

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



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Difficult Times Must Teach Us a Lesson

It is widely believed concept that the nations that go through difficult times ultimately gain a sense of admiration for peace, tranquility and progress and the members of such nation become more responsible and strive to bring about positive changes. History favors this concept evidently. For example, it took European centuries to rise for development and reforms and ultimately become better nations of the world. The had to go through dark age and then many wars before they started realizing that wars would not lead them towards stability, therefore, they brought about important changes in their considerations and priorities.

Nevertheless, it is vital to understand that it is not the difficulties and troubles alone that would guarantee a better response by the nation; the nature of the response itself is also of great importance. If a nation faces troubles and issues and gets pessimistic, it would not rise to the occasion and rather succumb to it.

It would then be dominated by those troubles and a time could come that nation would consider all the troubles as its destiny and thus adjust itself with them. At that point all the doors towards reforms and development would be closed.

As a matter of fact there are opportunities hidden in the troubles and problems. They show that there are shortcomings that have to be overcome by the society members. They require change and thus demand appropriate actions. Looking at the troubles in that perspective could give a nation an impetus to change and improve their socio-political circumstances.

One of the most imperative characteristic of a nation is its attitude and behavior within a tense and challenging situation. The nations that are able to go through such situations successfully, in fact, deserve to be remembered by history, while the ones that lose themselves only have the right to wither away with the sands of time.

Here it is important to see the nation as a whole. It is not always right to consider leaders responsible for everything that happens within the society. Definitely, they have a dominant role and certain responsibilities as well, but the society in its entirety depend on all the people. Even the quality and characteristics of the leaders depend on the types of societies and the nature of people among whom they are nourished. So, the responsibility for everything does not fall on the leaders automatically; neither are they responsible to bring about all the positive changes that are required within a society.

Therefore, the nation as a whole must rise to the occasion and respond to the challenges.

Moreover, the leaders are not always perfect and there have been many cases wherein the leaders have proved that they want nothing more than their self-centered incentives. There are cases when they are corrupt and above all they are like all other human beings and they may commit mistakes, make wrong decisions and may even sacrifice the greater good for their families and friends. In such cases it becomes really important for a nation to be vigilant and must not become dumb sheep and follow them blindly.

Currently Afghan nation is also going through a very crucial phase of its history and it is demanded from the nation to be vigilant and sensible and strive to write its history itself, instead of letting the circumstances take the control and pen down their destiny.

Though a government has been formed whose basic structure is based on unity and that also claims to a national unity government, concerns still remain regarding the exposed feelings and sentiments of the people for their countrymen. It has to be accepted that even if the leaders get together and form alliances and coalitions, nothing would save the nation from going towards chaos if the people abhor each other and become the victim of chauvinist and extremist feelings.

Therefore, it is important that Afghan nation must now start thinking and acting wisely. They have experienced an ugly phase of civil war and a very long history of instability. By now, they should be sensible enough not to fall in the trap of chauvinist feelings for their fellow beings and do not give any one opportunity to utilize their feelings for their self-centered incentives.

Now, they have to realize that their responsibilities are to declare clearly that they are no more ready to be fooled and to be utilized by others. Their rights are to announce their hatred for ignorance, poverty, conservative ideas, slavish thinking and growing hypocrisy, not for each other. They need to fight against the prevailing injustice and all the efforts that try to keep them away from education and knowledge. They should say no to the darkness and try to follow the light as it is the only way that they can live their life with prosperity and dignity.



'Earn Heart which is the Greatest Shrine'

By Mohammad Baqirian

Eid roots in deep sincerity and tends to weaken our tendency towards worldly lust. Within that historical day, when Ibrahim touched the knife to the throat of his beloved son Ismael, it symbolized the peak of selflessness and devotion for the deity. Showing lack of tendency towards flamboyant and eye-catching materials so as to reach a spiritual status is a milestone in one's life. Therefore, Ibrahim was upgraded spiritually and reached a true salvation. This historical day put a significant effect in human societies as it is celebrated annually around the globe.

Afghanistan is also among the countries which celebrates this day in an especial way. With smiles on people's lips, the city seems fresh. That is to say, the air is filled with indescribable delight, smile, and pleasure. People from all walk of life spend for this day as much as they can afford, make trip, visit their relatives, and sacrifice sheep as charity - which really reflect humanity. However, one of the issues is forgotten on Eid Days.

This issue which is of high significance is supporting the poor and those who live in abject poverty and have no one to care for them. This issue is hardly ever paid heed on Eid Days in our society. People spend huge amount of money for Eid, but if the expenses are channeled to supporting the poor, it will be more spiritual and delightful. For instance, those who go to parks, luxury hotels, etc. if they spend a small amount of their money in helping the poor, they will fill many hearts with strong sense of delight. Their own conscience will also be mollified and they will feel inner satisfaction. Hence, this act of kindness will add to the pleasure of Eid since sympathy and empathy will generate a feeling of self-satisfaction. It will give us a peace of mind and relieve us mentally and spiritually. This is a real spiritual rehearsal. In other words, pleasures and happiness are really ephemeral and not really momentous. We will lose our energy with the process of time and our pleasure might go no more beyond a memory. Nonetheless, supporting the poor will be different. That is to say, sympathizing with the poor will fill us with a perpetual delight.

We will feel an eternal tranquility. Suppose you, along with your close friend, have your meal at a luxury restaurant or visit the best park, your happiness will decline at the end of the day. But if you hand a small penny to a poor individual on the way to restaurant, help some children, whose only bread and butter are polishing shoes, support the underprivileged, etc. you will gain an eternal peace of mind and a great sense of pleasure that will not erase from your

memory.

Whenever, you remember your kindness and the act of morality you will feel satisfied and happy. So, you will be bursting with pleasure and pride.

