

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



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## Politicians should Serve the People

Though the evolution of human society has enabled them to achieve some marvellous achievements, they have not been able to achieve one of the most important aspects – they have not been able to develop a better society to live in. They have not been able to achieve order and true prosperity in their social lives; thus it can be said that the human designs generated by their so-called superior minds have achieved chaos and disorder, on the contrary. It is really unfortunate to note that human systems and ideologies have not portrayed the superior nature of human beings in practical life but instead has defamed them. Disorder and instability prevail in most parts of the world that is dominated by human beings. Ill-fatedly, our country is one of the same parts that have been highly influenced by disorder. It is important to study the nature of the disorder that has dominated our society and its reason. It is generally believed that politics and politicians are entirely responsible for the current disorder and chaos and such a belief is difficult to reject as politicians have not left any other choice. Their attitude and behaviour have made the people think so and at the same time defamed politics.

If we analyze Afghan society, we can see that there are many problems that we face. We are confronted with many economic, social and political issues and multiplied with that is the fact that we are not completely prepared to solve them. Decades of wars and instability have further influenced our capacities to face the challenges. And then there is corruption, which like an anaconda has tightened itself around the society in such a way that it has no chance of escape. Extremism and terrorism have penetrated deep within the roots of our society and have been threatening our people to a great extent. Disorder, disturbance and chaos are building hurdles in front of the designs of our authorities to establish order, discipline and dignity. The current chaos is, to a certain extent, because of our ruling elite as everyone can observe that they because of their negligence and self-centred incentives have made politics ridicule. They are, in the true sense of politics, answerable to both politics and the people. Politicians, in fact, are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their basic requirements, guide the nation, lead the nation towards a better system, solve the problems and issues and have the sense of responsibility. In our country, the politicians evade the people, fulfil their own requirements and demands, mislead the nation, never strive for political order and institutionalization, utilize the issues for their personal and group interests and do not have even slightest sense of responsibility.

On the other hand, because of the strategic importance of Afghanistan, it has been dominated by the international political games played by the world powers. In fact, imperialism blinded with extreme power has influenced the Afghan land to a large extent. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," said by John Emerich, an English historian, politician & writer. There is no doubt in the correctness of this statement, if we have a proper analysis of the contemporary international scenario. Few say that "Imperialism has died", while the fact is that it has taken a new birth, it has been transformed in what is scarier. The capacity of imperialism to exercise power has been enhanced by the availability of advanced mechanisms. No land is far away from the imperialists and no one can avoid their influences. They are the decision-makers, they decide the destiny of the nations and they determine the course of world order. A little happens in the favour of what they dislike. They follow their interests in weaker countries in different ways. They can launch a direct war, influence the other countries through cultural dominance or affect their policies through aid and assistance.

However, blaming the other countries for all of the disorders and disturbances has been one of the policies of our political leaders to avoid responsibility. It also helps them create a sense of lethal enemy who is always ready to destroy us and who has nothing else to ponder upon except our extinction. And we fall prey to such ill intentions and get ready to believe such concepts as a result of our blind and fanatic patriotism. In fact, in such a way we become ripe to be utilized by them the way they want.

A little political understanding and prudence can make us understand the games that are basically played by international world and our own rulers. On some occasions they make us be lost in the imaginations of an ideal society and on some others they slap us with the harsh realities to come back to the real world. What we understand is half-reality and half-lie, which is more dangerous than the whole-lie.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the understanding and attitude of the people have to be blamed to a certain extent as well for the chaos and disturbance in the society. If the rulers are not able to rule properly, they are also not able to understand their responsibilities and avoid performing them appropriately.



## Is Equality Attainable?

By Dilawar Sharzai

Human beings, living in today's world of ours, seem to be losing contentment and satisfaction. There are many incidents taking place in different parts of world that depict that human beings are not able to attain bliss and fulfillment that are really essential for them and that they should have achieved by now. There are marked short comings both in human personality and human societies that have been proving as factors that are pushing human beings towards instability and disorder. The societies and states that have been formed in today's world, though have evolved with the passage of time, still possess dominant shortcomings. These shortcomings if not met on time, the discrepancies and discontentment would keep on rising and disturbing the human beings, societies and the governments. If we analyze today's societies, we come to know that there are some very basic requirements that are missing. Among those requirements, justice, equality and rights are the most essential ones. Though all of them are necessary, we do not have much discussion available about the concept of equality. So, this particular article is to have a discussion about the concept in order to have its basic understanding.

