

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



September 27, 2017

## Firm Determination is the Key

It can be observed that there is no match between water and a stone as far as the rigidity and solidity is concerned. The stone is firm and not easily breakable while the water is liquid and flows softly. If a person has to break a stone with water, it seems unimaginable; however, it is also true that the water has the capacity to make a whole into a stone - that is a task that can be performed even by tiny drops of water.

All the drops require is consistency and determination. Put a stone under a tap of water and let the drops of water fall on the stone.

You may not be able to observe anything within a day, not even within weeks and months but if the drops keep on dropping for years the firmness of the water would definitely have to be defeated by the soft minute drops and a hole has to be made.

The above example clearly indicates that the consistency, determination and iron will have the capacity to make great and sometimes impossible achievements. Though talent and aptitude have their own importance, they can never reach to the status of persistent efforts. Talented people can be tired of the situation, can lose hope and even be disheartened but not the ones who are persistent. They may fail at first and fall again after rising for the second time but they can never give up. Not giving up means there is always a hope and the doors to blessings are never closed.

A determined person has to lose nothing. Even if he fails to achieve what he has set for, which seems very improbable, he loses nothing as throughout the process he has learned the invaluable gift of patience and perseverance. Moreover, such a person is never dispirited as he has had faith and hope alive within himself and he has acquired the quality of keeping his spirits high and his willpower undefeated.

You might have heard the story of a person who was digging somewhere in search of gold and after digging for some days and being only few inches away from a large chest of gold had given up. He had lost hope and therefore the opportunity and the reward. The reward is always for those who wait for it and for those who earn it. In fact, what he had lost was not the gold but the determination.

Unfortunately, today the new generation that is living in a fast moving technological world, does not have the stamina for persistence. They are always in search of shortcuts. They want to acquire all the success and wealth within no time. They don't seem to have the temperament to earn their rewards through untiring efforts.

That's why we see them lost in their imaginations away from the real world and most of the time we find them involved in so many illegal and non-ethical activities to achieve what they desire in a short span of time.

In order to achieve their shortcut goals, they give birth to so many other social evils, which they do not seem to realize as they are intoxicated with the drug of their own personal benefits. Such an attitude has, in reality, loosened the social fabrics and the race for the achievements of personal goals has gained momentum but that has been done with the sacrifice of cooperative and normal social life.

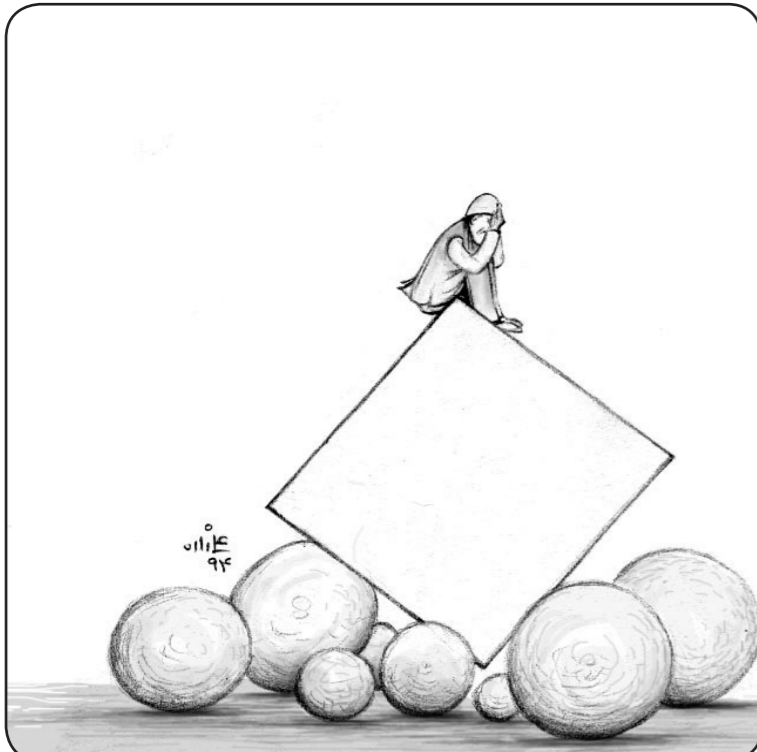
They resemble the person who used to have a hen that laid a golden egg every day. But the person was not patient enough to wait and get one golden egg a day. Therefore, he decided that he would slaughter the hen and get all the golden eggs that were in the belly of the hen at a time.

