

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



June 27, 2016

Under the Shadow of Democracy

Democratic system is a globally accepted government under which one will be able to exercise his/her rights and freedoms, known in constitution, without barriers. People's suffrage will determine the president in a fair and transparent election. Parliament, the beating heart of a democratic administration, will represent the true will and determination of the nation. Their moral standards, social norms and cultural values will be mirrored in their constitution. People's fundamental rights - i.e. the rights to life, liberty and property - will be the most significant issue in their legal system. All individuals will be equal in the eye of law irrespective of their religious, racial, sexual or any other accidental backgrounds.

Violence and bloodshed will have no room within a democratic system and life is highly expensive. The main reason behind establishing law is to protect citizens' fundamental rights and prevent from anomy. Whenever one violates the individuals' rights, s/he will have to be prosecuted and punished on the basis of law and no one will be allowed to break law with impunity - be it a simple person or a high-ranking official. Hence, discriminating one for his/her social and political status will be a blow to democracy. Therefore, no one will be beyond law.

One will find no barriers to practice their freedoms, mainly freedoms of thoughts and expressions. Civil society will monitor the state, on behalf of the nation, to make sure that law is enforced justly and challenge unjust and impolitic exercises of the state. Media and civil society would be given the rights to voice against any social harms and anti-law performances done by state or an individual.

In a democratic system, division of powers is a significant issue. To decentralize power for preventing from despotism, legislative, executive and judicial powers should be established and all the powers will have to work independently. Needless to say, when all powers are centralized under single authority, the power-holder will show tendency towards atrocity and despotism and curtail citizens' freedom and restrict their rights. In post-Taliban Afghanistan, democracy has taken root to some extent and a constitution based on the religious tenets and moral standards has been approved by nation's representatives in Loya Jirga on January 03, 2004. This constitution recognizes the natural and unalienable rights of people and their freedom. As a result, article 24 states, "Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable. The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity." Similarly, the freedom of expression and freedom of thoughts are stated in the constitution and supported by law. "Freedom of expression shall be inviolable. Every Afghan shall have the right to express thoughts through speech..." Moreover, it condemns any types of discrimination - be it on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, etc. All citizens are considered equal in the eye of law. To put it succinctly, the Afghanistan's Constitution is based on democratic theories and recognizes United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, the girls' schools were reopened and women took active part in social, cultural and political arenas. A number of women gained significant posts, including being members of parliament. Currently, the head of Human Rights Commission is a woman. Hence, the relative freedom and immature democracy were very critical for women's progress. Unlike the Taliban system, women are no more inferior to men. Sexual discrimination is not acceptable in our legal system. Despite all the facts, democracy encounters serious challenges in Afghanistan. One of the main obstacles before the nascent democracy is warring factions. The Taliban fighters inflict heavy casualties upon Afghan police and civilians and trample upon their rights flagrantly. In other words, life is highly cheap and the blood of citizens, including women and children, is spilt by the militants, mainly the Taliban and loyal to the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The radical insurgents practice upon their own ideology or simply paid to kill.

Secondly, the administrative corruption is a barrier before democracy and people's freedom. Afghanistan's reputation has been damaged internationally due to corruption and this country wrestles with this chronic problem for more than a decade. According to the Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perception Index, Afghanistan continues to be ranked at the very bottom. The index, which ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be, lists Afghanistan in the 175th spot out of 177 countries, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Somalia taking the two bottom spots. Hence, although citizens are equal before the law, the rich and the influential are hardly prosecuted as they pay bribery. In another item, the law is approved in the best way, however, it is not enforced properly. The judicial and executive systems are not parallel to legislative system.

It is hoped that democracy will be more prolific in Afghanistan so that our nation be able to exercise their rights and freedom without barriers. Prayerfully, the government will implement the law equally and form a civil society void of violence, discrimination and corruption.



