

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



November 02, 2017

Looking Beyond Despair and Disappointment

There is no easy way to success. Those who achieve great milestones always strive harder than the others. The purpose and goals of life are not always easily attained and different people have to go through different hurdles to reach them. These hurdles test the temperament of the people; challenge them in various ways and in certain cases sink them in despair. Only after going through the sea of hurdles and despair, they can reach on the other side – the side where their dreams are waiting for them.

In certain cases, it is easier to flow with the flow of time and let things come instead of reaching to them.

However, living a life that has been decided for us by our socio-economic circumstances does not really mean that we are living our lives with complete responsibility. In that case we are just puppets, dancing with the strings that are being moved by the society. In order to live a true and productive life, it is important that we should create such a life.

Creating a life means finding the true purpose of the existence and then following the same through our actions. Creating such a life is not a piece of cake; rather it requires great energy and enthusiasm. It requires a complete transformation.

The transformation can start from negating what is already taught to human beings by his surroundings. He requires to un-condition himself. The conditioning that is carried out by the society may not always be favorable for a person, and most importantly that conditioning is as per the thinking and the perspectives of others. Every person needs to discover himself. He has to decide his life according to his own comprehension of his self.

During this transformation, he may feel despair; and may experience nothingness. The world may look meaningless and purposeless. The roads may look dusty and leading to nowhere. The trees may look autumn-stricken and the water may be flowing in a directionless directions. The relations may seem absurd and the friends may appear to be strangers. However, the important thing is not to get stuck in this despair as the life is on the other side of despair. It is not within it. This despair may prove to be a necessary evil.

It may provide an opportunity to a person to rethink about his life, to rewrite its script and to rebuild his personality. Gold becomes gold after many years of suffering. It has to bear the extreme temperature and great pressure. It has to go through various processes to sparkle as it does. A seed becomes a tree after going through a long and tiresome process. It has to bear the different sorts of weather and have to extract its nutrition from the earth. Only after surviving through every thick and thin it is able to stand strong as a tree and grow flowers and fruits.

History proves that the same is true for human beings as well. The personalities that have gone through very critical circumstances have been able to stand taller as human beings. Every human being has to go through the experience of despair if he has to discover his true self.

Though it may always be more convenient to live on the creativities of others, to reach for the ideas that are already developed and to strive for the targets that are already set. However, borrowed ideologies, borrowed destinations and borrowed motives can never work for an individual. Every individual is unique in what he really is.

Finding that unique self will require going through the quagmire of despair, yet the great revelations are waiting on the other side. Though going through this quagmire is necessary, sticking to it is not recommended. Getting stuck in the quagmire means pitiful death. It means a useless and wasted life. The quagmire should be considered as a necessary passage to the real destination on the other side of it.

Today's world wherein most of the people are lost in hustle and bustle and in pursuit of the materialistic gains, this is a crying need that the human beings must discover true human gifted with perfect realization of the responsibilities and understanding of the human existence. He must suffer and despair, but has to take a rebirth. He has to be born as a different human being after what he goes through.

This is the only way human beings can change the world around themselves; no other way is possible today.

Therefore, it is imperative that people should not get disappointments when they face difficulties, when they see the road blocked ahead of them and when there seems to be no encouragement and appreciation. Particularly, people living in Afghanistan, in the current circumstance, where they find difficulties, hardships and disappointments, must always live with the optimism that there is a better ending to all these problems. As Sartre had quoted, "There is life on the other side of despair."

The Passive Role of National Council

By Syed Asif Husseini

National Council is the nation's home. Dignity and national authority must be manifested in the home of nation. In Afghanistan, however, the status of parliament has declined. Members of Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the Parliament), who enjoy great immunity, spend national budget in an acceptable way. So, every citizen has the right to impeach their representative. The parliament should be impeached in open so as to make it clear to the entire citizen of Afghanistan since it has authority and the right to vote of confidence and no confidence. It also has the authority of supervising the executive and judiciary powers. This right is concomitant with responsibility. But parliament enjoys the privileges without performing its basic responsibility.

