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Women Appointed Judges in Malaysia's Sharia High Court

For the first time in history, two women take their rightful seat as judges on Malaysia's Syariah (Malay for Sharia) high court. Noor Huda Roslan, 40, and Nenney Shuhaidah Shamsuddin, 41, are making history as they take on powerful roles allowing them to elevate the voices of Muslim women across Malaysia. Having graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies and Psychology, and International and Comparative

Legal Studies respectively, these two women couldn't be more



Noor Huda Roslan & Nenney Shuhaidah Shamsuddin

qualified for their positions. The appointment of two women to

the high court comes at a time of rising conservative narratives in Malaysia. Historically, the country has followed a rather moderate practice and application of Sharia law, however, current public discourse show that more and more Malaysian citizens are adopting conservative attitudes, and applying Sharia law in its most harsh standards. In the face of such distorted practices of Sharia law, Judge Shuhaidah sees it as more imperative now

than ever before to pass judgment fairly and, of course, justly. The only way to ensure this is to maintain a bench of judges flush with diversity. Judge Shuhaidah promised to take the opportunity to protect women and their rights. In her interview with BBC, Shuhaidah presented her expertise on equitable marriage and child custody laws. Her approach to

complex cases which involve polygamy or child abuse takes on an equitable practice. The appointment of Judge Roslan and Judge Shuhaidah not only comes as a beacon of hope for women's rights, this historic change also signals an increase and need for female representation in the field of law.

(extracted from mysalaam.com)

2018 L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science Page 5

In recognition of their distinguished accomplishments in the field of pharmaceuticals, three Egyptian female Muslim scientists have won the 2018 L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Award.

Anti-Cancer Drugs

With her academic excellence in the field of Pharmaceutical

said Balaha. She currently works in a project for design and synthesis of anti-cancer drugs in collaboration with a medicinal chemistry lab in Italy.

Breakdown of Drugs

Another winner is Dr. Noha Mostafa Ahmed, who is a Pharmaceutical Analytical Chemistry and Assistant Lecturer at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Assiut University, Egypt. Her research interests focus on the development of innovative and proven analytical methods to identify and break down some drugs.



Design and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Marwa Balaha, one of the winners of this year's award, managed to design, synthesize, and evaluate novel compounds as cytotoxic agents against non-small cell lung cancer. "My father passed away from cancer, something which pushed me to do all what I can to prevent cancer from claiming more lives. This goal propelled me to join the Faculty of Pharmacy, at the University of Tanta in Egypt,"

Genetic Damage

Dr. Amira El-Yazbi, the third winner, works as a researcher in Pharmaceutical Analytical Chemistry and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Alexandria University in Egypt. El Yazbi's research project focuses on the detection of DNA damage, which leads to mutations that cause cancer and many other diseases.

(Extracted from mvslim.com)



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Entire Turkish Village Quits Smoking

Millions of Muslims are unfortunately addicted to tobacco. But things are now different in Haydarbeyli, a village in Anatolia, Turkey, where none of its 180 residents smoke, and the handful that used to, have quit, it is said. One of the residents, Muhsin Varol, said he smoked for more than 13 years before deciding to quit the habit. "I quit smoking,



just like all the residents here. We also organize group walks day and night to keep healthy." The head of the village, Rifat Eraslan, said "every resident of the village supported each other to get rid of this harmful habit." At Haydarbeyli, however, we choose not to smoke. Right now, everybody is happy. Our houses, cars and streets don't smell of cigarettes. We don't want anyone who comes here from other places to smoke in our village. When we have visitors, the smokers don't

smoke because they feel ashamed. You can't find a single cigarette butt in our village," Uğurlu added. In an official recognition and appreciation for these local efforts, the provincial president of Yeşilay, Halil İbrahim Coşkun, visited the village. "It's fantastic that Haydarbeyli heard our call. I personally want to thank them for their decision. I hope many other people will follow the example they have set and we will get rid of the habit of smoking altogether," the official said. According to a 2006 article published by the British

Medical Journal, smoking rates are generally high in Muslim countries. The highest recorded rates among men were found to be in Yemen (77%) and in Indonesia (69%). Yemen also had the highest prevalence of smoking among women, where almost one third were found to smoke. The study reported that other Muslim countries with high smoking rates were Tunisia (62% of men), Guinea (59% of men) and Turkey (51% of men).

(Extracted from mvslim.com)

« Page 6 King Faisal Prizes ...

Bard and Jean M.J. Fréchet (both are citizens of USA). Joseph Bard is recognized for his groundbreaking development of electro-generated chemiluminescence methods. Chemiluminescence is the emission of light as a result of chemical reactions. Exploiting this emitted light, Bard developed the scanning electrochemical microscope. This has numerous biological and medical applications such

as detection of aids and analysis of DNA. Fréchet is awarded the prize for his pioneering work and seminal contributions in the areas of convergent synthesis of branched molecules (dendrimers) and their applications, chemically amplified photoresists and organic photovoltaics. (The writer can be reached at Dhofar University Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. rohelakhan@yahoo.com)

Indonesia Calls for Efforts against Religious Exclusivism

A number of Indonesian religious, cultural and interfaith figures have formulated a document called the Jakarta Treatise in response to the rising tide of religious conservatism in the country. The treatise, which consists of five points, was produced at the end of a two-day discussion recently. Among those who attended the event were former Constitutional Court chief justice Mahfud MD, Catholic priests Benny Susetyo and Franz MagnisSuseno, communications researcher Savic Ali from Indonesia's largest Muslim organization

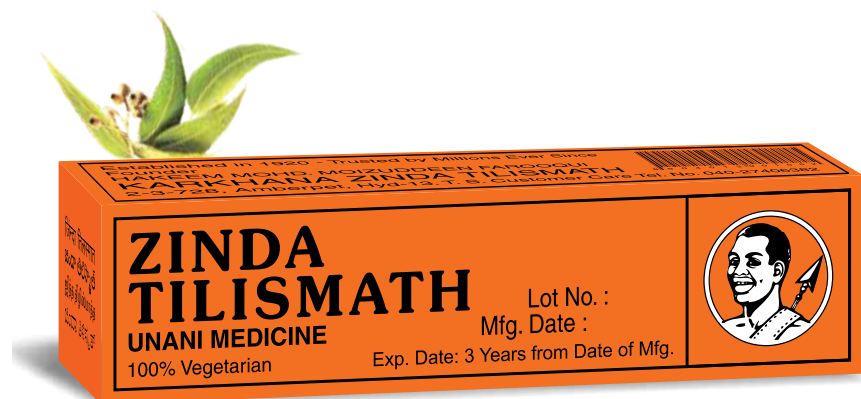
Nahdlatul Ulama, Liberal Islam Network (JIL) coordinator Ulil Abshar Abdalla and activist Alissa Wahid. The first point of the treatise said that while conservatism on its own was not necessarily a problem, it could become a "serious threat" if it morphed into "religious exclusivism and extremism" and became a "tool for political interests".

