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Our Degraded Priorities

Every society is recognized from the types of its problems and the nature of its values and habits of its people. The great societies of the world that achieved the zenith of development and success and the ones that have dominated the contemporary socio-political and economic spheres of life are the ones that discuss and value new ideas, knowledge, scientific developments, philosophical questions and modern thoughts. Their considerations and problems are the ones that are related to human development and advancement and the progress of human societies. They do not prefer the issues that are obsolete, have no value in human life and society and can in no way benefit them.

They strive to discover the universe, the living beings in them and try to uncover the reasons of different phenomena. They have reached to other planets and have extended their knowledge and research to the limitless expansions of the universe. They prefer education, educational institutions and respect teachers and students. They spend their whole lives in discovering ways to fight different diseases. They, as a matter of fact, have kept on evolving and developing with the changing nature of time.

On the other hand, if our society is recognized by its immature behavior, it is not really weird. Insignificant thoughts and false displays are within the roots of our society. Actually, we are suffering from the stagnancy of thoughts and there is no thirst for knowledge and wisdom within our people. We, as a matter of fact, are the dwarfs who, even standing on their own shoulders, appear to be dwarfs. We are only worthy of being mocked and laughed upon.

The traditions and values in our society are really odd and out of understanding. A limited number of people have decided to devour the entire wealth of the nation. Another group is busy only in the false display of wealth and status. Certain old men have shouldered the responsibility of proving the wrongs of the ruling elite right through holy scriptures; while another honorable group is striving tirelessly to earn fame in every possible manner.

They have, in reality, lost their connection with the actual problems of the time. The most unfortunate fact is that the intellectuals have forgotten their responsibilities. Though they claim their rights from the society but they seem to have forgotten that the society which they ignore cannot be expected to understand their rights, as well. Has earning fame ever been a top priority issue for the sane people of the society? Our society has adopted the non-issues and wasting time on them. As a matter of fact, we are far behind our actual social, civil and philosophical problems. Our people are behaving like the immature boys and it seems to be written on our foreheads that we do not have any serious issues at the moment and for the times to come God will keep us away from all the problems.

Though we are human, we have forgotten the habits of thinking and understanding. The fact is that our people have not been provided the required sanity and boldness to ponder upon the challenges of time and challenge the prevailing values and understandings. We are habitual of saying only those words that seem appropriate to everyone as we are afraid to make others angry. We, from the very beginnings of our lives, are taught to compromise and adjust. Even if there is a place for one person to sit in a car, we can adjust two persons there. We strive to fit ourselves in the mold of traditions and practices even though they may be obsolete and insane.

Someone had said that whenever I consider the problems of others as mine, they become angry and consider me their enemy. Same is the case in our society; if a person tries to divert the attention of others towards their actual problems, they mind it and consider it a lie.

We have only a single ideal to pursue and that is our 'past'. Unfortunately, the past has not always been glorious and our people seem to follow the same portion of the past that was inglorious. I don't understand why our people do not live their own lives instead of living the lives of their forefathers. If they really want to make difference to themselves and to the world, they need to start living their own lives - their present not past.

If we lack a serious consideration to our present and to the life, we would never be able to have a sincere relation with knowledge and even with our beliefs. Though we seem to have inhabited the cities, but we have deserted our conscience and our spirits. We seem like alien in our own world. We need to wake up; we need to understand that we are pursuing the wrong directions and the wrong destinations. We must realize that we are not using our humanly attributes in their full capacities and we are not fulfilling the responsibility of being true human being.

**Anniversary of Baba Mazari: Learning Occasion or Political Opportunity?**By: **Mohammad Zahir Akbari**

Before anything, the deepest condolences to the family of Baba Mazari and his true followers who devoted his life for the sake of unity, justice and brotherhood in this country. According to many analysts Baba Mazari was a unique leader who could change the course of history in Afghanistan, and so has a lot of messages to learn. One of his great achievements was to unite the people on a single political platform, despite many political and ideological differences. For the first time in our history, he made his people accepted as a single unit and recognized as a political force in Afghanistan. This was only achieved under the leadership of Baba Mazari and for that we all have enormous amount of respect in our heart for him. The great Baba Mazari was martyred on the 13th of March 1993. In fact, on the 13th of March 1993 Afghanistan lost a leader, a father, a hero and savior, who for the first time in the history of our country equalized us with the other Afghans, and gave the courage and self-confidence to stand up and fight for what was ours. His martyrdom upset not only the Afghan, but many people in different parts of the world as well.

