

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



October 02, 2017

“United We Stand Divided We Fall”

The great saying, “united we stand divided we fall” is the leading principle, Afghan should subscribe to ensures our life long triumph. Afghanistan is a war torn land that should exercise the bond of intimacy to magnetize all fragments of Afghan society into single whole. In order to reinforce this vision earlier, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on making a speech on Ashura with religious leaders reiterated greater national unity. He said that the path of Hazrat Imam Hussain was the path of unity among Muslims. It gave the message of unity not difference and believed on moderation and welfare. The president said Yazids of today wanted to add to the miseries and problems of the people of Afghanistan. “They want our people to go there and there confused and exhausted,” he added. Following successful formation of unity government the political deadlock was thought to be done away with, the masses eyed resolution of multifaceted problems, waiting their fates for years. The deteriorating state of security and political uncertainty remain to be obstacle on the way to unbeaten Afghanistan. Violence has been a dominant phenomenon browbeating every fabric of Afghan society. The fight between insurgents and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) seems unending provided civilians are not ended. Harmony promoting education and equitable distribution of resources and services narrows down the differences whilst paving the way for peaceful coexistence. There is a documented existence of law and with negligible application or prejudicial application, serve none’s interest. Insecurity has turned out to be one of the burning issues requiring immediate attention. The insurgents have run wild attacking innocent civilians and cities. It is witnessed with the turn of every seasonal offensive the intensity of violence inclined rendering the foreign diplomats, public officials and civilians’ prime target of attacks –but every now and then the insurgents cling to overrunning the developed cities exercising far and wide bloodshed. The growing attacks on foreign and civilians indicates the insurgents are underlining their pretentious presence. The individuals driven by evil motives, put them in the black race of domination, leading to formation of a human society we witness at the moment, characterized by rule of mob, violence, aggression, innumerable bloodshed and ruthless killings of fellowmen. Unluckily our society at present is governed by some of identical dilemmas. Another problem daunting challenges faces is poverty, one of the challenges pressing it hard. Most of the 30m population lives below poverty line including endemic poverty and lack of human capacity; insecurity; weak governance and institutionalized corruption; rampant gender inequality; and policy, regulatory, and institutional constraints that have limited effective growth in public and private sectors. The government that assumed the office must work out tangible plans - downizing the problems. Despite countless challenges left to the National Unity Government to face, financial management will be the biggest problem pleading immediate attention. To provide a sustainable backup to its financial needs, the government relies on loans accompanied with handsome amount of interest. High ranked public officials senior politicians involved in bank scandals and corruption seemed not the government’s concern or priority now. Consequently, multiple unresolved problems were left to the new government. It should be learned that Afghanistan cannot develop without a sustainable economical road map drawn and implemented that grants them financial independence. The state of self reliance can only be achieved when heavy investments are made in the field of human resource developmental programs. In addition to financial independence, Afghanistan is in dire need of socio-political assistance and trained official in all fields of human endeavors. Any country extending selfless services must be warmly received. In that pursuit a cordial relationship must be developed and tried to preserve the previous ones. Afghanistan was pushed to directionless avenues of battered relation with international community; certainly serve not Afghanistan’s interest. Another issue earning bad fame for Afghans is the illicit growth and trade of life snatching drug. Many countries and humanitarian organization showed grave concerns over mass production of the drug. Moreover, the illegal drug trade has always served a part in deterioration of law and order and a prior asset of insurgents and militant. Reportedly, the illegal drug has been greater source, serving financial affairs of militancy and insurgency. The government of Afghanistan instead of relying on international community must work out genuine means tackling maintenance of law and devise legitimate and standard procedure of prosecution. The US official stressed the strategy must address alternative development, eradication, interdiction, prosecution, incarceration and then the so-called soft-side programs of awareness, treatment and rehabilitation. Afghanistan is the land of treasure that is buried deep down in its heart. The unexplored rich earthy resources capable of earning socio-economic possessions for the state, aren’t taken the advantage of, underlines the negligence if not the incompetence of ruling elites. Afghanistan’s youth and resources are potential valuable assets that can earn financial support to its declining but dependent economy. Putting cognitive abilities into practice the public officials can reduce the size of problems if can not eradicate them. The politicians representing their electoral constitution not necessarily should come up to the expectation of their Electoral College but to the voice of faithfulness and sanity. The government and public officials must realize, the dream of a vibrant, progressive, developed Afghanistan can only materialize, provided a handsome amount of budget is allocated for education, health, infrastructure and governance. The world must learn it that a healthy, literate and well governed Afghanistan is a secure and developed Afghanistan.