Wolesi Jirga has a very strong legal and financial backing. Afghan Constitution defines National Council as the supreme organ of law and the manifestation of national will. This interpretation has been reclaimed in the greatest national document. The constitution bestowed great competence to National Council. It is the parliamentary authority that changed Afghanistan's political system from presidency to semi-presidency. Despite all this authority, National Council is extremely point – which is neither a secret nor able to be restored through political justification. Parliament could not fulfill public expectations. People's expectations can never be unreasonable since the expectation from an institution will be formed on the basis of its status. The position of National Council creates a legitimate role for parliament and legitimate expectations for citizens.

So far, National Council was not able to retain its authority or fulfill its role in Afghanistan. Lack of these two principles filled Afghans with a sense of disappointment. The challenges with National Council does not relate to the legal structure of parliament but to MPs. The weak management of the board of directors and lack of MPs' sense of responsibilities are two basic problems that have continued over years. Parliamentary leadership has spent much time in its internal conflicts. Intra-organizational conflicts will eventually cripple any organization.

Generally speaking, MPs are highly negligent to their duties and make absence for many days. Being too exhausted from their duties, their presence seems the same as their absence. It comes as they enjoy the bulk of privileges and immunity. Wolesi Jirga should be rehabilitated and its reputation restored. There are great opportunities for rehabilitation in the structure of National Council and the sympathetic representatives will have to use such opportunities in appropriate way. The monitoring role of parliament is a great authority and MPs should protect their monitoring

authority over executive bodies. Government needs to fulfill this responsibility step by step. All issues should be under the watchful eyes of parliament. But this is not the case with Afghan parliament. Parliament proceed to solve issues very late. MPs impeach ministers in the very last step; therefore, no impeachment has resolved the issue.

In addition to its supervisory role, Wolesi Jirga must have full control over the government's policy. The government's internal policy is visible in the form of the national budget. Parliament can push public programs into a strategic process, but this did not happen.

The issues of war and peace, and discrimination and corruption have engrossed the public for years. MPs have to consider these issues. Since parliament is the manifestation of national will, the words or mandatory issued by parliament should be put into practice by the government.

National Council does not deserve to be sidelined. Its status is to be restored. It is worth saying that the weakness of parliament is tantamount to the government's weakness. If the advisory and legislative role of the government is not fulfilled appropriately, government will not be able to gain its national objectives, either.

The former administration involved parliament in political game. Former President Hamid Karzai appointed seven acting ministers for two years during his second round of presidency. In political tension with parliament, Karzai managed seven ministries without ministers for two years which weakened the parliament's policy. Thus, parliament's political prestige has been declined from years ago. During Hamid Karzai's presidency, the political authority of Afghan parliament and its domination on major affairs were declined to the extent that Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) was considered a landmark in national issues.

National Council must demonstrate its own initiative. It needs to give a strategic look at macro-issues. Government should note that national major issues should not be overshadowed by political issues.

Peace process, elections and electronic ID cards are three major issues that have the public minds. Peace process should be dealt through international diplomacy. However, the election process is a national issue and parliament has to fulfill its role in this regard. Parliament should not let the election process be marginalized by other political issues. The decision of parliament about the population register law is suitable. Parliament should have this determination to resolve the issue of electronic ID card, too. It is to substantiate its role in the implementation of this national process.

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The Bombastic Peace Talks

By Hujjatullah Zia

The issue of peace talks has been ambiguous. Much was said about the relations among key players in peace process like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the US and the Taliban's approach toward the negotiation of peace, which was suspended and resumed several times. In case of coming to fruition, peace talks will be a pyric victory for Afghanistan.

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) comprising of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and the US held a meeting last month in Muscat, Oman's capital, to bring the Taliban to the table of negotiation. Following the death of Omar's successor Mullah Mansour, a disagreement emerged between Washington and Islamabad that left no room for QCG meeting. However, the last meeting was held after the US President Donald Trump declared his strategy about Afghanistan and South Asia saying that "Pakistan often gives safe haven to agents of chaos, violence, and terror."