The treatise said exclusivism and extremism could lead to more groups advocating for religious ideologies to become part of the state's ideology. The treatise also suggested five

strategies to address these challenges, calling on the government to take a more active role in bolstering religious moderation. "Religion needs to be returned to its role as a spiritual and moral guide and not just be focused on the ritual and formal aspects, especially those that are exclusive in nature, in both public and governmental spheres," the treatise said. The treatise was submitted to Religious Affairs Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, who released an official response, largely agreeing with the points in the document. ■

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King Faisal International Prizes for 2019

By Sameen Ahmed Khan

Six individuals and one organization from Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, and the USA have been named winners of the King Faisal International Prize (KFIP) for the year 2019, as the 41st edition of the renowned award recognized their distinguished contributions towards humanity. The prize consists of a certificate, hand-written in Diwani calligraphy, summarizing the laureate's work; a commemorative 24 carat, 200 gram gold medal, uniquely cast for each Prize; and a cash endowment of Saudi Riyal 750,000 (about US\$200,000) to be shared equally.

The King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam has been awarded to International University of Africa, located in Khartoum the capital of Sudan (<https://en.iaa.edu.sd/>). This is in recognition of its outstanding contributions in the service to Islam and spreading of Arabic language in Africa and beyond. The university has its origins in the Islamic African Centre, and is now the largest Islamic religious institution in sub-Saharan Africa. The university has 15 colleges outside Sudan in Africa, China

and Turkey. In order to expand the scope of knowledge, culture and advocacy, the University has established the Radio Africa station and the Al-Alamiya satellite channel.

The 2019 prize for Islamic Studies (Topic: Studies on the Objectives of Islamic Law) has been withheld due to the lack of sufficiently meritorious nominations.

The prize for Arabic Language and Literature (Topic: Arabic Language and Contemporary Challenges) has been awarded to Abdelali Mohamed Oudrhiri of Morocco and Mahmoud Fahmy Hegazi of Egypt. Oudrhiri is a professor at the University of Mohammed V in Rabat the capital of Morocco. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Islamic University of Niger, and secretary general of Moroccan Linguistic Union. Hegazi is currently Professor of Language Sciences at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. He has held several academic and administrative positions, including president of the Egyptian University, Almaty, Kazakhstan; chairman of the National Library and Archives, Professor of Linguistics and Head of Arabic Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts

The King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam has been awarded to International University of Africa, located in Khartoum.

and Director of Arabic Language Center at Cairo University.

The prize for Medicine (Topic: Bone Biology and Osteoporosis) is awarded to Steven L. Teitelbaum and Bjørn Reino Olsen (both are citizens of USA). Teitelbaum's pioneering research focuses on bone cell biology for the purpose

of developing new treatments for the prevention and cure of diseases such as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, which can lead to increased risk of fracture. It is the most common reason for a broken bone among

the elderly. Bjørn Reino Olsen is recognized for his outstanding contributions to the field of bone biology. He has made a series of key genetic discoveries which have enhanced the understanding of bone development, and the basis of inherited skeletal disorders, including osteoporosis syndromes.

This year's prize for Science is in the area of Chemistry. It has been awarded to Allen Joseph

» Page 5



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Conserving Native Varieties of Rice

By Maqbool Ahmed Siraj

For Syed Ghani Khan of Kirgavalu village in Karnataka, preserving native varieties of rice is a lifetime passion. This 42-year



old has been cultivating virtually hundreds of varieties of rice on his 14-acre farm in the village located 20 kilometres from Mandya in the Cauvery basin. He preserves seeds of nearly a thousand of these varieties in a tiny museum that he has organized at his house in the village. Walls of his first floor hall display these seeds, held in clusters of panicles neatly pinned on several panels with tags bearing the names of the varieties alongside.

Museum at Home

Son of a farmer and someone who does not fight shy of calling himself a farmer, Ghani Khan holds a degree in Archaeology and Museology from Mysore University. Pained at the increasing use of chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides and loss of native varieties, Khan took

up the task of preserving seeds of these varieties in packets. He would supply the same to local farmers around his village before the arrival of the next monsoon. But he was not satisfied. It needed a little more effort. He conceived the idea of a museum for promoting general awareness together with the supply of seeds. Two halls in the upper floor of his old, tiled house were readied



for the purpose. The clustered panicles were arranged on wall panels in a hall, while those in bottles were arranged on shelves in the second one.

Ghani Khan feels that commercialization of farming has led to rejection of traditional varieties of crops, be they cereals, lentils, vegetables or fruits. The farmers were influenced by the publicity to seeds produced by large firms that promised better yield. This has resulted in en masse switching over to hybrid varieties like MTU-1001, IR-64, Jaya etc.

Sustainable

Ghani Khan says conservation of traditional varieties is critical to sustainable agriculture as several of them carry medicinal properties, some give out aroma on cooking, some can withstand drought

Syed Ghani Khan of Kirgavalu village has been conserving and propagating hundreds of native varieties of rice which are threatened with extinction in the race for high-yielding commercial varieties.

and yet others can be grown with just one or two showers. He wanted to conserve these

methods which can ensure a life of at least 18 months for the paddy seeds without pesticides. He has



varieties for future generations. So, he began collecting varieties like Ratnachudi, Gandhasalai, Rasakadam, Rajamudi,

dedicated one acre of land in his farm in a demarcated zone where seeds of several varieties are sown in documented

Native varieties of rice can withstand vagaries of nature.

A corner of his museum displays several trophies, medals and certificates that were presented to him in recognition of his work for propagation of native varieties.

Ghamgadale, Doddibatta, Doddabyrenellu, Chinna ponni, Mysore Mallige, Zeerge Sanna, Parimalla Sanna, Basumati, Burma Black, Thai Jasmine etc.

Dedicated Zone

He says while agricultural colleges or universities used freezers to preserve seeds, he applied on-field conservation

segments. He even wrote to the Chief Minister of Karnataka to initiate measures to preserve and conserve native varieties. But no response has been received from him. During the last two decades, he has supplied free seeds of native varieties to around ten thousand farmers and received positive responses from them. He keeps a

meticulous record of all those who have visited him or sought seeds from him. Shiv Prasad, a farmer from the outskirts of Hyderabad has taken seeds of around 200 varieties from him and forwarded the seeds from the resulting crop to his associates. Krishna from nearby Maddur village has been a constant procurer of seeds from him. Rachanna from Hosamalangi village in T.

Narsipur taluk has successfully grown around 25 varieties of rice after having taken from him.

