican servants believe. With midterm congressional elections coming in November, they will have ample opportunity to prove it. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Joseph E. Stiglitz is the winner of the 2001 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. His most recent book is *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*.

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