The Need for Ending Distortion from Ashura’s Episode

By Jawad Sorosh

On the day of Ashura many Muslims partake in large peaceful gatherings where they recite poems in memory of Imam Husain (A.S) and his sacrifice whilst lamenting and beating their chest as a cultural tradition to display their grievance. Many people use the day of Ashura as a day to perform acts of kindness and charity as a way for them keep alive the very same principles and values Husain (A.S) gave his life for. However, the distortion of the event of Ashura (10th of Muharram) and misrepresentation of Husain’s (A.S) objectives and messages have affected the culture of mourning and changed the intellectual discourse into emotional myth among the mourners. This distortion is not a recent issue but started a day after the revolution as oppressors sought to empty it from values. A number of Imam’s proponents were unintentionally engaged in similar activities. Unaware of being pawn to the ill-intentioned, some show tendency in mythologizing the event of Ashura, altering its values, and misconstruing its objectives. With easy access to the means of communication, and the interaction of contemporary men with different faith and beliefs, nothing will be veiled in secrecy and people will understand the fact. Therefore, the need for pathological study and abolishing distortion is felt more than ever before. Since mourning ceremonies are the most significant centers for spreading the message of Imam’s revolution, any misrepresentations in this field will be seriously damaging to the objectives of this historical revolution. So, exploring the current damaging issues will be of great importance. Considering the current sensitivity across the country, the clergy and preachers are responsible to put an end to any kinds of distortion in conducting Ashura and mourning ceremonies and should not weaken the epic of this event. Emotional attitude towards this revolution, irrespective of other aspects, and chanting soulful poems will only beef up the sentimental dimension of Ashura’s incident that will necessarily keep the audience away from the pure mindset of Husain (A.S). Stating the issues which are in conflict with the characteristics of Husain’s (A.S) household or religious tenets, imposing personal tastes, having a baseless say will add to the distortion of this sacred movement. Ill-fatedly, a number of preachers have not enlightened this revolution truly or deeply for the public. There is no doubt that Imam Husain (A.S) along with his companions suffered great tragedy and the Kufa militants resorted to most horrible and catastrophic acts in this revo-

lution. To view this revolution from this lens, it will be a great tragic issue. Our folklore points out the tragic aspect of Ashura to the extent that the epic aspect is overshadowed. Indeed, this notion exists in the minds and thoughts of some religious scholars and preachers, too. For instance, there are statements about individuals that their presence on Ashura is veiled in doubt. The history about this issue is distorted. It is believed that the silence or confirmation of some religious scholars is one of the main reasons behind this falsification. The society’s intellectuals, scholars and religious elements will have to realize the facts and figure out the roots of society’s rise and fall and show an appropriate reaction in this regard. If the said people neglect this fact, distortion and exaggeration will continue faster than ever before. The clergy need to think better than the masses, resist boldly against distortion, and play their constructive role in the best possible way. Purifying and reforming public culture is the responsibility of the elite. The role of religious scholars is similar to surgeons and they have to do surgical operation so as to remove the unnecessary elements. The clergy have to raise their voice and act upon religious tenets despite being reacted negatively. Perhaps one will fear weakening the public faith by showing reaction to such distortion. But showing no reaction will do more harm than good, that is, if falsification is revealed for the public, it will weaken their faith. The next reason behind this distortion is copying the folklore of a nation or of an ethnic group in terms of conducting mourning ceremony. For instance, the way of flagellating ourselves by chained-knife in conducting mourning ceremony on Ashura is a product imported from other cultures. In brief, mourning ceremonies should be conducted in the way conforming with the true spirit of this sacred revolution and to our native culture. The event of Karbala has to reinforce unity, coexistence, peaceful life, and the spirit of brotherhood in Islamic societies rather than being falsified or weakened with superstition. The first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is quoted as saying, “The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husain and his followers were the rigid believers of God. They illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husain despite his minority marvels me.” *Jawad Sorosh is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the outlookafghanistan@gmail.com*

Is South Asia the New Middle East?