Honours Conferred

A corner of his museum displays several trophies, medals and certificates that were presented to him in recognition of his work for propagation of native varieties. He was conferred Krishi Pandit Prashasti by the Government of Karnataka in 2008. Plant Protection Variety Forum conferred on him National Genome Seed-saver Recognition a year later. Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad selected him for Rice Innovative Farmer's Award for 2011-12. Government of Karnataka chose him for Bio Diversity Award in 2010, while Suvarna TV channel declared him winner of the 'Man of the

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Bhatkal's Anjuman Completes Centenary

Over 7,500 children are studying in 22 schools and colleges run by the body.

Bhatkal: The Anjuman Hami e Muslimeen in this small seaside town has completed a centenary of its services for the cause of modern education this year.



The Anjuman began a year of celebrations on January 5 to recall the glorious services of the patrons and philanthropists of the Navayati community which has run the institutions over the hundred years. The grand inaugural ceremony commenced with inauguration of the centenary celebrations on January 5 by Ghulam Mohammed Vastanvi, the renowned scholar from Akkalkuwa in Maharashtra who runs several modern educational institutions. Karnataka Industries Minister Mr. R. V. Deshpande who hails from the district (namely Uttara Kannada) presided over the function. Local

BJP MLA who is an alumnus of the college too was there and spoke in laudatory terms about the institutions.

What is most surprising about the Anjuman is that it has been rendering service in the small town quietly for the last hundred years regardless of considerations of faith, caste and community.

The first institution to come up was Anjuman Primary School which opened its portals in 1919. The Islamia Anglo Urdu High School followed up nearly two decades later. Today, the Anjuman campus is located on a hill overlooking the small town and is a hub of activity. Altogether, the Anjuman runs 22 institutions, of which 15 are schools, mainly located in the town. The seven higher educational institutions include two degree colleges (one each for men and women), an engineering college, two post-graduate study centres (one each for men and women), a college for Management courses, and the

Anjuman College for Education. The Anjuman Engineering College offers even Ph.D. programmes.

The institutions employ 550 teaching as well as non-teaching employees. Of these, 90 per cent are from the non-aided category with their salaries coming from the Anjuman funds. The Anjuman's annual budget runs up to Rs. 15 crore, eighty per cent of which are meant for salaries of the staff members.

Foundation Laid for Whitefield Islamic Centre

Whitefield (Bengaluru): The foundation stone was laid for the Whitefield Islamic Centre on Jan. 6 which will have a mosque, prayer hall for women, library, play zone for kids and a men's PG. Laying the foundation stone, E. T. Mohammed Basheer, Lok Sabha member representing Ponnani in Kerala, said social infrastructure for the well-rounded development of youth was important, together with religious and cultural development.

The Centre is being built by the Hira Foundation Trust, Coles Park. The WIC will come up on

Remaining 20% cent goes for construction, maintenance, library, electricity, water and other amenities and upkeep of services. Most buildings have been constructed by individual donors. Dubai-based chartered accountant Khaleel Sahib donated the Women's Degree College building.

The Anjuman's General Body has over 2,000 members. As a rule, the Anjuman allows a maximum of only two terms for office bearers. The Executive Committee has 85 members. The President, General Secretary, Finance Secretary and other office bearers are elected every four years. Currently, Janab Abdur Raheem Jukaku

(son of late Janab Shamsuddin Jukaku, who was minister for power under the tenure of Mr. Nijalingappa's chief ministership in the 1950s) is the President of the Anjuman. Janab Ismail Siddiq is General Secretary, while Janab Ameeruddin is Finance Secretary. The Anjuman has conducted its affairs smoothly and with transparency. There never were any scams or scandals. Office-bearers are suffused with altruistic spirit and carry out their duties with sincerity.

Around 7,500 students are currently studying in the 22 schools and colleges. Of them nearly, 30 per cent are non-Muslims. (By A Staff Writer)

a plot measuring 4,600 sq. ft. in the eastern suburb which has seen



tremendous development due to several MNCs setting up their units and inclusion of several

areas into the municipal territory of Bengaluru. The Centre will have prayer halls on the ground and first floors while a library and Islamic awareness centre will come up on the second floor.

Convener Mr. K. Moosa welcomed the gathering. Mr. Asim Qasimi of Tayyab Trust, India and USA, from Deoband, Dr. Tahaa Matheen of Bengaluru Islamic Foundation Trust (BIFT) etc, addressed the gathering.

(By A Staff Writer)



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Kabir Trust's Free Coaching Classes Benefits Many Students

By A Staff Writer

Despite the winter early morning cold, some 800 children, from different schools but all from the 10th standard, attend early morning coaching classes at Bangalore's Kabir Ashram. This 100-day programme of free coaching classes for boys and girls from the 10th standard has been conducted for the last 33 years, explains Mr. T. Prabhakar, who heads the Kabir Trust under which the programme is conducted. The latest programme began towards the end of October 2018.

Mr. Prabhakar explains that the

Among the most inspiring things about the 100 Days' Coaching Classes at the Kabir Ashram in Bangalore is the fact that students from different faiths come here to acquire wisdom. Many Muslim students have gained immensely by attending the coaching classes.

RT Nagar. This programme starts every year towards the end of the year and finishes shortly before the final SSLC exams. Classes are conducted early in the morning so that students can later attend their schools. Classes are taken by a team of dedicated and trained teachers. Many of the teachers and students come from

was launched, more than three decades ago!

People like Mr. Prabhakar and his team, which comprises people from different faith backgrounds, are doing very noble work in serving economically marginalised people and bringing different communities together for the



programme of free coaching classes serves mainly children from economically poor backgrounds, who are from different communities. The programme was launched in 1986, with some 50 to 60 students. Today, over 800 students attend the classes. Interestingly, many of these children are Muslims, both girls and boys.

The coaching classes are organised in a hall in the Kabir Ashram, in Matadahalli, near

a long distance.

Mr. Prabhakar explains that one major purpose of the classes is to help students to be motivated to succeed. Through the classes, students are also nurtured in basic human values. No wonder, then, that many of the students who've benefited from the programme have done very well in their examinations. So far, around over 25,000 students have gone through the 100 Days Coaching Classes programme ever since it

good cause of peace, harmony and value education.

Meeting Prabhakar and his team at Kabir Trust, one is reminded of the noble teachings of the saint Kabir ji, whose message of devotion to God and service of all God's creatures is of universal relevance.

(To know more the noble work of the Kabir Trust, contact Mr. T Prabhakar, Chairman, Kabir Trust, on tprabhakar2@gmail.com)

B.Sc (Aeronautics) course at Jamia DGCA Grants Approval

New Delhi: Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Government of India has granted CAR-147(Basic) approval under B1.3 (Helicopter-Turbine) & B2(Avionics) category to Pawan Hans Limited (A Govt. of India Undertaking) to run B.Sc Aeronautics & Aircraft Maintenance Engineering course at the Jamia Millia Islamia.