Unfortunately, when he slaughtered the hen and cut its belly he could not find even a single egg as egg would nourish each day. However, it is also important that the consistent and persistent efforts must be guided towards the right direction. There must be preliminary understanding of what target to choose and what direction to follow.

Blindly following a wrong path and pursuing a wrong target with persistence would only mean colliding ones head to a rock and keep on doing it.

Provided that the target is suitable and the direction is properly chosen, there is no doubt in the fact that hard work and untiring endeavors would enable a person to achieve even the most difficult targets in the world, as was said by Yamamoto Tsunetomo, "Nothing is impossible in this world."

Firm determination, it is said, can move heaven and earth. Things appear far beyond one's power, because one cannot set his heart on any arduous project due to want of strong will".



## Alienation in Multi-ethnic Communities

By Qurban Ali Ansari

The public reacted negatively when a letter with ethnic tendency written by an official leaked to the media. Afghan Second Vice President Sarwar Danish said that ethnic approach and hatemonger should be treated seriously and radical elements are not to be taken under the wing. He added that the state should criminalize such issues and prosecute those who spread hatred.

In fact, alienation and segregation emerge in multi-ethnic communities and those who belong to another ethnic group will be deemed outsiders; that is, alienation and exploitation of ethnic issues will be capitalized on for certain objectives.

If there is no appropriate strategy for running a multi-ethnic society, the ethnic issue is likely to go from bad to worse. It has been proved that silence regarding ethnic and factional movements led to horrible consequences. In Afghanistan, which has been a multi-ethnic country, the relations of ethnic groups have not been friendly and it is still a hot issue. People reveal their ethnic and factional dilemma rather than national one. The graph of ethnic dissatisfaction with the current administration seems to be rooted in the same issue. Cherishing such mindsets will necessarily hamper the process of nation-building in the country. In the past, the mentality of alienation or segregation caused destructive war and conflicts in Afghanistan.

In spite of the recent changes occurred in people's view about the rights and dignity of individuals, our society is still embroiled in anti-human mindsets and suffers from discrimination. Indeed, discriminatory attitudes prevail in different layers of the society, including cultural, political, and social layers. This mentality will be reflected by the people who seek their ethnic or personal interests in reinforcing the culture of alienation.

Alienating individuals, in the society, due to their racial or ethnic backgrounds will create a gap among ethnic groups and hamper them from gaining equal access to opportunities. This cleavage affects all citizens and the continuation of this trend will spread social hatred and target national solidarity in a serious way. It is crystal clear that ethnic anti-human view is one of the reasons behind the current mistrust among Afghan ethnic groups.

The former administrations also played their destructive role in fueling ethnic tension. For example, Afghan kings sparked off ethnic tension to strengthen the foundation of their powers.

The policy of "divide and rule" was practiced in a way that one ethnic group was suppressed by another. The past regimes eliminated their political opponents via this

policy. Therefore, Afghan people who lived with the spirit of brotherhood for years and defended territorial integrity were pushed to the quagmire of mistrust. In brief, Afghans, who had a common destiny, once treated one another with great hostility that resulted in social and political upheaval and bloody conflicts.

The power of one ethnic group was considered a threat to another one. So, one will conclude that the true spirit of unity has not been formed and ethnic tension dismantled national unity in Afghanistan and slowed down the process of nation-building.

To get out of this abyss and reduce ethnic inclination, the principle of participation in nation's destiny will play a key role in coexistence and peaceful life. According to Afghan Constitution, all those who reside the geographical land of Afghanistan bear equal rights and should be treated equally regardless of their race, religion, sect, and ethnicity. Providing equal opportunities for all citizens irrespective of their ethnic inclination will be crucial in reducing this tension. If citizens are entitled equally, they will be able to hold their destiny in their own hands and free themselves from ethnic tendencies.

The critical role of states in preventing factional and ethnic movements is undeniable. Regarding the letter leaked to the media, Afghan government also ordered the investigation of the issue, which is a really significant step in combating such movements. If the society's intellectual and cultural powers fulfill their responsibilities dutifully, it will create hope for the public for a bright future. Moreover, this will free the nation from ethnic tendencies and revive the national trust. It goes without saying that Afghanistan will be called a democratic society if there is no sign of ethnic discrimination. It was alienation that resulted in poverty, war, violence, and hatred. Worst of all, those who fueled this tension have been treated with respect.

