

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



June 15, 2017

The Worth of Life

Life is one of the supreme gifts of nature; as a matter of fact, it bears resemblance to a miracle. It can only be found on our planet earth within the recognized universe. The conditions that have made the life achievable on earth have been made possible through astonishing amalgamation of appropriate temperature, apt ratio of gases in the atmosphere and the existence of water.

Life has to be treasured as it merits so. Nevertheless, it can be experienced in our world that the admiration and the worth attached to life is not as much as it should be. People are neither valuing their own lives nor of their fellow human beings. There are many people in the world who do not really know what to do with their lives - all their lives they live without having any objective or purpose.

The world has been designed in such a way that the people rarely get an opportunity to consider much about the purpose they would like to chase after their birth. Their goal in life is basically set by the society around them. They then orbit a circle that they have not planned themselves. While they perform activities and they seem eventful but they do not seem to be making any accomplishment. In point of fact, he is just living.

All the people who are born in the world has the right to choose what they are going to do with their lives. Consequently, it is essential that the people, at some stage in life, should decide what they are going to do with and in their lives, what their objective would be in the world and how their existence would make a difference to the world.

And, it is necessary for the parents to make the children capable enough so that they can decide on their own about their lives. However, in our world in can be observed that in most of the cases the parents have already decided that what their children are going to do even before they are born.

It is also essential that while deciding their goals in life, a human being must not forget that the others who live in the world have their rights of pursuing their purposes as well. They are not alone and others are bound to be influenced by them and their actions. They may harm them by pursuing a purpose that is not reasonable and supportive for the social life and co-existence. Therefore, while pursuing a purpose in life they must be careful about others as well. For example, certain people choose the purpose of their lives to be earning money. All they care about is the worldly gains that they would acquire by accumulating more and more money. And, they would adopt all the possible ways, whether legal or illegal, ethical or non-ethical, but what they gain at the end is a disturbed social life.

The people cannot do whatever they wants as they are in chains of social relations.

Nonetheless, they can do many things in their lives that will never harm others and will also gratify their interests and desires. They do not have to live for others; or else, they will lose their will to decide what is better for them, but they need to realize this very fact that they have to live with others.

There is another imperative aspect that plays a dominating role in the life of human beings as they attempt to realize their purpose in life; and that is the hard work and willpower.

Without willpower it is not possible to achieve what a person thinks. There is a large space between what a person thinks to become or do and what a person would ultimately become or do. In order to cover this space, it is necessary to have the support of resilience. There have been many people in the world who have had large thinking and they have wished to attain something noteworthy in their live, nevertheless, their wish have only been a part of their thinking and have never tasted the tang of expediency or reality because they have not strived much.

Thus, there are two important factors that have to be inculcated in the minds of the human beings; first, they have to have a purpose in life; second, they have to make certain it does not hurt others and then they have to follow it with persistent efforts.

Ilchi Lee says, "Who am I?" "What is the purpose of my life?" These questions arise spontaneously throughout our lives, either unbidden or through conscious intent.

Anyone who wishes to live an authentic life must answer these questions, regardless of whether they believe in the existence of the soul or practice a religion. If these queries remain unanswered, life will, more than likely, remain superficial and empty, in spite of any material abundance. If you wish to make the soul's journey, then I suggest you ask yourself these questions relentlessly and ruthlessly, and listen carefully."



Saudi-Qatar Encounter on a Rough Road

By Syed Asif Husaini

After waving the white flag of the Taliban, which was called an insult to Afghanistan's formal position, Qatar came to limelight in Afghanistan. But the United States appointed Qatar for inaugurating the Taliban's political office, welcomed by Doha. Qatar had a prominent role in Islamic groups and the Middle East issue. Aljazeera state network was the only reporting media outlet for al-Qaeda and the Taliban as it broadcast the audio of Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri.

