

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



October 07, 2015

It is Time to Pursue True Wisdom

If we turn the pages of history we will be able to find some great societies - the societies that had value for knowledge, wisdom and philosophy. Though they lived thousands of years earlier, yet they had thirst for knowledge and great urge to discover the truths about human beings and the universe. One of the examples of such a society is the Greek society of antiquity. The great philosophers and thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were the inhabitants of the same society. All of them are still known to the world because of their valuable contributions in the field of philosophy, astronomy, ethics, politics, literature and many others. There are many other examples, as well, of such societies. One of them is, undoubtedly, the society that flourished in Baghdad years ago. Baghdad had great worth and respect for knowledge and philosophy and it also gave birth to many great philosophers among whom, Jaffar and Nizam may be named as the most prominent ones.

By studying these societies thoroughly, we come to know about their traditions and values. These are the societies that have to be valued as much as possible. Every society is recognized from the types of its problems and the nature of its values and habits of its people.

If our society is recognized by its childish behavior, it is not really weird. Unimportant thoughts and false displays are within the roots of our society. In fact, we are suffering from the stagnancy of thoughts and lack of thirst for knowledge and wisdom within our people.

The traditions and values in our society are really weird 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 same 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 mould of traditions and practices even though they may be obsolete and insane.

Someone had said that whenever he considers the problems of others as his, they become angry and consider him 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. It is difficult to 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, 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.

We Need A Teacher More Than Ever!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

On the occasion of this teachers' day, I badly felt the need of a teacher for myself and for almost everyone around me. Of the many attributes of a teacher, the most important for me is of a facilitator. In my student life as well, I experienced many times when I needed someone to advise me, to help me in a difficult situation and lead me. Being students, we have always admired and remembered the kindness of a teacher who was kind to us and who used to solve our problems. It has rightly been said that, 'a person's problems might never finish unless the number of his breaths finish'. Now that many of us have passed from the era of being a student and became professionals, we are still facing numerous problems and at times feel the need of a person who should facilitate us. This need is felt by everyone and on all the stages of life.

As a nation, we are passing through the most difficult time. We are depressed, we are angry, we are afraid and at times, feel pessimistic about our future and future of our country. On such occasions, we need a teacher, both individually and as a whole nation. It is, however, remains a fact that a teacher mostly facilitates us by his or her wise words. The wisdom in his words comes not because of his knowledge or any other angelic quality but because of his sheer honesty. He realizes his duties being a teacher and wants to do his best for his students. Then he realizes that his duties and responsibilities cross the limits of mere teaching and attending classes and he facilitates his students on different occasions. His honesty brings a kind of hidden and invisible comfort to his students.

Although mere and hollow words never leave lasting impressions but it is not the case in case of an honest teacher. When his honesty and sincerity enters his words, his words turn into magic words. It is strange that students take the maximum inspiration from words of a teacher. Although the same words can be uttered by anybody but the words uttered from the mouth of a teacher act differently. Mostly, teacher uses his words to show a right direction, to make a student look at the bright side of a picture and make him relax and forget the sorrows. Unnecessary tension and fear can cripple the minds and thoughts of a person and a teacher teaches how to get aside and let the raging bull of fears and depression pass from a side. Although we may not be able to stop anything from happening but we are in position to deal it wisely and it is what the words of a teacher teaches.

Comforting words are very necessary, especially in this time when cutthroat competition and commercialization has deprived us of all the comforts. I am talking about those comforts that are associated with our mind and thoughts. From many months now, large numbers of people are fleeing the country due to different fears. Media finds it more beneficial to show the dark side of the picture and further darken the scenario. Most of our youngsters are in need of some magic words that should repel their fears, help them look at the bright side of the picture, and get relaxed. But these words are not coming from

anywhere. Everyone is talking of the frightening words and these words are getting onto our nerves. Other day, I watched the Friday sermon of a religious scholar in one of the famous mosques of Kabul. He was talking about this issue. He was trying his best to utter some comforting words and I felt too good after hearing him. Many of my friends had the same feelings and they recommended the video that was later released on internet. The situation did not change but the way we look at the situation changed slightly. At this time of uncertainty, we need large number of teachers who should help us look at the brighter side of the picture.

The difference of viewpoints can also be understood from the same problem. I have been witnessing more and more cases when our youths have made to Turkey, Greece or even Germany but they are not happy there as well and they want to return to Afghanistan. Here, they were only shown the bright side of the picture that if they made to Turkey or Europe, they will be very happy, they will earn a lot of money and of so many other pleasing dreams but when they went there and saw the actual picture with their own eyes, it did not come out to be so beautiful.