The CAR-147 (Basic) / B.Sc (Aeronautics) program is a joint venture of Pawan Hans Limited(PHL) and Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) set up through MoU signed on 27th July 2017.

The training organization has been established with an objective to provide a world class quality education and practical training in aviation at par with latest technology enabling students competent for taking Modules Examination as per CAR 66 requirements, in order to acquire DGCA License (AME license in Mechanical/Avionics stream). After successful completion of training syllabus, the students would be awarded a Certificate

of Recognition by PHL-CAR147 (Basic) and B.Sc (Aeronautics) Degree by JMI.

B.Sc (Aeronautics) is a three year under-graduate program providing students a strong specialized aviation knowledge to pursue



higher education in the field of Aviation, which may enable them to acquire top positions in the aviation industry and open up new vistas.

The aviation industry is poised for substantial growth in India and this will contribute in country's overall development. The country has already witnessed the open sky policy which led to significant growth in air services which in turn required parallel increase in overall infra-structure. Therefore, it will need greater requirements for skilled manpower in all streams connected with aviation industry. ■

39 Muslims Pass UPSC

Combined Medical Services Exam 2018

39 Muslim doctors are among a total of 440 recommended for various medical posts to be filled based on the Combined Medical Services (CMS) Examination 2018 conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the final results of which were declared recently. Out of the total 40 Muslim doctors, who made to the list of 440 successful candidates, 17

are women. The UPSC CMSE 2018 results are declared based on the result of the Computer Based Examination (Part – I) of the Combined Medical Services Examination, 2018 held by the Union Public Service Commission on July 22, 2018 followed by Personality Test (Part – II) held in November 2018 to January 2019.

(Extracted from ummid.com)

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Priyanka Entry

Charm Offensive by Congress

By Maqbool Ahmed Siraj

Ms. Priyanka Gandhi's entry into the Congress is a shrewd move by the AICC to galvanise the party cadre in Uttar Pradesh and to tap the residual loyalties of the people towards the Nehru-Gandhi clan in the forthcoming General Elections. It is equally a backlash against the SP-BSP decision to keep away Congress from the alliance in Uttar Pradesh. In a way, it is an aggressive and strategic response to Akhilesh-Mayawati combine's move. Congress

Indian politics, especially when a woman, with an aristocratic face like her ruling-ancestors, plunges into the political arena seeking to

it is today'. Feminine charm will be used against casteist and communal appeal.

The Missing Pole

As things have stood till last week, cursory surveys had indicated that Congress may emerge as the largest party, with 180-200 seats in the 543 (elected)-member Lok Sabha. The BJP may be down to 160-175, and 'the others' (BSP, SP, TRS, YSRC, Shiv Sena, AIUDF, AIADMK, PDP, NC etc combined) may notch 160-180 seats. (Ref. Deccan Herald, Bengaluru, Sunday, Jan. 20, 2019). The likely scenario is that Congress could be the pole around which majority among 'the others' will converge to form the Union Government. Given the past monopolistic tendencies in the Congress, other parties do not seem to be comfortable with the idea of the Congress re-emerging on the national scene and would like to see a weak centre. This has been the major concern for SP-BSP to keep the Congress away. But as things stand today, Union Government needs a central pole with a pan-Indian appeal to be durable for some tenure. Most of the South Indian regional outfits have therefore made up their minds to back Congress' claim for that position. But SP-BSP and perhaps Mamata Banerjee are not yet agreeable to it.

Upper Caste Votes

Upper caste votes in UP are

crucial. The race to garner them has begun in earnest as SC, OBCs and Muslims were likely to tilt towards the SP-BSP combine. Among the Indian states, Brahmins have the largest proportion in this Hindi-speaking state, i.e., variously put between 11% to 13%. This was one motivation which pushed the BJP to bring in the legislation for 10% quota for the poor (to say so) upper castes. The Congress would not like to sit quiet and eyes them covetously. After all, the Nehru-Gandhi clan had a Brahmin ancestry and many people look at them as more authentic Brahmins despite genemixing during the interim years.

roti, kapada and makaan. For this to happen, the ones who have an interest in the nation remaining secular need to devise ways to influence media and other forums where issues are debated and highlighted. Currently, saffron elements have infiltrated deep into the institutions that prepare, propagate and push the agenda.

Vadra Cases

Rahul is maturing fast. He knows that the Congress victory in the recent Assembly election was neither emphatic nor convincing. It won by a whisker in Madhya Pradesh, and there was no landslide in Rajasthan as was being predicted. It lost Mizoram

Rahul knows that it is either now or never.

President has signaled that what Congress may be losing due to exclusion will now come back to it via women, many of who are all likely to gravitate towards it under the charm offensive.

Special Traction

To begin with, women politicians get special traction from the electorate all across the nation. In Priyanka Gandhi (at 47) they see an image of her grandmother Indira Gandhi, who not only exuded charm, but demonstrated extraordinary courage by being decisive and resolute. One should not discount personal charm in

reclaim the political family's lost glory. (Remember! Superstar of 1970s, Rajesh Khanna won the New Delhi seat on the Congress ticket in a by-election in 1992 against Shatrughan Sinha, who fought on a BJP ticket.)

The Congress has designated her as General Secretary for eastern Uttar Pradesh, a region mired in extreme backwardness, and expects to recapture old loyalties and send out signal to the younger generation that 'Enough is enough with casteist and communal parties. Come back to the grand old party that took India where

The Congress expects to recapture some its old constituency through feminine charm.

It is true that the Hindutva narrative of the BJP has pushed the Congress and its President to enter into a competition of religiosity. But it is certainly different from a communal competition. The BJP and its cronies openly spew hatred against the Muslims. Congress does not indulge in a hate campaign. Nor does it set up goons to attack them. Yet, the dominant narrative of Hindutva has compelled Rahul Gandhi to go on a temple-run. This tilt from secular fulcrum is painful, but has to be taken in the stride till the axis of the narrative itself veers off to more substantial issues such as

after being the ruling party for two terms. It was only Chhattisgarh where it won hands down. In this scenario, he has to push himself assertively, rejecting backfoot play. It is a now or never scenario. Priyanka's induction is one such deft move whereby he has been able to recapture the national imagination. However, it is now certain that cases against Mr. Robert Vadra, Priyanka's husband, would now be expedited. It remains to be seen how all these impact the events in the run-up to elections and the outcome. ■



LETTERS

Useful for Language Improvement

I have been reading Islamic Voice for only one year, but I gained good command over English after reading this paper. I was quite weak in English. So I like to say that Islamic Voice is very useful

not only for improving one's language, but also useful in order to acquire knowledge about the current affairs of the world.

Shammas Np

shammasnp2168@gmail.com

« Page 7

Native Varieties of Rice...