Despite Saudi Arabia, which was not inclined to involve in Afghanistan' issue following the Arab Spring, Qatar emerged as a key player in the region and came under the attention of western countries. Qatari officials sought to fill the vacuum left by Saudi, which was beyond the tolerance of Riyadh. The situation turned in favor of Qatar and this country had great influence over the Islamic institutions, including al-Qaeda and the Taliban, mainly in Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

On the one hand, the US intended to use Doha's leverage in holding negotiation with the Taliban, but on the other hand, Saudi showed tendency towards Pakistan with strong dislike of Doha. Riyadh persisted Kabul not to accept Qatar's mediation as Afghan former President Hamid Karzai said to the Taliban that his administration was in favor of Saudi or Turkey to host the peace negotiation.

However, the Taliban denied Karzai's demand stating that Afghanistan lacked the necessary qualification for talks and they would hold negotiation with the United States and the international community. With reports about inauguration of the Taliban's office in Qatar, Afghanistan's foreign ministry recalled its ambassador from Doha to Kabul as a sign of complaint. But later accepted Qatar's role for hosting talks. Qatar's high ambition in regional and international issues paved the ground for a negative political competition between Riyadh and Doha.

Qatar occupies 180 square kilometers with about two million population. This country shares a strong tie with the US, England and some other western countries. It could extend its realm of influence in some Islamic countries and the Middle East. In short, Qatar's role became more significant in the Middle East issue after 2010.

The reason behind this fact was Qatar's strong economy and the support of the US and the Europe. Saudi had an eye on Qatar's competitive role. A number of Middle Eastern and Western powers are believed to be inclined to use Qatar as Saudi's rival.

Saudi-Qatar conflict continued mysteriously and took stronger root. These tensions came to a head during a March 2014

meeting of the GCC, after which the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain announced the recall of their ambassadors to Qatar. With the new administration in Qatar, a military coup occurred in Egypt and some heads of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) took refuge to Qatar. Doha's political support to Islamist movement continued for years.

Saudi signaled a threat through recalling its ambassador but Qatar did not yield. With Kuwait's mediation, the MB's heads were supposed to head for Turkey rather than being sent to Egypt. With the revival of the South Pars gas tanks, foundation of influential Aljazeera TV-network and financial support to some Islamic organizations, Qatar sought a strong base in Persian Gulf.

After the withdrawal of US military forces from Saudi Arabia, Qatar urged the US to establish its military base in this country. Hence, besides not being an ally with the world's super power, Riyadh considered Doha a serious rival.

Saudi-Qatar proxy war continued over supporting the militant groups in Syria. Saudi constantly accused Qatar of supporting Jabhat al-Nusra and its support to Hamas is not an emerging issue. Despite all these differences, the two countries kept their relations during Obama's administration. However, Saudi sought to review its role in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), whereas Qatar struggled to follow a policy independent from Saudi and region. So, an agreement seems really hard now.

The current regional evolution, mainly the US, appears promising for Saudi, since it deems Donald Trump closer to Saudi than Obama. In his trip to Saudi, Trump was welcomed beyond his expectation and received precious gifts. After returning to America, Trump said in the White House that it was time for Qatar to end supporting terrorism.

Now Qatar's tie has been severed with Saudi, Emirate, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The main problem for Qatar, which is the major exporter of gas and petrochemical products, is importing goods. Turkey and Iran seek a new polarization out of the emerging issue in the Middle East and Islamic countries. Iran has begun exporting goods to Qatar by air and sea. Turkish products also filled Qatar's store shelves.

Currently, Afghanistan has no relation with Qatar politically or economically and the only issue is the Taliban's political office in that country. Based on the current occurrence, neither the US will pay heed to Taliban's political office in Qatar nor will Doha continue the issue as before. So, one will conclude that Afghanistan will stand beside Saudi rather than Qatar.

