

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



July 26, 2017

## The Shallow Standards of our Social Life

A society is recognized by its values and standards. Better societies have better standards in every facet of life; nonetheless, it is arguable what better standards really mean. The standards that are humane, based on the well-being and development of the society as a whole and that are as per challenges raised by the socio-political circumstances are mostly thought to be better than the ones that do not uphold them or negate them. On the other hand, relevance to the context does not always stand for perfect and positive standards. For instance, in contemporary modern world, modernity is one of the agreeable standards but it cannot be concluded to be positive.

Setting universal standards for the societies of the world is always a difficult task as cultures and social settings differ and even contradict. However, the main point is to comprehend that the standards that depict the actual position of human beings; their positive role and behavior - the one that is sensitive to the well-being of others, care and kindness for the fellow beings, true encouragement for science, arts, creativity and innovation are basically the ones that must be fortified and protected.

Today's human beings are led astray. They have become materialistic excessively and saunter aimlessly in their spiritual life. They are unable to realize the true purpose of their existence and are turned into beings that they are not by the conditioning of systems and circumstances. They are caught at a position where they are the cause of their own infamy and annihilation. They urge for love, affluence, pleasure and material comfort and they are prepared to pay any price for it. This urge has given rise to a man who flawlessly fits in today's materialistic societies but may not be successful in achieving the requirements of being a true human.

A cursory look at the standards in our society are necessary at this instance. Our society is well-known and easily recognized because of its egotism and bigheadedness. Inequitableness and discrimination are the commonly acceptable behavioral trends. If a person brings another person anguish for his own benefit or if a person betrays another person, it does not seem to be weird as it is normal exercise within our society. Since the socio-political settings and the objective conditions have paved the way for such types of actions and thinking, imagining something different would be ridiculous. As the rule of the race is to thrust others back so as to win the race in any way; therefore, victory kisses the feet of those who are follow this rule in its exact form.

Considering today's society, it can be claimed that a person who is not cunning and self-seeking is principally unwise. Alternatively, the crafty evils cannot be censured, too. As a matter of fact, in our society, when a person does an evil act, he is not all the time guilty for it. On the other hand, the kindness and service to others are not responded in the way they should be. The people are so much accustomed to wrongdoing and cunning behavior that even if they receive sincerity and kindness, they are able to respond it properly. They may even think that they are being flattered and therefore their response is mostly a discouraging one.

In this society, if a killer is not a relative to the prey, it is really odd. Attachment, adoration, belief, uprightness and devoutness are the values that are only important to few of the people; else, these are only words which the people of our society use so as to conceal the crimes of their conscience and the evils of their intents. We are mainly bounded by lies and false exhibition and if we are able to defend our truth, it would be a great accomplishment. Nevertheless, the company and ownership of truth is truly wearisome. It involves bearing seclusion and accepting the responsibility of being dissimilar. Yet, it is not something to be discouraged about. A human can be disenchanted from another human but should not be disenchanted from humanity, because human beings live for a definite period of time but humanity has always lived and will live persistently.

The significant point is to deliberate why the kind of society, wherein a person has to lead another person by going over his cadaver, should not change. Why should not we modify the system wherein human beings do not need the sustenance and collaboration of others for the improvement of society in its entirety, but need for their selfish benefits? There is something utterly wrong with the society that does not have love and brotherhood as its standards but inspires the people to have negative rivalry so as to own as much material coziness as possible. The society we reside in is in desperate need of true humanity, true affection and true warmth.



## No Hope for Breaking the Deadlock in Afghanistan

By Hujjatullah Zia

Streams of blood oozing from sliced throats and tears flowing from puffy eyes reflect the heart-wrenching stories of Afghan nation. Here, life is full of sorrow and disappointment. Carnage and bloodshed appear to be endless. The nation's wounds as a result of protracted war are bleeding on day-to-day bases. To one's unmitigated chagrin, the pain and sufferings of Afghans continue unabated despite the glimmer of hope emerged following the downfall of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate.