Giovanni Sartor has rightly observed that the term equality "has so many facets and so many implications that after we have examined it from all angles we are left with a feeling of not having really mastered it." In common parlance the term equality is used for identity of treatment and identity of rewards. However, this is not a correct use of the term because absolute equality is not possible. In short, nature has not created all as equals and there are differences in strength, intellect etc. among various people; therefore, absolute equality is a mere myth.

Equality has been assigned both negative as well as positive meanings. In the negative sense equality means the absence of special privileges. It implies the absence of the barriers like birth, wealth, caste, color, creed etc. in the positive sense equality means provision of adequate opportunities for all the members of the society. It may be observed that adequate opportunities do not mean equal opportunities. For example, an engineer and an ordinary laborer cannot be treated at par and provided equal wages and other facilities. Equality in this sense is neither practicable nor desirable. Therefore, equality really means the provision of adequate opportunities to all citizens without any discrimination. Nobody should be debarred from certain facilities simply because of his status, caste, creed, etc.

In short, equality implies the following things. First, all persons should be provided with adequate opportunities for the development of the personality. Second, no class or caste or group enjoys special privileges which are not available to other members of the society. Third, there should not be any discrimination among members of society and if there is any discrimination it should be on reasonable grounds. Thus, it does not prevent special treatment of handicapped and backward persons so that they can be brought at par with others.

Fourth, rights are equally distributed among all and all have equal access to opportunities leading to authority.

The concept of equality is not basically very old, though we get some tracers of the concept in the writing of the Stoics as well as the Romans. It was only in the latter half of the eighteenth century that the concept gained popularity. The French Revolution of 1789 was largely a protest against the prevailing inequalities and the Revolutionaries adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) asserting, "Men are born and always continue to be free and equal in respect of their rights." But, it was only in the present century that effort was made to eliminate inequalities in the economic and social sphere and necessary laws were enacted to protect the interests of the workers. It was emphasized that equality in the economic sphere was more important than equality in the civil and political spheres. It was asserted that political liberty without economic equality was a myth. The decline of imperialism and colonialism and the emergence of a large number of independent states in Asia, Africa and Latin America gave a further impetus to the principle of equality. All the states began to be treated as equals at the international levels irrespective of their size, resources and importance. The war against racial discrimination and the introduction of universal franchise further strengthened the doctrine of equality. Most of the modern states devoted great attention to the improvement of economic lot of the deprived ones to bring about economic equality. Yet, there are serious matters to be resolved in this regard.

According to modern political principles, a state should make sure that the citizens have (1) Civil Equality – Equality of all before law, (2) Political Equality – Equal rights to participate in the affairs of the state, (3) Social Equality – No discrimination among citizens on the basis of social status, caste, color, creed, rank, etc., (4) Economic Equality – Equality in the opportunities to have sound economy. Unfortunately, these equalities are not guaranteed in many countries of the world and we have discontentment among the people.

Laski has said, "Political equality is never real unless it is accompanied by virtual economic equality; political power, otherwise, is bound to be handmade of economic power." Definitely, in the absence of economic equality it is difficult to imagine a just political system. It is important to remember that economic equality does not imply that there should be equal distribution of wealth, because this sort of equality is incapable of realization. On the other hand it means that there should not be concentration of wealth in few hands only and certain minimum standards of income should be assured to all before anyone can be allowed to have more. In other words, the basic needs of all should be met before some people are permitted to lead a luxurious life. Prof. Laski expresses this point, "I have not right to take cakes when my neighbor is compelled to go without bread." Unfortunately, these concepts are being neglected in today's world and we see thousands who suffer because of inequality and discrimination.

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## Brexit or Breakup?

By Carl Bildt

Even after abandoning its empire, the United Kingdom hesitated for decades to join Europe. But it eventually did, and in the past half-century it became a proponent of European Union enlargement, and a champion of key EU policies such as the single market.