By Dominique Moisi

The Middle East is often viewed as a region waylaid by feelings of collective humiliation and violent rivalries, both between and within countries. But South Asia is beset by some of the same forces, reflected in a surge of Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar, where the Muslim Rohingya are being driven from the country, and Hindu nationalism in India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party. The good news for South Asia is that a “Middle Eastern” future is not inevitable. But the mere possibility indicates the febrile state of affairs that rising nationalism, often couched in religious terms, is producing across the region. It is as if growing fundamentalism within Islam has now encouraged fundamentalism in other religions. The situation is particularly dire for the Rohingya. Since August, the military has been engaged in a brutal campaign that, despite being nominally focused on stopping Rohingya militants, has targeted civilians and burned entire villages, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. But while this latest crackdown is particularly devastating – “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing,” according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – persecution of the Rohingya is nothing new. Since independence in 1948, successive governments have denied even the most basic rights to the Rohingya, refusing to grant them so much as citizenship. As the international community has condemned the crackdown, Myanmar’s de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi has stood largely silent, a choice that has done untold damage to her once impeccable image as a courageous champion of democracy and human rights. Even when she finally did address the issue – at a press conference, delivered in English, after weeks of violence – she refused to mention the Rohingya by name. Suu Kyi’s problematic response has often been attributed to her political calculations regarding how to deal with Myanmar’s military, which ruled the country until just last year and remains beyond civilian control. But, as unbecoming as it is for a Nobel Peace Prize winner, the truth is that her response probably also reflects her indifference to the fate of a small minority. Muslims comprise just 4% of Myanmar’s population. To her Burman aristocratic sensibility, their interests barely register. What began as a localized tragedy has now become an international crisis – and not just because of the refugee flows into Bangladesh and elsewhere. As in the Middle East, national and religious identities tend to be inextricably linked. Like Myanmar, neighboring Thailand is a majority-Bud-

dhist country; Malaysia and Indonesia are mostly Muslim; and India is majority Hindu. Pakistan, for its part, was created as the homeland for the Muslim minority in Britain’s former Indian empire after independence. For religious minorities in the region, security can be hard to come by, not least because of the British and Dutch imperial legacies. The British Raj used minorities to help enforce colonial rule, by promising to provide a better life for those enduring discrimination. But when the British went home, discrimination resurfaced – sometimes with added zeal, given resentment of minorities’ collaboration with colonial rule. It is that discrimination that has led a small minority of young Rohingya to choose violence, such as the attacks in August on security outposts and police stations. The militants may have been egged on by fundamentalist Muslim preachers from the Middle East, or even by homegrown fanatics. In any case, they are typically seeking to strike back at the system and people responsible for oppressing them. And radicalization within Myanmar’s Muslim community has proceeded alongside the growth of religious extremism among the Buddhist majority. Buddha preached peace and tolerance. Yet some Buddhist priests today are inciting hatred and violence. In fact, even before the latest eruption, a succession of massacres garnered only indifference from the international community. Like the horrors inflicted on Bosnia’s Muslims during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, the assault on the Rohingya seems to reveal the Western world’s selective empathy. The result is a vicious circle of radicalization and violence. Terrorist organizations like the Islamic State, now defeated on the ground in Syria and Iraq, undoubtedly hope to use the Rohingya’s plight to mobilize Muslims, particularly in Asia, for their own ends. As religious tensions escalate, regional cooperation is in jeopardy. How can an organization like ASEAN, which has promoted gradual progress on security and economic collaboration, weather the killing and displacement of religious minorities in its member states? If a geostrategic catastrophe is to be avoided, the unholy alliance of religion and nationalism must be broken. The United Nations should take the lead in this regard, by committing to bringing an end to the Rohingya crisis. Beyond the moral imperative of doing so, a successful intervention could help to restore multilateral institutions’ tarnished image. The last thing the world needs is another politically fragmented region mired in violent conflict. (Courtesy Project Syndicate) *Dominique Moisi is Senior Counselor at the Institut Montaigne in Paris.*

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