Year Award' in 2017.

According to Ghani Khan, India is home to thousands of varieties of rice and one should not be surprised to find one variety being replaced by another after every forty kilometres. He says several varieties are known for medicinal properties. If Navara of Kerala is good for those who have joint pain, Karigajvilli and Ambe Mohur from Karnataka are said to be good for lactating mothers. Mehdi is held to be good for healing of bone fracture, while Mapillai samba from Tamil Nadu improves virility. Khaima is said to be good for those suffering from piles.

Ghani Khan is a mobile encyclopaedia of knowledge on varieties of rice. He says it is wrong to presume that paddy is an aquatic plant. He refers to several varieties such as Doddi Batta, Ghangadale and Bididi Doddi which can be grown in farms that receive just

one or two showers. He says Ratnachudi, HMT, NMS-II are high-yielding varieties while Zeerge Sanna, Rasakadam, Gandha Sale, Parimala Sanna and Mugadh Sugandh emit pleasant aroma on cooking.

For the last few years Ghani Khan has taken up conservation of native varieties of mango too and has registered himself with the National Bureau for Plant Genetics, New Delhi. He has trees that have been there with his family farm for the last six to seven generations. These trees yield native varieties like Mosambi ka Aam (tasting like sweet lime); Seb ka Aam (tastes like apple); Pheeka Aam (for diabetics); Kaale Malghoba, Bada Gola; Mangamari; Manji bi Pasand; Mittmia Pasand. Some of these varieties are procured from him by suppliers attached to Lulu Mall in Dubai. Syed Ghani Khan can be reached at 99017-13351, email: muhinuha786@gmail.com.

Humble Tailor Sets up a School

By AnanyaBarua
(Thebetterindia.com)

In a family of six brothers, he grew up in abject poverty. His father, the village kotwar (constable), earned a meager salary of Rs. 130 in Tuljapur, Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. The income was barely enough to feed eight mouths. Owing to this, despite being a bright student Shaukatali had to get married even though he was only in Class 11. Even faced with discouragement



from family members and villagers, he fought hard to continue his education and finally graduated with a B.Ed degree. Speaking to The Better India he said, "It was a huge deal for anyone from the village to gain such a degree. I was proud and confident that despite several odds, I had managed to pass with high marks. But, the confidence faded when I started looking for jobs in Osmanabad. Despite my merit, everyone wanted me to pay

up first. One place even asked me to pay Rs 50,000 to get a job as a teacher. My dream to become a teacher was shattered. I decided to look past all that and move to Pune for a better life."

With his own family to support, Shaukatali, who knew tailoring, began to brush up his skills.

"I worked under a local tailor there for a few months, until I was good enough to start my own little business. In a small rented room with a rented sewing machine, I began my journey as a



tailor," he shares.

Fortunately, this fared well, and in a matter of two years, he managed to get his own house and lead a comfortable life.

"Once things had settled, my calling as a teacher began to ring again. So, I went to my son's school, which was till Class 7, and offered my services for free and start higher classes. Lucky for me, the school authorities agreed, and I began working there as a teacher," he adds.

Having earned a B.Ed degree, Shaukatali had difficulty in finding a job as a teacher. But today he runs a school in a backward region.

His life, however, took a turn when the school management, impressed by his work, offered him to start a school in Velvand, a remote village in Bhore taluka.

Established in 2005, this school, Samarth Vidya Mandir, now stands as the first and only secondary school across five

villages within a 35-kilometre radius of the taluka.

Hidden amidst the hilly landscapes of Bhore, the school provides education to tribal students coming from villages as far as 40-50 kms. away.

"When I joined in 2005, the school was a two-room dilapidated structure with almost no students. The leaking tin roof, lack of washroom and transport, further deterred students from coming to school. It did not even have government recognition.

So, for students to start coming to school I had to take care of all that," he added.

Although the government authorisation was received in a few months, convincing parents to send their wards was a challenge. Setting up a school

Shaukatali of Tuljapur village in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra earned a B.Ed. degree and has set up a school in a nearby village where education was thought of as a luxury.

in a place where education was perceived as luxury was difficult. "In Velvand, the youth were largely illiterate. Most of them would migrate to nearby towns and cities to do odd jobs as labourers or factory workers. Their parents also perceived those to be lucrative options as it brought in a steady flow of money. Changing that mindset and helping them see the larger picture was a challenge, so I would visit every house in all nearby villages to explain to them the need for education," says Shaukatali.

He added that getting female students was a bigger challenge, due to the distance and lack of proper amenities in the school

premises.

Yet, his own adverse experiences gave him the strength to continue. Additionally, the structural issues of the school, along with the necessary facilities were soon solved with the help of Alfa Laval and Rotary Club with their donation of over Rs. 40 lakh. This helped him build an eight-room school with classrooms, laboratories and a library.

After 14 years of incessant efforts, Shaukatali has finally brought the

school to a progressive state. And, for the past three years, the institution has been maintaining the 100% pass results.

But academics are not the only emphasis here. To make education more relevant and holistic, he has incorporated skill development programmes within the curriculum. Two such courses include teaching the skill of tailoring to students and their mothers, along with a special graphic designing class. With each day, Shaukatali is moving towards fulfilling his dream to make this school a haven of learning and self-sustainability- a tall example for the world! ■

Farhad Hakeem is new Kolkata Mayor

Fifty nine-year old Farhad Hakeem has been named as the Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. This is the first time that a Muslim has become the Mayor of KMC after Independence. He resigned as the Minister of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs in the State cabinet headed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee a little while before assuming the charge. His ascension was however, made possible by passing an amendment in the KMC Act in the West Bengal Assembly whereby a non-corporator too could be appointed as the Mayor. He, however, will have to be elected as a corporator later.

Who is Farhad Hakeem? is the question being asked in political corridors and what the Didi is targeting to achieve by appointing a Muslim as the chief

of the municipal body looking after the administration spread over 200 sq. km. urban area.

Farhad Hakeem is also known as Bobby. He has a mixed Urdu Muslim-Bengali parentage as his father Abdul Hakeem hailed



from Gaya in Bihar and had married a Bengali Hindu woman while doing business in Kolkata. Farhad has grown imbibing cultural influences of both Hindus and Muslims. He has been into business of chemicals prior to joining politics. Since he

Mamata elevates a politician from Hindu-Muslim parentage to the key position.

had roots in Bihar, he can easily shift to Hindi-Urdu from Bangla language while addressing crowds.

Eversince he joined the Trinamool Congress, he has been a staunch loyalist of Mamata Banerjee. Mamata is said to have blind faith in three of his loyalists i.e. Shovan Chatterjee, Roop Viswas and Farhad Hakeem. Hakeem has also entered into 'good books' of Mamata's nephew Abhishek Banerjee who is currently the closest political associate of the Chief Minister.