Now the question is that who wants an eternal enjoyment? The answer is that all want it. We will heal the inner wounds of the poor with acts of kindness and human feelings.

The inner satisfaction of the poor is the other side of the coin. With our act of humanity, we will revive smile on the lips of the individuals who might not have beamed for years. To emphasize, we will fill the broken-hearts with happiness. Making people happy will further beautify the Eid and make it an enjoyable day for them, too.

In such a case, the true meaning of humanity will emerge in the society and the true soul of Eid-e-Qurban, which means getting rid of material lust and sacrifice for the divine sake, will be practiced upon. A Persian poem aptly says that earn heart which is the greatest Hajj and earning a heart is better than thousands of [visiting] Ka'ba shrine. Pleasing others in a divine way and reviving smile on their lips will be better than visiting shrine, according to this poem. The great shrine will be doing favor to people and filling them with pleasure rather than the custom and superstition which hold strong sway in our society and have no religious basis. The great shrine is to reform our practices no matter where we are. For instance, if one visits a shrine but does not reform their practices, it will be of no spiritual value. We have to purify our hearts and deeds so as to earn the divine satisfaction. Humanity lies in philanthropy and selflessness for others. Pleasing human beings will be tantamount to pleasing the Creator.

It is believed that the peak of humanity is in feeling sympathy and empathy with the poor. It is a great shrine. The reward of supporting our poor neighbors will be more than visiting a shrine. We have to force smile on the lips of our needy and underprivileged individuals through financial support. I hope for the day that the financially backbreaking custom of our society will be replaced by supporting the needy and it be changed into a culture.

The true happiness is to make the needy happy. It is further expected that the Prophet Ibrahim should be an epitome of devotion for our society and we have to copy his sacrifice through getting rid of selfishness and practicing selflessness in our community. Let us move towards a great shrine which is helping the poor.

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China's Renewable-Energy Revolution

By Jiang Kejun and Jonathan Woetzel

At the start of 2017, China announced that it would invest \$360 billion in renewable energy by 2020 and scrap plans to build 85 coal-fired power plants. In March, Chinese authorities reported that the country was already exceeding official targets for energy efficiency, carbon intensity, and the share of clean energy sources. And just last month, China's energy regulator, the National Energy Administration, rolled out new measures to reduce the country's dependence on coal.

These are just the latest indicators that China is at the center of a global energy transformation, which is being driven by technological change and the falling cost of renewables. But China is not just investing in renewables and phasing out coal. It also accounts for a growing share of global energy demand, meaning that its economy's continuing shift toward service- and consumption-led growth will reshape the resource sector worldwide.

At the same time, various other factors are reducing global resource consumption, including increased energy efficiency in residential, industrial, and commercial buildings, and lower demand for energy in transportation, owing to the proliferation of autonomous vehicles and ride sharing.

According to Beyond the Supercycle: How Technology Is Reshaping Resources, a new report from the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), these trends are slowing the growth of primary energy demand. If rapid adoption of new technologies continues, that demand could peak in 2025. And with less intensive energy use and increased efficiency, energy productivity in the global economy could increase by 40-70% over the next two decades.

While global growth in energy demand is slowing, China's share of that demand is increasing. By 2035, China may account for 28% of the world's primary energy demand, up from 23% today, whereas the United States could account for just 12% by 2035, down from 16% today.

China has already made significant progress in reducing its resource intensity: between 1980 and 2010, its economy grew 18-fold, but its energy consumption grew only five-fold. According to World Bank data, that reflects a 70% decline in energy intensity per unit of GDP.

In its 13th Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government aims to reduce energy intensity by a total of 15% between 2016 and 2020. It is already well on its way toward achieving that goal. At China's National People's Congress earlier this year, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang reported that China's energy intensity fell by 5% last year alone.

Renewables are one reason for China's declining resource intensity. Hoping to become a world leader in the field,

China is already investing more than \$100 billion in domestic renewables every year. That is twice the level of US investment in domestic renewable energy and more than the combined annual investment of the US and the European Union.

In addition, China is investing \$32 billion - more than any other country - in renewables overseas, with top-tier Chinese companies increasingly taking the lead in global renewable-energy value chains. China's State Grid Corporation has plans to develop an energy grid that draws on wind turbines and solar panels from around the world. Chinese solar-panel manufacturers are estimated to have a 20% cost advantage over their US peers, owing to economies of scale and more advanced supply-chain development. And Chinese wind-turbine manufacturers, having gradually closed technology gaps, now account for more than 90% of the Chinese domestic market, up from just 25% in 2002.

These trends suggest that China will be a major source of both energy demand and cutting-edge technology, implying that it will have a unique opportunity to provide global leadership. Its experience in reducing energy intensity can serve as a roadmap for developing countries. And its investments in renewables at home and abroad can lead to additional technological breakthroughs that drive down costs for consumers everywhere.

But China will also face challenges as it moves from fossil fuels to renewables within a changing global resource sector. Its economy is still highly dependent on coal, implying sizeable costs as it shifts capacity to other resources such as natural gas and renewables.

Moreover, the construction of solar panels and wind farms in China has outpaced upgrades to its electrical grid, creating a great deal of waste. And Chinese producers, like most others, are feeling increasing pressure to reduce costs and improve efficiency to make up for slower demand growth worldwide.

Despite these hurdles, technological innovation should help Chinese producers realize productivity gains and deliver savings to consumers. According to MGI, by 2035, changes in the supply and demand for major commodities could result in total cost savings of \$900 billion to \$1.6 trillion worldwide. The scale of these savings will depend not only on how quickly new technology is adopted, but also on how policymakers and companies adapt to their new environment. But, above all, it will depend on China. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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