These days, our forces also need a teacher. They must be told that they are on the right side and fighting for a noble purpose. They are fighting and sacrificing their lives for the protection of millions of men and women, children and elderly who have pinned their hopes with them. It must be kept in mind that at the end, evil has to vanish and they will definitely be successful. We are proud of our forces that they have never let us down but these days, when they are busy fighting the terrorists on a number of places, the comforting words are gradually decreasing. When we will think of fleeing the country in hopelessness, how can we expect that they will sustain their spirits?

At present, another role of teacher is also needed which is of giving good advice. There is a long list of advices needed to all of us these days, and with every passing day, their importance is increasing.

The first advice is to teach us all that we should discourage the efforts of our enemies who are working hard to divide us.

We need a teacher who should also advise our leaders that instead of looking for temporary gains, they should widen their horizons and try to be the pioneers of a country that is going to be strong and developed in the future. We also need a teacher who should tell funny stories and take our children out of the trance of shocking sounds of firing, bomb explosions, rockets and ambulance sirens. We cannot stop these things but at least we can divert our attention to listen to something else.

Finally, we need a teacher who should tell us that when we will not be honest with ourselves, our fellow citizens and our motherland, we should not expect any good in return. We will have to fight terrorism but it will start when we will fight with our desires and work honestly and think broadly of general good instead of our own prosperity.

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Managing Europe's Perfect Storm

By Richard N. Haass

The Chinese often point out that in their language the character for crisis and opportunity are one and the same. But, while it is indeed true that crisis and opportunity often go hand in hand, it is difficult to see much opportunity in Europe's current circumstances.

One reason the current situation facing Europe is so difficult is that it was so unexpected. Here we are, 70 years after the end of World War II, a quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, and some two decades after the Balkan wars, and suddenly Europe's political, economic, and strategic future seems much more uncertain than anyone predicted as recently as a year ago.

Another reason to be worried is that Europe faces not one crisis, but several. The first is economic: not just the current reality of slow growth, but the prospect that slow growth will continue without respite, owing above all to policies that often discourage businesses from investing and hiring. The rise of populist political parties of both the left and the right across the continent attests to popular frustrations and fears. Making matters worse for Europe's economy was the decision taken decades back to introduce a common currency without a common fiscal policy. Discipline disappeared at the national level in many countries; Greece was the most recent casualty, but it is unlikely to be the last.

The second crisis results from Russian actions in Ukraine. There is no prospect of Russia giving up Crimea, and questions about its intentions in eastern Ukraine and the Baltics are mounting. The result is the return of geopolitics to Europe at a time when defense spending is modest and public support for armed intervention is largely absent.

The third, and most pressing, crisis is the result of massive flows of migrants from the Middle East and elsewhere into Europe. The flood of people is exposing new rifts among EU members, raising questions about the principle of open borders and free movement that has long been at the core of the EU.

Germany and a few other countries have stepped up to the challenge in ways that are admirable but unsustainable. Some 8,000 refugees a day - a modern day Volkerwanderung - are entering Germany, partly because of harsh conditions back home, and partly because of Germany's willingness to take them in. The challenge of caring for, employing, and integrating such numbers will soon run up against the limits of physi-

cal capacity, financial resources, and public tolerance.

It is obvious that public policy cannot succeed if it is focused on the consequences, rather than the causes, of the refugee crisis. The change that would have the greatest positive impact would be the emergence of a new government in Damascus that was acceptable to the bulk of the Syrian people and a satisfactory partner for the United States and Europe. Unfortunately, this seems likely to come about only with the blessing of Russia and Iran, both of which appear more inclined to increase their support for President Bashar al-Assad than to work for his removal.

Other steps, however, would improve the situation. Increased international financial support for countries in Europe or the Middle East hosting large numbers of refugees is one. Ideally, such funding would help persuade more countries to follow Germany's example.

Another useful development would be the creation of enclaves inside Syria where people could gather with some expectation of security. Such enclaves would require local support from Kurdish forces or select Arab tribes, with military backing by the US and others.

A new comprehensive arrangement with Turkey is also needed to reduce the flow of jihadist recruits to Syria and the number of refugees heading north. Turkey would receive financial and military assistance in exchange for asserting greater control over its borders, while the question of Turkey's long-term relationship with Europe would be set aside until the crisis passed. The US has a special obligation to help. Both by what it has done and what it has failed to do in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East, American foreign policy bears more than a little responsibility for outcomes that have led to the refugee exodus.

The US also has a strategic interest in helping Germany and Europe contend with this crisis. Europe still constitutes a quarter of the world's economy and remains one of America's principal geopolitical partners. A Europe overwhelmed by a demographic challenge, in addition to its economic and security challenges, would be neither able nor willing to be an effective ally.

In all of this, time is of the essence. Europe - and Germany in particular - cannot sustain the status quo. Waiting for a solution to the Syrian situation is no answer; while lesser steps will not resolve Europe's predicament, they could make it manageable.

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