Media circles also testify that Farhad has maintained an extremely secular stance all through his career and has never played any communally

partisan tune. He is equally popular among the Hindus in the constituency from where he got elected as the MLA. He enthusiastically participates in the celebration of Durga Puja, the major festival observed on a popular level in West Bengal. Farhad is known for hard work. KMC employees remember him as one who would be available till late in the evening in his ward office while others would leave by 6 pm. He remained unblemished as far as corruption was concerned. He was instrumental in seeing completion of beautification project for Rajarhaat, an area in the vicinity of Kolkata. He is said to be a hard taskmaster and does not leave projects incomplete. It was Mamata

Banerjee who had tasked him to take up the beautification project. It is said only those who are consistent with unflinching loyalty of Mamata Banerjee can expect to be elevated to such high positions.

It is guessed that Mamata has opted for Farhad with an eye over 20% Muslim votes and Hindi-speaking population among 54 lakh KMC area voters. In 2017, when Shankar Development Board was constituted to improve civic conditions around the famous Shankar Mandir in Kolkata, Mamata had appointed Farhad Hakeem as its Chairman. This led to accusation from the BJP that a Muslim was being appointed in pursuance of the policy of minority appeasement. It is guessed that the BJP would again try to polarise Hindu voters in the KMC area to gain political advantage.

(Source: Translated and transcribed from thewire.in/Urdu)

Oxfam Report 2018

Savagery of Capitalism

Last year, 2018 saw the biggest increase in billionaires in history i.e., one billionaire every two days. There are now 2,043 dollar billionaires worldwide. Nine out of 10 are men.

In 12 months, billionaires wealth rose up by \$762 billion. This increase could have erased the global poverty seven times over. Eighty two per cent of all wealth created last year went to the top 1% population, while the bottom half of the global population saw no increase at all.

New data from Credit Suisse means 42 people now own the same wealth as the bottom 7 billion people, and that last year's figure has been revised from eight to 61 people owning the same as the bottom 50%.

Look at just two richest men in the world:



Amancio Ortega of Zara Fashions and Stefan Persson of H&M (right)

Amancio Ortega, the 4th richest person in the world received Euro 1.3 billion in dividends from his shares in his company

making fashion garments Zara. Stefan Persson, whose father founded H&M is ranked 43 in the Forbes list of the richest people. He received Euro 658 million in share dividends last year.

Now look at the world's poor:



A garment worker in Bangladesh

Anju works in a garment factory in Bangladesh. She often works 12 hours a day until late at night. She has to skip meals because she has not earned enough money. She earns just over \$900 a year.

Fatima, also works in a garment factory in Bangladesh, is often abused she fails to meet targets and gets sick because she is unable to go to the toilet taking leave of her work.

Not alone this. Myint in Thailand is told to either put up with sexual harassment and abuse from guests or quit her job.

Inequality is rising despite all the political rhetoric of ending poverty.

One New Billionaire every Two days; Billionaires wealth rose by \$762 billion in 12 month; Developing countries are losing at least \$170bn each year in foregone tax revenues.

In the period between 2006 and 2015, ordinary workers saw their incomes rise by an average of just 2% a year, while billionaire wealth rose by nearly 13% a year – almost six times faster. In Nigeria, the richest man earns enough interest on his wealth in one year to lift two million people out of extreme poverty. Despite almost a decade of robust economic growth in Nigeria, poverty has increased over the same period.

In Indonesia, the four richest men own more wealth than the bottom 100 million people.

The three richest people in the US own the same wealth as the bottom half of the US population (roughly 160 million people). In Brazil, someone earning the minimum wage would have to work 19 years to make the same amount as a person in the richest 0.1% of the population makes in one month.

Major Reasons for Growth of Billionaires

Normally, increase in wealth is

justified when it is created due to talent, work and risk-taking. But in the current scenario,



it has often been the product of inheritance, monopoly and political cronyism.

Approximately a third of billionaire wealth is derived from inheritance. Over the next 20 years, 500 of the world's richest people will hand over \$2.4 trillion to their heirs – a sum larger than the GDP of India, a country of 1.3 billion people.

Monopolies fuel excessive returns to owners and

shareholders at the expense of the rest of the economy. The power of monopoly to generate extreme wealth is demonstrated by the fortune of Carlos Slim, the sixth richest man in the world. His fortune derives from an almost complete monopoly he was able to establish over fixed line, mobile and broadband communications services in Mexico. The OECD found that this monopoly has had significant negative effects for consumers and the economy.

Monopoly power is compounded by cronyism, the ability of powerful private interests to manipulate public policy to entrench existing monopolies and create new ones. (The latest example is manufacturing of Rafale fighter jets being given to the

Ambanis). Privatization deals, natural resources given away below fair value, corrupt public procurement, or tax exemptions and loopholes are all ways in which well-connected private interests can enrich themselves at the expense of the public.

For more log on to: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2018-01-22/richest-1-percent-bagged-82-percent-wealth-created-last-year>

India's Richest

India's one per cent hold 51.5% of national wealth

India has committed itself to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. Fifty million people are estimated to be trapped in extreme poverty. They constitute 3.6% of the total population. 8.4% of the world's poor are in India. India has one-third of the total poor around the world. Nine richest Indians own as much wealth as bottom 50%.

All 119 billionaires in India hold \$440 billion. India's riches gained \$310 million each day in 2018.

Top one per cent people in India hold 51.5% of national wealth.

Bottom 60% hold 4.8% of national wealth.

Seventy new millionaires are estimated to be added every day between 2018 and 2019.

21.8 people escape poverty every minute. The global escape rate is 48 per minute.

'End Poverty in all its forms' is the first among the Sustainable Development Goals of the United



Nations. If this goal has to be achieved by 2030, 7.9 persons should escape poverty every minute.

(Extracted from Oxfam-Wealth Report 2018)

View From America

What I learned teaching Islamic studies in Texas

By Simran Jeet Singh

As far as I know, I was the first Sikh hired to teach Islamic studies at an American university. I loved every minute of it, especially because my employer, Trinity University, was located in my beloved hometown of San Antonio, Texas. My first real job also shed new light for me on what it's like to be an underrepresented minority in this country. Most Americans, in short, don't know who Sikhs are. Typically they presume we are Muslims, mostly as a result of Islam being racialized in the past few decades: It's not just a faith, it's also a look, and the resulting stereotypes square with the appearance of many Sikh men — brown skin, turban, beard. That's me.

