

Jihadi threats: A coping strategy



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

This is all about exercising the soft power of religion and diplomacy to exorcise the genie of prejudices from the humanity whose children are more like each other than unlike each other.

WORLDWIDE shock and consternation have followed ISIS' beheading of three journalists, two American and one British, as six French tourist guides were lately done to death in a similar fashion. A hundred American Islamic scholars have voiced their strong condemnation of the executions terming those as a complete anathema to Islam. True Muslims are enjoined upon to adopt peaceful means including discourse and debate for conflict resolution, and not resort to ruthless forms of retribution. Most significant was the scholars' interpretation of jihad being legitimate only when it is launched in 'defense', not as an offensive.

There is no way one can make light of it, saying that it's being seen from the Western perspective or dismiss it as a 'Western propaganda.' It will then be demeaning the convictions carried by the scholars in airing such a collective opinion. This finds instant resonance with all right thinking people.

The same goes about the following AFP news item: 'As Islamic State extremists call for random murders throughout Europe in Allah's name, the continent's Muslims are hitting back with mass peace demonstrations and a Twitter campaign to say "not in my name".'

To quote Aiman Mazyek, chairman of Germany's central council of Muslims: They are 'terrorists and murderers who drag Islam into the

dirt and bring hatred and suffering to the people, including to their own fellow Muslims, in Syria, in Iraq and elsewhere'.

Strong words these; and naturally so because if a stick is bent too much on the one side you need to apply an equal force to straighten it back.

This is all about exercising the soft power of religion and diplomacy to exorcise the genie of prejudices from the humanity whose children are more like each other than unlike each other.

Barrack Obama has gone for air strikes on north of Iraq and parts of Syria to dismantle ISIS' strongholds. In a latest move at the UNSC under the chairmanship of President Obama, a resolution was unanimously passed binding the signatories to stemming the flow of foreign jihadists to Iraq and Syria. Freezing the sources of support has been embodied too.

Interestingly, in a latest attack joined in by Qatar and Saudi Arabia some oil installations were destroyed in the war zone, dealing a blow to the source of income for the ISIS.

British Prime Minister David Cameron has ordered air strikes to degrade ISIS's positions. It is worth noting he says that Britain can't use as a pretext a 'mistake' it had committed 12 years ago to waffle in taking action against ISIS.

The US and Britain had fought a war against an ideology in Afghanistan and Saddam's Iraq to rid it of the so-called WMD which did not exist at all. If the powerful nations fought a violent ideology with a war, they are only expected to wage a full-scale war against those proclaiming caliphate with a territorial design. But the world has changed only to spurn unilateral invasions. And none of the countries where physical intervention had been carried out by big powers is any safer today than it was before in terms of vulnerabilities of extremism.

A 54-country coalition stands pitted against the ultra-jihadists. Some heat is being put on Bangladesh too: We been asked to join it, and abide by trade sanctions against Russia centring around Ukraine, on the sideline. Bangladesh's position may have to be made known on these issues sooner rather than later. One conjecture is that Bangladesh is opposed to intervention in principle.

But we have had on our doorsteps the feel of extremism. To begin with the latest threat, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) lately arrested seven members of the outlawed Jamaatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh (JMB) including its chief. On interrogation, it has been revealed that the group was planning an attack at the highest government level to attract world media attention. Stashes of weapons have been recovered from time to time by Rab.

Although we have combated extremism by arresting terrorists and punishing the diehard elements with death sentence, our counter-terrorism strategy based on fighting off a bigoted doctrine with superior ideology has yet to be put in operation.

After al-Zawahiri dropped his bombshell of spearheading a South Asian al-Qaeda front, there has been a mishmash of information hauling up suspects in this category.

A bridge needs to be built between moderate elements of all religions through sustainable interfaith discourses. That will be the best defense against ultra-radicalism.

The profiling of Islam after 9/11, however, should have by now morphed into a positive reckoning of Islam.

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Korma Karma



NAVEED MAHBUB

PERHAPS the reason I am flown all the way to London is to bridge the sense of humour gap between the East and the West. For I am assigned to host the red carpet interviews at the ninth British Curry Awards, to make it all giggles and laughs as the celebrities and dignitaries walk in to join the glitz and the glamour. But I salivate like Ivan Pavlov's dog as the aroma of all the Eastern delights being prepared in the kitchen for the several thousand guests enters my nostrils, enough to throw me into a long, gastronomical *korma*, er, coma.