In his recent trip to Islamabad, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson maintained that he had visited Pakistan to say that Washington is determined to eradicate terrorism from the region with their support or "in a different way" and Washington would implement its strategy with or without Islamabad, which means through peace or war.

Following the meeting between Rex Tillerson and Pakistani officials, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif denied the allegations against Pakistan of offering safe havens to terrorists and protecting the Haqqani network. He also said that the Pakistani side told the American delegation that they should allow their policymakers, and not their military leaders, to device a policy for Afghanistan as the military solution has failed and a political solution is needed. While briefing the Senate, Asif said that the Pakistani side had told the visiting delegation that the influence Pakistan once had over the Taliban has now diminished.

The Afghan-Pak relation is also in fluctuation. However, the last QCG meeting suggests that the mutual relation between two countries is beginning to thaw. Recently, President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani said that Kabul government has always left the door open to Pakistan for negotiations and the decision lies with Pakistan whether to cooperate positively for regional peace or not.

According to reports, Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar declared its support to the new strategy. Hekmatyar says he was ready for any kind of assistance to the peace process in order to bring to a complete halt to the war and violence in the country.

HIA stopped its militancy against the government and

joined peace process during Ghani's administration. The party's leader constantly asked the Taliban to join peace, which was turned a deaf ear by the Taliban. It is believed that Hekmatyar does not carry much weight in this regard and will bring no changes in the country's stability. Before joining peace process, his men had sporadic clashes with the Taliban militants. What if he himself is the Taliban's target?

All the key players need to play their role in terms of peace process with bona fide intention. It is self-explanatory that peace negotiation was as fruitless as war on terror. Persisting on peace without practical step will be doomed to failure. For instance, Afghan government has currently focused the bulk of its attention on peace talks, whereas the Taliban have intensified their attacks against Afghan soldiers and civilians.

All the countries have to adopt strategies regarding terrorism in accordance with time and condition. For example, when the Taliban remain adamantly opposed to peace talks, persisting on this issue will not bear the desired result. All the roots of terrorism ought to be figured out and eradicated. There are three significant issues to be considered in fighting terrorism:

First, the radical ideology of warring factions, mainly the Taliban, should be condemned by religious scholars from around the world.

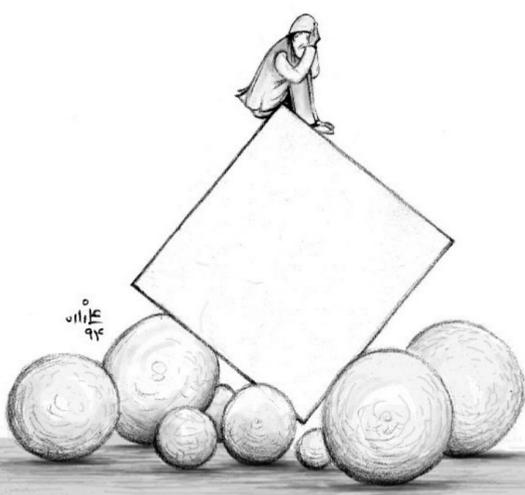
That is to say, all Islamic clergy from different countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, should condemn the Taliban's practices and mentalities through media and press.

Second, the Taliban's financial support must be cut off. Cultivating and trafficking narcotic drug seem to be the main reason behind the protracted war in Afghanistan. The Taliban's deafening silence toward the cultivation of narcotic drug suggest that they reap the benefit. In short, the Taliban never issue fatwa against cultivation of narcotic drug although it is in conflict with Islamic tenets.

Third, military deal will be the only viable option if the Taliban do not succumb to peace talks. So, the key players have to adopt a unanimous decision to launch attacks against the safe havens of the Taliban and leave no room for the spread of their ideology or militant activities. Obliterating the Taliban's safe havens is possible with the support of intelligence.

With a spate of suicide bombing, there is no gleam of hope for peace talks. Afghan people are being sacrificed every day. Violence and bloodshed continue in spite of the fact that Afghan government seeks peace through diplomatic way. The "an eye for an eye" strategy will be effective.

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