Anti-Muslim Hate

Of course I had long since learned what "looking Muslim" meant in post-9/11 America. I knew first hand the violence that came with misguided understandings of Islam, and as a Sikh especially,

I felt compelled to do something about it. It's precisely what sent me down the path of studying religious communities and addressing the racism they experience. I decided to make allyship with Muslims and those affected by anti-Muslim hate a centerpiece of my life. Because my path seemed so obvious to me, I never considered my field of study to be odd. Only



Simran Jeet Singh interacts with his students during class at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, on Jan. 12, 2017. Photo courtesy of San Antonio Express-News/Ray Whitehouse

when I began interviewing for jobs did I realize that some might find it strange for a Sikh to teach Islam. "How can you teach a religion you don't even practice?" people would ask, including the president of a university during a job interview.

I had long since learned what "looking Muslim" meant in post-9/11 America. I knew first hand the violence that came with misguided understandings of Islam, and as a Sikh especially, I felt compelled to do something about it.

I wanted to point out to the president that the scholars in his own religion department, like most of the religion scholars I knew, did not practice the faiths they taught. It's considered normal for white scholars to be interested in traditions other than their own. I didn't alert him to his bias — I wanted the job, after all. But ever since I've wished I could have asked why it was problematic for me to express the same interest — because I'm a person of color? Because

I identify as a religious minority? Common Racial Profiling My wife lived in New York City when I was hired at Trinity, and because she was working and we didn't yet have kids or a firm long-term plan, I commuted to and from Texas every week. I would fly out Monday morning and return on Thursday evening, a brutal schedule that my generous colleagues bent over backward to accommodate. But traveling had its perks — tons of frequent flier miles, for one. I also got so familiar with airport security officials that they often let me slide through without subjecting me to otherwise common racial profiling and secondary screening procedures. But there were uncomfortable aspects. On my regular carrier, Southwest Airlines, whose first-come, first-served seating policy normally sets off a scramble for favorable seats, my fellow passengers consistently chose not to sit beside me, no matter where I was sitting, until no other

option was available. I sometimes made a game of it, counting how many empty seats were left for the unseated passengers, trying to guess if I would get a row to myself or at least an empty seat next to me so I could spread out a bit more freely. It wasn't just me. Check

My conundrum in this situation was whether to prepare for class. If I pulled out a book on the Quran or on Islamic history or on politics in the Middle East, would it cause unnecessary distress?

out the Twitter hashtags #FlyingWhileBrown or #FlyingWhileMuslim or #FlyingWhileSikh. It's a real thing. I was grateful for the extra space, but part of me would feel sad that people viewed me as someone they didn't want to be around.

Illegitimate Fears

My conundrum in this situation was whether to prepare for class. If I pulled out a book on the Quran or on Islamic history or on politics in the Middle East, would it cause unnecessary distress? After hiding my books for months, reflecting constantly on the Sikh teaching that "A truly wise person neither fears anyone nor inspires fear in anyone," I eventually put fake book jackets on what I was reading. Some may say I gave in to illegitimate fears and should have simply read and graded unapologetically; if people felt worried, that was their problem. I see that argument and honor it. But as a racialized body, it's not always easy to dismiss others' fears. For one thing, these fears often have consequences for

people who look like me. This is a reality that all people of color know because they live it every day of their lives. There is a real psychological impact of being so cognizant of one's own appearance and how it's perceived in public. Even things that seem mundane to many people raise questions for me.

Tweet of Solidarity

For instance, I was surprised (though I probably shouldn't have been) by the hate aimed at me in my job. People were angry when I spoke out about a

14-year-old Muslim boy in Texas who had been wrongfully accused of bringing a bomb to school. Local law enforcement handcuffed, detained and questioned him for 90 minutes without permitting him to see his parents. My tweet of solidarity with the boy became part of the story on "Good Morning America" and CNN International.

But this stays with me too: the wonderful students, colleagues and administrators who welcomed me and listened when I shared my darker lessons as I have here. The sharing of our experience helps others see realities that would be hard to imagine otherwise. Through my own stories, I hope they too saw what our Muslim neighbors and every minority goes through in trying to overcome the racial and religious supremacies so deeply embedded in the world around us. (Simran Jeet Singh is a scholar of religion currently based at NYU's Center for Religion and Media. He is also senior religion fellow for the Sikh Coalition).

(Extracted from religionnews.com)

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MONUMENTAL MEMORIALS

Rashida Tlaib **Rashida Tlaib Sworn** **in Wearing Palestinian** **Dress**

Washington: Newly-elected U.S. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib was sworn into the USA's House of Representatives wearing a traditional Palestinian thobe, or dress. The thobe she wore featured ornate, hand-stitched embroidery known as tatreez. The craft of tatreez is a folk art that has been practised by Palestinian women for centuries, according



to The Institute for Middle East. "Throughout my career in public service, the residents I have had the privilege of fighting for, have embraced who I am, especially my Palestinian roots," Tlaib wrote. "This is what I want to bring to the United States Congress, an unapologetic display of the fabric of the people in this country." Tlaib became the first Palestinian woman elected to the U.S. Congress and joined Minnesota's Ilhan Omar in becoming the first Muslim women elected to the legislature. (Extracted from aa.com.tr)

Ilhan Omar **US Congresswoman** **Ilhan Omar: First** **Somali-American** **Member**

Washington: Ilhan Omar marked her first day in office by promising to make the U.S. live up to its ideals of religious liberty, and she demanded the country reject divisiveness and hate. Omar was sworn



into the House of Representatives and joined Michigan's Rashida Tlaib in becoming the first Muslim women in Congress. Omar is also the body's first Somali-American member.

"I am feeling very honored and really humble to represent the people of the 5th and get this opportunity to really work on restoring our democracy and fighting for the people," Omar said, referring to Minnesota's 5th district.

The 36-year-old Omar used her grandfather's copy of the Quran during her swearing-in ceremony, saying he inspired her to pursue a career in politics. "I know he would have loved to be here today. But I want to bring him with me. He was with us in spirit because I got a chance to get sworn on his Quran," Omar added. She also wore a hijab for

the ceremony—another first for Congress that previously banned any sort of headwear.

"We are going to make this country one that lives up to its ideals of inclusion, of religious liberty," Omar said to a crowd of supporters at a celebration after her swearing in. "One that recognizes this is a land that is stolen from indigenous people, built on the backs of black slaves, and one, one that welcomed immigrants so many years ago." "We believe in the politics of joy, and this isn't the time for tip-toe politics. We are going to reject divisiveness. And we are going to reject hate. And we are going to reject people who want to destroy one of the greatest governments, one of the greatest democracies to exist on this earth."

Omar commended the diversity in the new Congress that now has 102 women and 55 black members. The congresswoman reflected on her roots as well, when she came to the U.S. more than two decades ago as a refugee. "If this ban was happening 23 years ago. If the reduction of refugees being allowed in this country was happening 23 years ago, my family and I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have the opportunity to get an education, start a family and now get to represent all of you in Congress," Omar said. "Not only do we welcome refugees, but we send them to Washington to represent us," she added, praising her district.