Rome was not built in a day

By Ahmad Shah Karimi

Nothing great or valuable is possible in this world within a short space of time. All such things must be accomplished gradually. No one can reach the summit of a mountain by a single leap. The climbing must be done slowly and cautiously and considerable effort is required to reach the top. A building cannot rise suddenly from its foundation, then the plinth, then the walls and finally the roof. The city of Rome with its magnificent buildings, public parks and squares and its extensive empire, embracing almost the whole world, was not the work of single day. Rome was at first only a small village having only a few mean huts. Long years of patient toil on the part of the people, their perseverance and strong determination made Rome the greatest power in the world and helped her to attain the height of glory and prosperity. It was not the work of days or months but years. That is true of everything great in this world. One cannot expect to be successful in any great undertaking in the course of a few days, in order to accomplish any difficult task certain qualities are essential. In the first place, a clear-cut plan arrived at after due and mature deliberation is necessary. Secondly, there must be an earnestness about the work undertaken, and lastly, patient perseverance is needed to carry the work through. Over and above these essential qualities, time and steady application and industry are also indispensable. Armed with these qualities, anyone can hope to achieve success in any enterprise, however great and difficult it might be.

Without the qualities mentioned above, however, it is not possible to accomplish any great object or to come out successful in any difficult undertaking. If a person sets about anything within a definite and carefully considered plan, ten to one he will have to turn back after having proceeded a little way and so much labor and time will be wasted. He will meet with difficulties which he never contemplated and he will have no other alternative but to begin afresh. Haste and impatience also stand in the way of success. These two things make diligence, perseverance and close attention impossible and, without these, there can be no hope of success. Moreover, one who does not possess patience is not capable of sustained effort begin to lose their intensity and one gives up the talks in disgust. Want of perseverance is another obstacle in the path of success. In every great undertaking one is sure to meet with failures, for the path of success is not strewn in one's work steadily and perseveringly. But one who is not endowed with this qualities of perseverance will receive a setback as soon as failures overtake. One will lose all energy and give up one's task in despair. On the other hand, this proverb inspires men and women to constantly pursue their goals; work harder; climb every small step of success ladder to reach much higher than sky to see themselves at "top of the world". Furthermore, history says itself and gives us lots of examples whether it is magnificent

architecture, monument or people themselves. For instance, it took a thousands of skillful laborers and decades to build Taj Mahal; fame as "No 1" rank in Seven Wonders of World. 8 year old boy started working at petrol pump worked hard for decades to become entrepreneur of "No 1" petroleum refinery industries known as Reliance Industries. That extraordinary person is Dhirubhai Ambani who has created his vast empire of Reliance Industries in field of petroleum, cloth, etc. This all did not happen in a single day or fortnight. It took decades of hardship to achieve their ambition, their dream they have seen. People often think that they work hard and they should get immediate results and deserve for success. By all means, they are wrong, because great things in life cannot be achieved instantly nor does success come to their door knocking every evening. Instant success achieved is of no value and fades away easily as the sun sets every evening. Let's face it, the fact is that nothing can be achieved overnight, a man simply cannot hope to achieve anything great within a day. Only through patient and hard work anything of real significance can be achieved.

Writing a book for example cannot be achieved with computer or modern technology alone. It needs real brain work. Only by using one's imagination and patient toil can such a thing be done. Likewise, if a man/woman wants to reach high position in life, he/she should put in hard toil for years. However, this is a kind of perseverance that every person needs to cultivate. People have got to realize that obstacles will certainly come on the way; and the path to success is always strewn with stones and thorns. They must keep their spirit alive and upright, until they reach the destination. The jungles are dark and daunting, but when once they cross these woods and reach the other end, the joy is boundless and the journey become worth the trouble. Although through this long journey lots of hurdles, and adversities will come on the way but a man can achieve it if he stands firmly and work hard and consider it a task which may need years of struggle that finally leads to great and outstanding result. In life people need to sacrifice small things so that they reach to prodigious things.

In brief, the proverb "Rome was not built in a day" teaches people to allow time for the accomplishment of a great object and must have patience and perseverance to see it through. The proverb is an eye-opener and a source of encouragement for everyone. If for the building of the vast Roman Empire it was necessary to spend vast energy and enormous time, then it is no wonder that proportionate energy and time will have to be spent for all great things. The example of Rome should fill everyone with vigour and energy even though he/she meets the failures, and should take them onward till they succeed in achieving the great object which is their goal.