Afghans held out hope for two main reasons: First the Taliban's regime was collapsed in late 2001. After the fall of the regime, Afghan people heaved a sigh of relief, crossed their fingers and hoped for the best. They believed that they were freed from the Taliban's dogmatic mindsets, warped minds and violent practices. Similarly, Afghans celebrated the collapse of the Taliban's dictatorial regime and never thought that they will again fall victim to their guerilla fighters. Second, the establishment of democratic government based on electoral system and endorsement of constitution filled the nation with a strong sense of delight. The constitution, which was approved in January 2004, was a milestone in the history of Afghanistan for stressing on human rights and dignity, denying distinction and discrimination on racial, religious and linguistic backgrounds, respecting the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and forming a civil society void of violence and bloodshed. A pregnant silence prevailed in the country; however, Afghan men, women and children who were suddenly freed from a gory issue did not stop to think about the terrible nightmare of the Taliban's practices. No one believed it was the calm before the storm. Militancy resurfaced as the Taliban ragtag insurgents were re-organized and launched their attacks against Afghan soldiers and foreign forces. This incident did not only shock Afghan nation but also revealed the fact that the downfall of the Taliban's regime was not their death knell - this was a strong blow to Afghans' ambitious dream and shatter their hope tremendously.

With the Taliban's intensified attacks, people believed that embracing democracy or establishing a democratic government overnight was no more than an absurd thought. In other words, the democratic process in Afghanistan, which was beset by three decades of war and violence, will move at a snail's pace. The militant fighters were no more a simple movement with radical

ideology but a strong political network seeking to continue a proxy war in the country.

On the one hand, the US-led NATO forces launched "the war on terror" along with Afghan soldiers but on the other hand, the Taliban reinforced their militant fighters and split the blood of innocent civilians, including women and children, under the pretext of sacred term of jihad, which was no more than a bogus claim. The war between Afghan government and NATO forces on one side and the Taliban fighters led by Mullah Muhammad Omar on the other side continued for years which led to heavy casualties and Afghans were changed into sacrificial lamb in this endless war.

After years of bloodshed, the war on terror came to a stalemate and Afghan government established a High Peace Council (HPC) in 2010 to pursue a non-violent mechanism through bringing the Taliban to negotiating table. In spite of the fact that Kabul government made great sacrifices in this regard - even the head of HPC professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former jihadi leader, was assassinated on 20 September 2011 by a suicide bomber who claimed to represent the Taliban in discussing peace - but the Taliban refused to hold negotiation and kept on their militancy.

Now with Mullah Haibatullah at the helm, the Taliban militants have intensified their attacks more than ever before. That is to say, they still refuse to give Afghan government the green light to come to peace table. With the recent clashes between the Taliban and Afghan soldiers, two district centers in northern and central Afghanistan (Taywara and Kohistan districts of Ghor and Faryab provinces) fell to the Taliban on Sunday. It was claimed that the Taliban attacked hospital in Ghor province and killed a number of civilians, which was denied by the Taliban's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed.

The tragic aspect of the war in Afghanistan is highly salient since non-combatants sustained heavy casualties within the last decade and half and continue to do so.

After all, there seems no power to break the deadlock in this war-torn country where both "war on terror" and peace offering calls were proved abortive. If this trend continues in Afghanistan, the entire region will be exposed to threat. Hence, the world, along with the international community, are hoped to put an end to this protracted war and unmitigated insurgency so as to minimize the regional threat.

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## Qatar Scores, at Least on the Soccer Pitch

By James M. Dorsey

Qatar won more than a symbolic victory with a decision by European soccer body UEFA to award controversial television network Al Jazeera's sport franchise, BeIN Sports, the Middle Eastern and North African broadcasting rights for two of soccer's most prestigious club competitions - the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League.

The awarding was remarkable given that it came before the first chink appeared in the armour of the seven-week-old UAE-Saudi-led diplomatic and economic boycott of Qatar. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt had banned Al Jazeera as well as BeIN as part of the boycott.