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Mechanisms for Counterinsurgency

By Hujjatullah Zia

We have experienced so many escalations within the two last years that we seem to have already reached the summit of Mount Olympus. In any event, when the next wave of terror strikes, we will again be told that it is an escalation. The scourge of terrorism has inflicted indescribable sufferings on us. Terrorism has changed into a global threat that knows no border, nationality or religion and kill people indiscriminately. The tragedies and mercilessness of militant fighters, which make the constant headlines in national and international newspapers, are beyond doubt.

Despite the widespread terrorist acts, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has not reached consensus on a definition of terrorism that would be adhered to by all countries. In turn, differences over the definition have been a major factor in the failure to pass a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism, which criminalizes all forms of international terrorism. More than 109 definitions have been given over terrorism, but none are agreed upon globally. This seems the first obstacle before combating terrorism.

No wonder, counterterrorism has been debated hotly following the worldwide deadly attacks of terrorist networks, especially with the emergence of the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014. Afghanistan is believed to bear the brunt of terrorism in Asia and the Taliban's spring offensives and ISIL's attack have been intensified recently killing hundreds of civilians, including women and children.

Recognition of the importance of root causes and counter radicalization strategies are nascent. In Afghanistan, neither negotiation of peace nor military deal have born the desired result. There is no third option. So, do you think that there is no solution to stop violence and bloodshed?

To reduce death toll and mitigate militancy, Afghanistan will have to seek a role model for combating terrorism and change its mechanism. For instance, Israel will be posed a threat by the ISIL group, but it has always thwarted terrorist attacks. So, Israel's anti-terrorism mechanism will be an effective model for Afghanistan and the region.

Accurate and timely intelligence has always been a central component of Israel's ability to thwart terrorist attacks. Indeed, intelligence is the mainstay of counterinsurgency. Security agencies manage to thwart terrorist attacks through the intelligence penetration of terrorist organizations by using HUMINT (human intelligence) or COMINT (communications intelligence).

If Afghanistan had a strong intelligence apparatus, it could foil many terrorist attacks and would not suffer heavy toll

as today. Moreover, Israeli anti-terrorism mechanism is based on defensive modes of action, such as safety barriers and military checkpoints, as well as offensive ones like infiltrations, preventive arrests, and targeted killings. Afghanistan's war has been mostly defensive rather than being offensive. Similarly, the Afghan-Pak porous border has deteriorated the security situation in the country. Targeting the terrorists' influential figures, those who are the brains behind deadly attacks, will also weaken terrorist activities.

The third mechanism is dismantling the terrorists' economic bases. One of the major financial supports for terrorism is narcotic in Afghanistan. For instance, the Taliban claim to fight for religious reasons, the question is that why they have never ever raised their voice against narcotic, which is forbidden in Islam? It is because they are highly dependent on it. This issue further suggests that the Taliban never care about religious issues and nothing is sacred for them. Don't you think that feeding on forbidden resources and claiming Jihad are highly paradoxical issues? I wonder what the ministry of counternarcotic is for! The graph of narcotic remains as high as ever and the Taliban gain the bulk of its financial support from it.

Another defensive approach that's evolving is the monitoring of social networks. The terrorists have access to social networks and sometimes they disclose their plans beforehand. It happened when members of terrorist groups declared their plans on Facebook and their attacks were foiled accordingly.

It should be noted that a country cannot copy all anti-terrorism mechanisms of another country. That is to say, a society should consider the social and political situations. For instance, Israeli's authorities have made it easier to carry weapons, saying that civilians can respond more quickly when there's an attack. In Afghanistan, the opposite will be effective.

Licensing weapons must be strongly strict in Afghanistan. The easy access to weapons is believed to have increased violence and bloodshed in the country. Afghanistan should do its best to stop smuggling and selling weapons. In short, a country cannot take a model completely out of context.

Finally, It is strongly believed that since we live in "the global village", without sustained multilateral cooperation to collect intelligence, capture terrorists, disrupt funding, and wage military actions, counterterrorism efforts will take longer and be less effective.

Thus, the world will have to join forces to combat terrorism with strong force and individual battle will not be as effective as collective one.

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