In brief, we have to practice upon our Constitution which states in article 22, "Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law."

So, all groups have to prioritize national tendencies and distance themselves from ethnocentrism and narrow-mindedness.

We have to heal our problems through burying the differences and uphold our common interests. We need, more than ever before, to hold the rights and dignity of one another in respect and shun any kinds of discrimination.

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## A Test for Europe's German Anchor

By Daniela Schwarzer

The outcome of Germany's federal election holds a crucial lesson for the European Union: even the country that has been the EU's bedrock of stability amid crisis is not immune to political fragmentation and polarization. Although Chancellor Angela Merkel will almost certainly gain a fourth term, her new government is likely to be considerably weaker than the three that preceded it.

The Bundestag now counts six factions, compared to four in the previous electoral term. Merkel's center-right Christian Democratic Union took 33% of the vote, its worst result since 1949, though still enough to give the CDU the most seats in parliament. The center-left Social Democrats (SPD) - Germany's second-largest political party, and a part of Merkel's last governing coalition - also hit a post-war low, receiving just 20.5% of the vote. Meanwhile, the populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) won 12.6%, making this anti-euro, pro-Russia, and staunchly xenophobic party the first far-right party to enter the Bundestag in almost 60 years. And the SPD has thrown in the towel, vowing to spend the coming electoral term in opposition.

In this context, Germany is likely to be ruled by a so-called Jamaica coalition, named for the colors of the parties - the CDU, the Greens, and the Free Democrats (FDP) - that would comprise it. But such a coalition will be unruly, owing to the parties' heterogeneous foreign-policy positions.

Similarly, the SPD-led opposition will be beset by deep divisions. Indeed, it is unlikely to cooperate on any issue at all with its fellow opposition party, the AfD. The SPD shares almost no values with the AfD, which has already declared that its main goal will be to hound the other parties with populist and nationalist bombast. As a result, decades-old parliamentary norms of decorum and collegiality are in jeopardy.

Given the Bundestag's central role in shaping Germany's EU policy, this could weaken the capacity of Merkel's government to provide the kind of leadership Europe now needs.

To be sure, there is some good news. The victory of Merkel's CDU, however weak, implies elements of continuity on which to build. Merkel's prompt decision to take responsibility for forming a viable coalition government means that her commitment to preserving the EU and her staunch defense of democracy and Western values will continue to guide German policymaking. Moderation, stability, and international openness will remain Germany's watchwords, no matter how much ugly rhet-

oric the AfD spews.

But, in terms of action on international challenges, Germany's partners will have to be patient. In particular, though Merkel is expected to cooperate closely with France's pro-European president, Emmanuel Macron, to forge a new model of EU integration for the post-Brexit age, she is unlikely to do so right away.

The formation of a coalition alone - in particular, a conservative-liberal-green coalition - will likely take months. Next month's state election in Lower Saxony, where the AfD secured significant support, adds another element of uncertainty to the mix.

Even after that election, compromise may not come easily. The Bavaria-based Christian Social Union (CSU) - the CDU's sister party - will face a state election next autumn. Feeling the hot breath of the AfD on its neck, the CSU has already sharpened its criticism of Merkel's immigration policy, and is likely to try to push the chancellor further to the right in the coming year.

Perhaps the stickiest issue for the coalition parties will be the eurozone. The stances of the FDP and the Greens are opposed on this front, particularly when it comes to joint crisis management, mutual insurance mechanisms, and fiscal tools.

But this struggle to find common ground may prove useful for the wider EU, as its leaders attempt to strike a balance between the responsibility of member governments and the eurozone-wide institutions that the monetary union needs to function effectively.

It may turn out to be easier for Germany's coalition parties - not to mention the French and German governments - to forge a new framework for bilateral and European security cooperation.

Polls show that concerns about terrorism and internal security outweigh fears over immigration. If those pressing issues are addressed at the European level, as Merkel suggested in her victory statement, support for Europe could end up winning back the discontented voters who cast their ballots for the AfD.

Whatever government emerges in Germany in the weeks ahead, its leaders will need to devote more effort to explaining their policy choices to citizens and international partners alike.

With the AfD in the Bundestag, the German public will be exposed to more radical positions on foreign affairs - from EU leadership to relations with Russia - than have been heard in over a generation. While Germany's center has held, its consensus is about to be tested.

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