And then, something is abuzz. It's the security detail of some VVIP, surprisingly disrupting no normalcy, let alone any rude shoving. The power of curry has the most powerful in Britain, the Prime Minister, gate crash the Oscars of the British curry industry. Not only that, David Cameron makes a beeline for the kitchen. Enam Ali, MBE, the founder of the awards that have become the industry standard, beams, "You are the first SERVING prime minister to attend the awards." The PM quips, alluding to his tour of the kitchen, "I thought I was going to be the first British Premier SERVING [dinner] at the British Curry Awards."

With 12,000 restaurants, an annual turnover of US\$ 7 billion and 100,000 (mostly) voting employees serving millions of (again voting) people in Britain, the PM would be a fool to miss this extravaganza of a talk of the town. Besides, the *Chicken Tikka Masala*, stemmed from the Brits' love affair with spicy dishes, has already stripped the Fish and Chips as the national dish of Britain. Ok, it is still short of being called the national food of Britain, until the *mem shahibs* start preparing it at home every night for dinner, er, supper...

The curry in Britain has come a long way since the Hindustani Coffee House in Central London, reputed to be Britain's first curry house started by Sake Dean Mahomed, opened its doors in 1809. And it is not just curry, but what is British curry, cleverly evolving to suit its new home, that has made its way back East, enabling ice to be sold to Eskimos.

The curry has brought the British food to its renaissance from being the butt of jokes. The alluding is no longer to the smell of curry, but rather, the Chanel of curry. Britain may have at one point conquered the world with gunpowder, but the Sub-Continent has conquered Britain with the curry powder.

The curry is there because the British Raj was here. It may be the *Korma Karma*, but a welcoming one, that is now the very fabric of Great Britain. After all, being British now is all about driving a German car (filled with Saudi gasoline) to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then going home, sitting on a Swedish couch, watching an American show on a Japanese TV while making a call on a Korean cell phone for a home delivery of a hot, mouth watering Bangladeshi curry, straight from the kitchen of Hurry Curry on High Street.

So, vote seekers, keep the curry and *naan* on. And let the chefs from Sylhet in.

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Strange happenings in Golden Bengal!

SHAHNOOR WAHID

STRANGE kinds of things have been happening in Golden Bengal since time immemorial. The quirkiness of the events and incidents has been so baffling and scary that even mighty Alexander who had conquered half the world did not dare to venture into the dark depth of this land mass. Things beyond the norm still happen here. Our players and athletes unabashedly lose to our opponents and come back to explain that "it was a great experience gathering tour from which the next gen players would learn a lot and play better." And we still send equal number of over-aged and overweight officials to such tournaments under many guises. What do they do really? Good question. Cynics say that throughout the tournament they sleep, snore, drink, devour and shop without any qualm. It has been happening since 1972.

The story of gold! The proverbial Golden Bengal seems to be now turning golden in the literal sense of the term. It's gold everywhere for one to pick. No, you don't have to go to the mountains with a shovel and a sieve to dig up plenty of dirt and sand to find a small nugget of gold. It's much easier than that. Just walk into a toilet in one of our airports or in an aircraft, and voila! There it is! A sack containing hundreds of pure gold biscuits in a corner...8kg, 10kg 11kg in weight!

In the 17 and 18th century, prospectors had to rush to the mountains with shovels and sieves to find nuggets of gold after removing tons of sand and dirt. Sometimes they had to spend months in severe winter chill in the mountains before finding a nugget or two the size of a glass marble. Many of the prospectors, all strangers to one another, died of pneumonia or bullet wounds, as brawls often turned violent. See Charlie Chaplin's epic film 'Gold Rush' to have some idea.

