

Awareness of Circumstances

Before starting any work it is necessary to understand the conditions and demands of the atmosphere and then to draw a program accordingly. Jobs done without first studying the relevant trends often end up in failure.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said, "One who becomes aware of the conditions of his times is saved from a sudden attack."

This is a very valuable principle. Had the Muslims and other backward communities of the world, paid attention to this rule in the matter of politics they would never have been subdued by the invaders. Many misfortunes are the result of ignorance of and carelessness toward prevailing conditions.

In western Rome Before the advent of Islam, there was no progress at all in arts and science, trade and industry and military affairs, because the people there were so unmindful of the world that when the Muslim army besieged Constantinople their wise men were discussing vain issues as: Can some angel accommodate them on the point of a needle?

History repeats itself. Muslims also fell to such idleness at a time when they were at the peak of their progress and advancement. The eastern states, particularly the heads of Islamic countries were pitifully unaware of the conditions of their masses. They woke up only after the west took control of all sciences and industries.

Even the recurring defeat of the Ottoman Empire did not awaken its rulers. The rulers remained in sleep even after being defeated by the Europeans. Suddenly when they saw enemy planes roaring over their heads they began to open their eyes wide with astonishment.

They could not imagine that it was the work of human beings. Perhaps they were thinking that the flying machines were the handiworks of angels!

The nineteenth century was very important from the viewpoint of discoveries and inventions. But in those days Iran was engaged in internal struggles. Those responsible for such state of affairs were in deep sleep. They were unaware of the conditions of the world.

For example it would not be out of place to mention here that during the reign of Fatehali Shah, Napoleon wanted to conquer India. He intended to snatch away that fertile land from the hands of the British East India Company. In this connection, in order to obtain the support of Iranian public and government, he wrote a letter to the Shah of Iran.

Strangely enough they could not find anyone in the court of the Shah of Iran who could translate the letter of Napoleon for the king.

It was considered inadvisable to get it translated from the embassies of other countries. They were thus compelled to send that letter to the Iranian embassy in Baghdad where there was a French-knowing person who translated it.

Such a dosing nation cannot preserve its political, economical and cultural independence and it has to live under the obligation of others.

A great Iranian poet has given vent to his burning feelings in this connection thus:

We are the ones who had collected tax from kings, then we took away their belt and crown.

We took their royal cap and their throne, which was decorated with pearls and ivory.

We emptied their treasures.

We did not fear storms and high-speed winds.

We were a dreaded topic in China and other countries.

Egypt and Oman were awed by our glory.

Our power was obvious in Spain and Rome.

Granada and Ashbila used to obey us.

Saqliya was under our flag.

Royal decree was our sign, which used to cover everything under the sun.

These couplets pertain to the era when Muslims and Iranians were awake. It can be said that the East was proud of the glorious past of the Islamic world. But what is our condition today? The same poet describes:

Alas! This field has been destroyed by flood.

The afflicted farmer went into deep sleep.

The blood of our heart took the color of wine.

The heat of fever burnt down our body.

The cool face turned into a burning one.

The eyes of intelligence too got covered with blood.

The wealth went away and health turned to illness.

Institution of the Pope

The Pope's grand institution, after a long duration of oppressive rule, got disintegrated, because it had

tried to remain in power by creating a cruel court called Inquisition. But it had erred seriously and was unaware of the changes, which had already taken place in the masses. Those changes in the thoughts of the people tended to destroy the wrong thoughts of the clergy and the priests. The church took no notice of those changing trends at all. It was of the opinion that it would be able to stem the flood with the help of oppression, use of force and torture. But this thinking was merely the result of their ignorance of the change in winds. If it had not, at the last moments of its life, prepared a new plan and had it not adapted itself to the new age, no sign of Christianity would have remained in the world today. It cleared its sleepy eyes, changed its course, started schools, colleges and universities and regained its past position through educational service to the society.

The Most Intelligent Man of the East

In the nineteenth century, an ordinary but a very intelligent person (Amir Kabir) rose up. He felt that the misfortune of the easterners was due to the changes, which had taken place in the west. Those changes had created a vast gulf between the people of the east and the west. So long as that gap was not filled the western communities would continue to monopolize Iran.

So he studied the circumstances carefully and realized that it was not the time to fight with swords and arrows. Modern technology has changed the method of production. Gas and steam have subdued all material treasures.

Therefore, Amir Kabir, in 1849 AD (1266 HE) established an institution named 'Daral Funoon' (House of Arts & Science). The eastern wing of this institute was completed by the end of the year 1267.

They deputed a reliable person to Vienna who requested the Emperor of Austria to send a commander of infantry, a tutor of artillery, a teacher of mounted police, an expert of mining, two miners, a professor of medicine and surgery and a pharmacist for five or six years and paid each of them a monthly salary of 4000 Tomans.

But alas! Traitors of the nation came forward to put off this shining lamp and Amir Kabir was killed at the hands of the butchers of Qachar a few years after the establishment of Daral Funoon in the year 1268.

Observing closely the trends of the world, Amir Kabir had realized that a major cause of the backwardness of Iran and other counties was that their economy depended on the west. Iran had become a market of the west-manufactured materials and was only their consumer.

This reliance on the west, rather helplessness and beggary, had destroyed the capabilities of Iranians. The Iranis had become only the suppliers of raw material to the industries of the west. They were pulling on their days like a daily-waged laborer. Amir put at the disposal of the artist enough capital for the expansion of manufacturing industries.

He established sugar factories in Saari, rope and cloth in Tehran, silk in Kashan and Horse-carriages in

Isfahan etc. He gave much assistance to cloth manufacturers in Isfahan and Kashan, encouraged many experts for preparing new things and making inventions and had also arranged an exhibition of Iranian products in Iran.

All these services rendered by Amir Kabir were the result of his awareness about the existing trends and circumstances.

When roads were built in Iran and automobiles started rolling thereon, the joyful journeys on horseback and in horse and donkey carts came to an end. The carriers of mule-litters began to complain so much that, strangely enough, they even asked the government to cancel the licenses of pannier-owners! All this was the consequence of remaining unaware of the happenings in the world.

Sometimes our businessmen do things, which are disliked by people in today's world. In fact such deeds of theirs are like waging war against progress. As a result they meet with sure defeat.

Here we become convinced of the importance of a great religious leader's words who said: Do not fight with time otherwise time will fight with you.

Enemy: A Step-stone to Success

Only he is victorious who has recognized the world fully and who considers his enemy as the first step toward victory.

Intelligent people think that the enemy teaches him how to march towards success, because, the adversary is the best type of mirror which reflects our defects through pen or tongue. It decreases our pride and arrogance and, sometimes, helps in uplifting our hidden abilities.

The advances of the east and the west are the consequence of competition. If competitions come to end, capabilities would not flower. Thus, if there were no struggle between individuals or masses the progress in new inventions too would become stagnant.

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