Ahmad Shah Karimi is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at ahmadshah.karimi12@gmail.com

Europe After Brexit

By Dominique Moisi

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt once proclaimed that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The United Kingdom's "Brexit" referendum, in which just over half of those who voted chose to leave the European Union, proved that he was not exactly right. We must also fear the people, like Britain's populist leaders, who prey on public fears to bring about truly terrifying outcomes. In this case, the outcome may well lead to the EU's disintegration. After 43 years of EU membership, Britain has, in what is purportedly the most democratic manner possible, decided to retreat into itself. However pragmatic and realistic Britons supposedly are, they have voted against their own interests. By rejecting the EU, they have probably condemned their country to gradual impoverishment and, perhaps, to not-so-gradual disintegration, as the leaders of Scotland and Northern Ireland, which overwhelmingly voted to remain in the EU, have said they want out.

Indeed, what Britons should have been afraid of was Brexit. Yet reason, weakly defended by uninspired and untrusted establishment voices, could not stand up to fears of what might come through a door left open to the rest of Europe - and, indeed, the rest of the world.

The true paradox here is that it is precisely when they are saying "Non" to Europe (echoing Charles de Gaulle's famous veto of Britain's first application to participate in European integration) that the British are the closest in emotional terms to the rest of Europe's citizens. And, in fact, that may be the problem.

People are afraid all across Europe - indeed, all over the world. Above all, they fear globalization, which, in their view, has brought the menacing "other" into their daily lives and undermined their livelihoods, while benefiting only the elites. They are afraid for their security and their jobs - and they are furious with the leaders who have failed to defend their interests.

The result is that the "have-nots" are increasingly turning on the privileged elites, and thus on the openness that those elites favor, demanding instead a return to what they view as a more predictable and secure past. Nostalgia was a driving force behind the leave campaign, as was the desire to punish the scoundrels in charge.

The Brexit vote was no fluke, nor should it have been a surprise. It was the result of long-held fears and frustrations, though one might not have expected that, for many British,

instinct would become a point of arrival rather than a point of departure. In any case, a few years ago, those instincts would not have taken the UK out of the EU. It was a grave political miscalculation that made this political tragedy possible.

One of the most important lessons of the Brexit campaign is that when politicians try to manipulate society's emotions to their own ends, as Prime Minister David Cameron did, things can quickly get out of hand. Throwing gasoline on the flames of fear and frustration may have won Cameron and his party the 2015 election, but it also produced the conflagration that has gutted his party, his legacy, and his country.

The problem for the rest of Europe is that Brexit itself could serve as the accelerant for popular passions, with feckless populist figures happily fanning the flames. Even Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for US president, has expressed his support for Brexit; despite his cluelessness, he recognizes how powerful the promise of "taking one's country back" can be. And people like Trump don't seem to worry much about consequences. These are not modern Winston Churchills.

The extent to which Europe will break down, and the consequences of that process, remain to be seen. But it is reasonable to expect populists and independence movements in Europe and beyond to feel invigorated by the move. The image of Europe in seemingly terminal decline is sure to undermine its soft power.

With Europe's role on the international stage under threat, its leaders must urgently undertake a massive self-assessment, both literally and metaphorically. They need to figure out what they have done - or not done - to lose the trust of their citizens and devise a plan, at the national and EU levels, to regain that trust.

Crucially, such an assessment must precede a push for greater integration. If the EU launches a panicked effort to lurch forward, it will prove its lack of understanding of what is really happening.

June 23, 2016, will not go down in history as the UK's independence day, as Boris Johnson, London's former mayor and a leader of the Leave campaign, promised. But it could be remembered as the day when Europe finally woke up, realizing that, to secure its future, its only option is to commit to reinventing itself. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Dominique Moisi, a professor at L'Institut d'études politiques de Paris (Sciences Po), is Senior Adviser at the French Institute for International Affairs (IFRI) and a visiting professor at King's College London



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
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.