To evaluate his personality, let's raise this question whether the history made his personality or he made the history? It is not surprising when the history shape or impose a person or a character to a society due to certain political circumstances. For instance, there are many examples in the past that were made by history such as series of kings, imperators and tribal leaders, and also examples exist in the current era such as presidents, prime ministers, ministers, and many government officials. Sometimes, without playing a self-contributing role, they are created and overnight become a personality and appointed in a top position because of a political reason. But it would be amazing when an unknown person come and try to change the entire history of a nation and a land. Based on this view, on the eve of the 24th anniversary of Baba Mazari, we need to evaluate his personality whether he made the history or was made by the history.

First of all, it must be made clear that becoming like Mazari is not impossible and his political life is a fully practical example for his followers, especially for today's political leaders. Therefore, besides celebrating his anniversary to make a political opportunity for election campaigns, it is also possible to learn from the contents of his political life. The spirit of Mazari would not be satisfied from those who introduce him as a mythical personality blocking the way and goals of Mazari for the sake of their personal/family interests. If we are respectful to goals of Mazari, we have to let the mentality of becoming Mazari open to all not few and learn how he prioritized the national interests over personal and family interests.

The second thing, why Mazari become Mazari? And how he became Mazari? He won the heart and mind of people because he recognized the common goal and pain of his people. He devoted his life to achieve that goal and relieve that pain. So, anyone can become Mazari of his time on condition that he does the work of Mazari and choose to live like him. We need to accept the Afghan

community, especially the deprived community of Hazara are grateful to the sacrifices and efforts of Mazari, but our society always needs the Mazari of its time. Based on this, it is also clear that Mazari created the history with devotion of his personal and family life.

Mazari set the leadership standard amongst the nation very high. We always compare and expect every one of our contemporary leaders to Baba Mazari. That is clearly a position too high to achieve. Baba Mazari for the Hazaras is what Gandhi was to British Indians, what Martin Luther King Jr. was to black Americans and what Neilson Mandela was to South Africans. They were the men with commitments, honesty, intuitions and charisma whom we don't get a lot. Like in the case of the Indians, the black Americans and the South Africans, we might not have the pleasure of having another Baba Mazari like leader in years to come. Therefore we must stand united behind the next best option we have and imply what Baba Mazari thought us.

Baba Mazari is the most charismatic leader who for the first time managed to unite a much divided ethnic group, despite the interferences of foreign and domestic hands against him. In the 1989 when he succeeded in unifying nine different groups under the umbrella of Wahdat Islamic Party in Bamiyan, it was very rarely believed that the Hazaras would one day become a significant political and military force in Afghanistan, but under the new name and leadership of Baba Mazari unity further consolidated his political dominance. The Wahdat manifesto emphasized the continuation and intensification efforts for the creation of an Islamic government based on equality, social justice and brotherhood, which was the first demand of its kind at that time.

Ideologically Baba Mazari was a political Islamist and a pragmatic Hazara nationalist. However, some of the brothers who have problem with his cleric dimension are trying to conceal this part of his personality, while he was a faithful and true religious scholar. We have to recognize Mazari as he was; and must not portray him as we wish-to invent a face that is not true. Anyway, he fully understood the rules and requirements of contemporary politics in Afghanistan. He knew that idealism, and morality alone would not work at the time of his leadership. He consequently initiated a new approach which was the most effective approach or strategy in the political history of the Hazaras.