But soon it will be one year since the UK decided, by a slim majority, to leave all of that behind. In the past 11 months, we have been told repeatedly that "Brexit means Brexit" – a phrase that leaves one none the wiser as to what Brexit actually means. But now that the UK has invoked Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, the fog has started to lift. The UK has clarified some of its objectives for leaving the bloc, and we can begin to get a sense of how the process will play out over the next few years.

For starters, we know that the divorce will not be easy. Rather than pursuing a Norway- or Turkey-style arrangement, in which the UK would maintain some access to the single market or customs union, British Prime Minister Theresa May has opted for a "hard Brexit." She has made it clear that controlling immigration and leaving the European Court of Justice's jurisdiction are her primary objectives. And with her Conservative Party poised to win a solid majority in the general election on June 8, the UK will almost certainly stay this course.

In its negotiations with the EU, May's government will want to discuss a new UK-EU partnership alongside the terms of the divorce. But, so far, the European Council has furnished its chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, with a mandate only for the divorce stage of the process. It will not expand that mandate to include talks on a future UK-EU partnership until the first stage nears completion.

Moreover, the remaining 27 EU member states' finance ministries are demanding that the UK settle its financial obligations to the bloc, lest they get saddled with the UK's bill. There will be haggling over what the UK owes; but, as a matter of principle, the EU can hardly budge much on this issue.

Thus, one can be virtually certain that the UK will formally leave the EU by the end of March 2019, and that it will not have a final agreement on a new partnership in hand. Barring a separate agreement on some kind of transitional arrangement, the UK could be heading for a brutal exit: new tariffs, severed institutional relationships, and diplomatic tensions.

On the other hand, with such an agreement, the UK could leave with a reasonable divorce settlement that includes guiding principles for a new UK-EU partnership, to be discussed in another round of negotiations. Assuming good will on both sides, such negotiations could possibly be concluded by 2022. Any new partnership that emerges will most likely resemble the arrangement between Ukraine and the EU: something like the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, along with additional agreements covering complicated sectors

such as transportation and agriculture. But while the DCFTA was a boon to Ukraine's economy, a similar deal for the UK would represent a huge step backwards, not least because it would require a new border regime that would disrupt the integrated value chains on which many UK firms depend.

The UK will also have to establish a number of new agencies for regulatory issues that are currently being overseen by the EU, such as nuclear safety, pharmaceutical testing, aviation, and food standards. And, given that one of the UK's top priorities will be to maintain its economic relationship with the EU – no other relationship is as important – whatever new agencies it creates will have to uphold the standards that the EU will demand. Beyond that, the UK will also have to pursue individual arrangements with all of the non-EU countries that are a party to any of the Union's 48 trade agreements with the outside world.

There was once much talk about a post-Brexit free-trade deal between the United States and Britain. But enthusiasm has waned, and one now hears talk of the UK joining some kind of US-EU trade deal at a later date.

Another priority on the negotiating agenda will be the nearly five million EU citizens who have suddenly found themselves on the wrong side of the new divide, and whose immediate rights and future prospects will need to be addressed. Most of these people are in the UK, and most of them make important contributions to the UK's economy. For example, Barclays Bank alone employs 3,000 citizens from other EU countries.

The devil will be in the details. The May government insists that it wants to control immigration, but no one really wants to see new visa barriers in Europe. Either way, many companies will have to start making adjustments, especially in the automobile and aerospace industries, which are highly integrated across borders. In fact, Lloyds of London is already establishing operations within the EU; and Goldman Sachs has announced that it is relocating some jobs away from London. I sincerely hope that a brutal exit in the spring of 2019 can be avoided, and that the "deep and special partnership" that the UK talks about will materialize by, say, the spring of 2021. But, after some rather acrimonious conversations in recent weeks, one cannot be confident that either outcome will come to pass.

As for the remaining EU member states, we should not lose sight of the fact that we need one another. In a couple of decades, we will constitute no more than 4% of the global population. The EU – with a renewed Franco-German axis at its core – will have to deal with its many other challenges, and chart its own future.

The same goes for the UK, which must decide if it still wants to be a part of Europe, albeit outside of the EU; or whether Brexit actually means Breakup. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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