Yes, finding gold was that difficult and life threatening those days. But today, on a lucky morning, one may strike GOLD in a toilet of an aircraft! The gold craze reminds this writer of the Ian Fleming story titled 'Goldfinger'. Ian Fleming's hero James Bond had to handle only one gold hungry maniac, the villain named Goldfinger, but in this country, there are dozens of them or may be more! In the novel the villain gets caught finally, but in Bangladesh our very own Goldfingers are too clever. They never get caught. They know who the administration love gold and how much it takes to

keep their mouth shut. It's always the poor couriers who get caught, and strangely enough most of the gold seized by the law enforcers allegedly disappears over the years.

Fun in the political arena. Lately, after the public display of puffing acumen, some of our public representatives are indulging themselves in crooning in meetings with great gusto. Crooning during devastating floods! Reminds one of Nero and his violin! Well, crooning is no doubt entertaining and the person(s) should be encouraged to sing on instead of talking politics that the audience would not find interesting. Political talks are limited to "We did this" and "They did that." Some of the opposition leaders should also learn to sing in public meetings to pacify the angry supporters. That would at least save our automobiles and buses.

Scholars have been writing books since the advent of printing machines to entertain or educate readers. But, in this country, unscholarly people have started to write books that neither entertain nor educate. There is no plausible answer to the question: Why do they write? In recent times, there has been much brouhaha over the publication of two books written by two aged warriors belonging to two political camps in the country. Frankly speaking, the world would not have come to an end if these two writers had not written the books in question. Then why? Surely, no one would remember the existence of these two books next year except for their grandchildren.

People all over the world eat good food to stay alive and healthy. In this country, food traders force us to eat food to fall sick and then "live happily ever after." There seems to be no stopping these 'Reapers of Souls.' So, we eat all sorts of chemicals in our food every day blissfully unaware what damage these are doing to our kidney, liver and other vital organs. This is possibly unique in Golden Bengal as we do not hear of such horrendous practice in other neighbouring countries. Yes, we are told that some preservatives are applied everywhere but not in proportions that would kill a person.

We don't know, maybe we should look at it as a novel attempt by our food traders to keep the population growth under control. Anything is possible here, Seleucus!

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Do not call it 'Eve Teasing'

C. RASHAAD SHABAB

WE have all seen it. If you are a female who has spent any time walking around the streets of this part of the world, you have experienced it first hand. Depending on the circumstances under which you were sexually harassed in public, you may have felt slightly miffed, somewhat embarrassed, deeply ashamed, angry but powerless, or absolutely terrified. The implications of this culture of verbally accosting women in public may range from petty street fights, to women's labour market participation, all the way to the highest adolescent female suicide rate in the world. And what is the term we use to describe this always filthy and often terrifying act that is endemic to our part of the world? 'Eve-teasing.'

Words have power. The words we use to describe an action shape our emotional, intellectual and physical reactions to that action. The use of words like 'rape' and 'vomit' trigger pupil dilation, measurable increases in heart rates and almost instantaneous changes in the electrical conductivity of our skin. 'Rape' and 'vomit' are powerful words. 'Eve teasing' falls short of eliciting the same visceral response. Why might that be? I will start with the 'teasing' part.

'Teasing' is something I used to do to my sister when she was eight and I was twelve. It is something my wife does to me when I mistakenly wear my t-shirt inside out. A sense of playfulness and a lack of harm hang carelessly about the word. Granted, when children 'tease' each other they can inflict emotional damage. But even when used in this way, the word maintains a connotation of innocence or at least blamelessness, because the culprits in the end are children. In the context of 'Eve teasing' though, such a sanitary label contrasts starkly with the lewdness of the act it is meant to describe.

What we refer to by 'Eve teasing' is inherently sexual and obviously harmful. It often involves verbal references to private parts of a woman's body, and it is common for men to grope or pinch such parts of a woman in a public place. In any conceivable form the act is a violation, not a 'tease.'

The act of 'Eve teasing' is a statement of power and ownership. It asserts ownership over a public space as a man's space, and it establishes dominance over the woman who dares venture into that space. It forces

her to turn the other cheek and submit to her own powerlessness. 'Teasing' falls hopelessly short of describing such an act of domination.