The ban threatened to deprive fans in the four countries access to broadcasts of the world's major tournaments to which BeIN holds the regional rights. These include England's Premier League, Spain's La Liga, the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, the Champions League, the AFC Champions League, the Asian Cup, the CAF Champions League, and the Africa Cup of Nations. The UAE, in an indication that the hardened frontlines of the Gulf crisis may be softening, lifted days after the awarding the ban on BeIN. It was not immediately clear whether other members of the UAE-Saudi alliance would follow suit. It was also unclear whether Saudi Arabia would push ahead with plans to launch a rival sports broadcasting franchise. The lifting of the ban on BeIN did not extend to Al Jazeera's news channels that the UAE-Saudi-led alliance initially demanded should be shuttered. It constituted the second indication in a week that the Gulf crisis may be ever so slowly easing. Earlier, UAE minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash described amendments of Qatar's anti-terror legislation as "a step in the right direction." The amendments, part of a decree issued by the Gulf state's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, established lists for individuals and entities accused of involvement in terrorist activities and the criteria for inclusion on them. The decree also amended the legislation to define what constitutes terrorism, terrorist crimes, terrorist entities and funding of terrorism. It was issued days after Qatar and the United States signed an agreement to combat the funding of terrorism, the first such accord with a Gulf state. The agreement is believed to provide for the stationing of two US Justice Department officials in the Qatari state prosecutor's office. Under the agreement, Qatar is expected by year's end to impose travel bans, enforce surveillance, and freeze the assets of individuals with suspected links to terrorism. While the agreement at first glance appears to go some way to meeting the demands of the UAE-Saudi-led alliance, the devil could prove to be in the details. The fact that the agreement does

not define what groups might be included leaves much open to interpretation. Qatar rejects the UAE and Saudi Arabia's designations, first and foremost among which the Muslim Brotherhood, a group with which the Gulf state has a long-standing strategic relationship.

The lifting of the ban on BeIN, while projected as a goodwill gesture, also served to pre-empt criticism by soccer fans as well as possible punitive measures by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The AFC alongside world soccer body FIFA's African affiliate, the Confederation of African Football (CAF), last month in almost identical statements insisted on upholding the separation of politics and football. They called on football stakeholders to adhere to the principles of neutrality and independence in politics as "part of the statutory missions" of FIFA and its affiliates "as well as the obligations of member associations." CAF warned Egypt's two top clubs, arch rivals Al Ahli FC and Al Zamalek SC, that they could be penalized if they went through with a declared boycott of BeIN Sports, in response to a statement by the Egyptian Football Association (EFA) supporting Egypt's participation in the UAE-Saudi-led boycott of Qatar. The Cairo-based, African group subsequently suspended and imposed a \$10,000 fine on Al Ahli coach Hossam El Badry for first refusing to address a news conference at which BeIN reporters were present, then refusing to give BeIN an interview, and finally covering BeIN's microphone and trying to prevent it from recording the press conference. CAF has yet to respond to a refusal a week later by Mr. El Badry and Al Ahli players to grant BeIN interviews after the club's African match against Cameroon's Coton Sport. The players also absented themselves from a post-match news conference in their bid to boycott BeIN.

The decision by the UAE, a driving force of the boycott of Qatar, to lift the ban on BeIN and the apparent softening of positions on both sides of the Gulf divide is likely to make it more difficult for Saudi Arabia and Egypt not to follow the Emirates' example.

The incidents in Egypt nonetheless suggest that the Gulf crisis will leave deep scars, even if Qatar and its detractors ultimately paper over their differences and end the crisis. The likelihood is that ultimately either Saudi Arabia or the UAE will mount a challenge to Qatar's commercial grip on the Middle East and North Africa's sports broadcasting market. It will be both a political and commercial challenge, rooted in a fundamental rift that is likely to play out on the soccer pitch as well as elsewhere long after the Gulf crisis is resolved.

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