Unfortunately, the Hazaras have again lost their political objectives they had gained during the Baba Mazari era. To regain what is lost, we need to revisit his philosophy. Baba Mazari without any doubt was the most effective leader in the history of Afghanistan. He promoted women rights, equality, justice, civility and every other democratic and modern norms and values. But when the interests of his people were not guaranteed, he had other ways to protest and resist and he definitely hoped to see an Afghanistan where everyone is equal, regardless of his ethnicity and religion and that has been achieved to a certain extent.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

Governing GeoengineeringBy: **Ban Ki-moon**

Climate change poses an unprecedented threat to humanity, one that appears increasingly likely to reduce global standards of living dramatically within our lifetime, and cause untold damage in the longer term. And, because addressing such a daunting planetary challenge requires radical approaches, there have been wide-ranging discussions about what the world must urgently do to limit the rise in global temperature to less than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Although reducing greenhouse-gas emissions must remain the highest priority, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says this is not enough. Some now suggest that we also need to remove huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the air. Others argue that we may also need to reflect sunlight back into space, to buy the world more time to reduce and remove emissions. Taken together, these two approaches are known as geoengineering. And as the effects of climate change worsen, a growing number of policymakers, scientists, and entrepreneurs are considering such options more seriously.

But at present, we have no idea what unforeseen and unintended consequences deploying these new technologies might have. The unknown unknowns - especially with solar geoengineering - could be just as bad as the known challenges presented by climate change. What's more, as with global warming, the impact of these technologies will transcend national borders. This puts those who have the least say - the vulnerable and the poor - on the front line. It also risks exacerbating wider threats to international peace and security, such as resource scarcity and forced climate migration.

This is why the Elders, a group of independent global leaders, is calling on the international community to agree on a rigorous governance framework for geoengineering, and to put it in place without delay. Such a decision-making system must be transparent, participatory, and accountable. It should include the voices of those most affected and enable all governments and non-governmental stakeholders to gain the fullest possible understanding of these new technologies for more informed decision-making.

Since the Industrial Revolution, we have known that technology is not a panacea, and that it advances human wellbeing only if all those affected are given the chance to participate in its development. This consideration is all especially relevant to geoengineering, because our knowledge of these technologies and their impact remains limited.

Fortunately, efforts are underway to address this. This week, the UN

Environment Assembly - the world's highest-level decision-making body on environmental issues - will consider whether to initiate a global learning process on both the science and governance of geoengineering. To this end, the UNEA would call for a worldwide assessment of these emerging technologies, giving all countries a common platform of knowledge.

This shared understanding is an important first step toward ensuring that decisions concerning the use or non-use of geoengineering are based on the principles of equality, justice, and universal rights. These are the values underlying the 2015 Paris climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, both of which were adopted during my tenure as UN Secretary-General.

The UN is best placed to accommodate the governance framework requirements we now need. Only through the UN's multilateral processes can we ensure that geoengineering technologies, and how they might be applied, are not the preserve of individual states. This is vital for environmental sustainability, international security, and the wellbeing of future generations around the world.

Many people are wary of this debate, particularly in international fora. They fear that it could be a foot in the door for highly dangerous ideas, and that the very act of drawing attention to these technologies could reduce pressure to cut emissions.

I understand these concerns, and I agree that our main collective priority must still be to cut emissions; end the use of fossil fuels; and promote a zero-carbon, climate-resilient, and people-centered economic transition.

But we also need to acknowledge that the geoengineering genie is already out of the bottle. The likelihood of unilateral deployment of solar geoengineering increases every year. The global community must decide whether to engage now, by setting clear governance rules and guardrails, or allow individual actors to take the lead, creating a fait accompli for the rest of us.

Ignoring this debate would be a mistake. Instead, the world should focus on learning more, including via the process at the UNEA, in order to understand the full range of options and assess their risks with the best information available.

How to understand and potentially harness disruptive new technologies for the benefit of all humanity is one of the defining questions of our age. Future generations will not forgive us if we fail to answer it convincingly.

Ban Ki-moon, Deputy Chair of The Elders, was Secretary-General of the United Nations from 2007-2016, prior to which he was South Korea's foreign minister.