What about 'Eve', then? What bearing might a reference to the Garden of Eden have on shaping our reaction to a public act of sexual dominance? When I try to picture Eve, my mind conjures up images of serenidly placed fig leaves. Unlike the women going to work and living their lives on the streets throughout the subcontinent, Eve is nude, and for millennia her defining role has been that of the temptress who seduced Adam to sin. A reference to religion's original nude temptress in the very label we use to describe a vile, public act of male sexual dominance serves only to implicitly blame the victim. By shifting part of the blame to the woman, for no other reason than being of the same gender as the nude temptress, the 'Eve' in 'Eve teasing' blunts our shock and outrage to the actions it describes. It almost glorifies the male perpetrator for punishing the gender that instigated the original sin.

The words we use are powerful. They shape the way we think about the things they describe. Referring to public acts of male dominance, which violate women in plain sight of society on a day-to-day basis, as mere 'teasing' makes light of a vile and hateful crime. It belittles the suffering of women, who due to the strain of this every day stressor fall prey to anxiety, depression and the highest adolescent female suicide rate in the world. Evoking the image of religion's original nude temptress in the very term we use to describe this crime against women is a deplorable example of 'blaming the victim' and comes dangerously close to glorifying the perpetrator.

Together, these aspects of the phrase 'Eve teasing' serve to dull our intellectual and emotional responses to something that by another name might warrant our instinctive outrage and disgust. Every government, organisation or individual that believes in the right of women to move freely throughout our public spaces should therefore distance themselves from the term. Call it 'gang sexual harassment.' Call it 'public violation of women.' Call it 'the sub-continental grab and grope.' Just don't call it 'Eve teasing.' It is far worse than that.

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CORRECTION

There were some inadvertent mistakes in the article titled "What is/ would be the meaning of 'Imprisonment until Death' for Sayedee?" printed on September 24. The corrections are: In the 17th line of the first paragraph 'Cr.P.C.' after the words 'Penal Code' will be deleted. In the 1st and 15th lines of the second paragraph and the last line of the sixth paragraph read 'Penal Code' instead of 'Cr.P.C.' We regret the error.

QUOTABLE Quote

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.

Henry David Thoreau

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

1 Flies and gnats

6 Some Europeans

11 Advice

12 Use

13 Play place

14 "Picnic" heroine

15 Quirk

16 Diminish

18 Motel freebie

19 Mine matter

20 Stew sphere

21 Horse bit

22 Diminish

24 Swift jets

25 Fallon's show

27 "Blast it!"

29 Fold

32 Maze runner

33 Be a contender

34 -- Aviv

35 Bordeaux buddy

36 Charged particle

37 Writer Tarbell

38 Drivers, e.g.

40 Concerning

42 Boredom

43 Ball, for one

44 Stop-watch button

45 Moved slowly

DOWN

1 Starter's need

2 Complete

3 Distant outposts

4 Harbor boat

5 Increase, as an incline

6 Rio rhythm

7 Mendes of movies

8 They have antennas

9 Lion, e.g.

10 Cold showers?

17 Del Toro of "Traffic"

23 Drunk

24 That lady

26 Hurdled explosive

27 Bureau part

28 Surname in punk rock

30 Act the temptress

31 On cloud nine

33 Drop in

39 Expected

41 Pasture sound

Yesterday's answer

CAPRA SHORT
ABOUT COLOR
NEONS RODDY
LETSUP
FAB ATM GEE
ALASKA COLA
VOLLEYBALLS
ONLY SELFIE
RESTON BED
GENEVA
PHLOX FILMS
SAINT INLET
ISLES TESTY

CRYPTOQUOTE

IWOQO FH DJ PZIZQO FD UDB KJL IWO PZIZQO MFOH FD IWO XUD RWJ WJMT H IWO KJL.

-- NOJQNO YQUDO

Yesterday's Cryptoquote:

LOVE IS A FIRE. BUT WHETHER IT IS GOING TO WARM YOUR HEARTH OR BURN DOWN YOUR HOUSE, YOU CAN NEVER TELL.

-- JOAN CRAWFORD

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

YOU SHOULD BE OUTSIDE FOR ROLL CALL!

I HAVEN'T DONE MY MORNING STRETCHES YET

GREAT WORK WALKER

SARGE HELPED BEETLE STRETCH THIS MORNING

HENRY by Don Trachte

ONE SIDE, BUSTER!

OUT OF MY WAY!

SHOPPING BAGS

SHOPPING BAGS

SALE!