Farnaaz Islam

Engineer by Degree, Artist by Passion

Farnaaz Islam of Guwahati is an engineer by qualification, but a flourishing artist by passion. She is one of the two artists from Assam who feature in the 11th Contemporary Painting Exhibition organised by the Bengal Art Foundation (BAF) which is going on now at the Gauhati Artists' Guild in Guwahati. BAF is today a platform and a beacon light for practising artists. The Foundation is committed to support artists around the country who are working with a contemporary attitude to art by projecting their works through exhibitions, art workshops, art seminars at major centres and creating awareness among the collectors and the connoisseurs of art in the country. Farnaaz did her schooling at the Blue Bells School and Holy Child School

in Guwahati. Her father is a doctor and a professor at Gauhati Medical College and her mother



is a lecturer. She herself has done an M Tech in Electronics and Communications Engineering. But more than her profession, it is her passion for painting that is taking her places these days. Expressing gratitude to her parents, Farnaaz says, "I have memories of my parents dropping me at Gauhati Artists

Guild, my alma mater for painting lessons, and then my parents taking me to various art competitions, and me, getting a 2nd prize in an art competition organised by the Productivity Council of India when I was just a KG student." Farnaaz says, "My most memorable experience was my grooming at Gauhati Artists Guild at the age of 12. I completed the Visual Arts course there. "Farnaaz wants to continue experimenting with acrylic and water colour using various styles, and learn more and more tricks of the trade until she is able to open her own you-tube art channel. (Extracted from twocircles.net)

OBITUARY

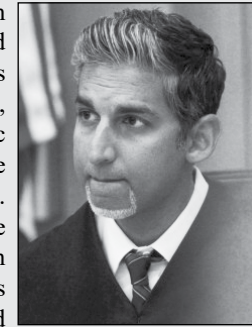
Islamic scholar and noted author and writer, Maulana Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi died in Lucknow on January 17. He was 84. He edited Ar-Raid, the Arabic journal from Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow for several years

and had even served as the secretary of the Islamic seminar Nadwatul Ulema for several years. He was buried at the ancestral graveyard, Daira Alamaullah Shah in Rae Bareilly the same evening. ■

Halim Dhanidina

First Muslim Judge in California

The year 2018 concluded with California marking a historic milestone when it got its first Muslim judge. The American Muslim Judge, Halim Dhanidina was elevated to the state of California's Courts of Appeal, making him the Pacific state's most senior judge of the Muslim faith. Being a Muslim, he carries an uncommon distinction in America's courtrooms. "I learned to deal with bigoted comments. Imagine what horrible things would happen if there aren't any Muslim judges. By providing what I'm hoping is a counterexample, it's sort of demystifies the subject," he said. The native of Chicago was born



to Gujarati Indian parents who migrated to East Africa before traveling to the USA. Dhanidina sees it as an important part of his job to go out among the diverse American community. He helps to preside at bridge-building events that link Los Angeles' Jews with the city's Muslims.

Dhanidina's co-chair, Rachel Andres, a Jew, says: "He cares so much about the community, about Muslims, about Jews, about relationships, about fairness, about equality."

(Extracted from mvslims.com)

British Muslim Student Wins **£76,000 Scholarship**

London: Hasan Patel, a 16-year-old Indian origin Muslim student from East London, has won a coveted £76,000 scholarship to attend the prestigious Eton College - attended by the likes of Prince William and Eddie Redmayne. Hasan Patel won his place at the school after a gruelling three-day assessment that included three entrance exams, seven interviews and a group interview.



Hasan admitted that he "could not be any more different" from his future classmates. "I'm a boy from a Leyton council estate who receives free school meals," he

told the Evening Standard. "My parents are on welfare", Hasan Patel, whose father lived in abject poverty in India, said. "I am not joining the elite but simply benefiting from the education my family would never in a million years be able to afford", he said.

The 16-year-old currently attends a local state school, George Mitchell School, and shares a two bedroom council flat with his parents and two brothers in East London.

He will start Eton in September, where he hopes to study A-levels in history, geography, politics and drama, before hopefully securing a place in Oxbridge. ■

Tailor's Son is Top-Ranker **in CA Exam**

New Delhi: Congress President Rahul Gandhi extended his best wishes to CA exam topper Shadab Hussain, who cleared the exam in the very first attempt. "Congratulations, Shadab. I feel very proud of you. I extend my best wishes to you for the journey ahead," Gandhi wrote on Facebook. Hussain, who

hails from Kota in Rajasthan, is the son of a tailor. He scored 597 out of 800 with 74.63 per cent marks as announced by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Hussain's father studied up to Class 10 while his mother is a school dropout. He earned a B.Com degree from Kota University. ■

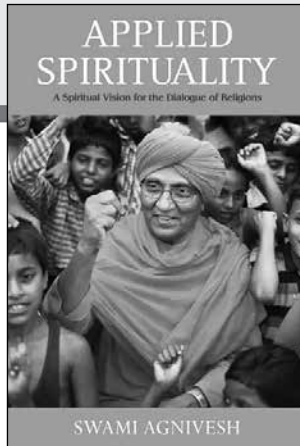


Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi Dead

The Horizon of Shared Spirituality

Applied Spirituality: A Spiritual Vision for the Dialogue of Religions

By Swami Agnivesh
Harper Element, Noida
156 Pages
Rs 350



This timely book by noted writer, spiritual teacher and social activist Swami Agnivesh articulates an understanding of spirituality that addresses many issues of contemporary relevance. Noting how religion has often been misused as a tool to seek to justify oppression and conflict, it urges the need for rethinking on a number of theological issues even as it articulates a relevant, universal and socially-engaged understanding of spirituality that transcends religious boundaries.

Critique of Institutionalised Religiosity

Swami Agnivesh distinguishes between religion, on the one

the various religions and their adherents—something of immense concern today. Indicating that religion, properly understood, is essentially about one's relationship with the Divine and that religions also enable us to relate to the rest of creation, the book asserts

Swami Agnivesh offers some very useful suggestions that could help make interfaith dialogue more than just polite theological exchange.

hand, and spirituality, on the other, noting that they are quite often contrary to each other. He critiques the tendency in institutionalised religiosity to be concerned mainly about personal salvation while ignoring issues of social justice. The spirituality that he articulates takes seriously the pressing social issues of this world. In contrast to institutionalised religion, which is often exclusivist and supremacist, the practical spirituality that Swami Agnivesh advocates is inclusive and universal, being concerned with the welfare of all, rather than just one community.

Culture of Hospitality

A major focus of the book is the issue of relations between

that hostility between religions 'implies a contradiction of the very idea of religion'. Religions, Swami Agnivesh says, should be 'nurseries of the culture of hospitality', rather than 'fortresses of hostility'.

Not a Theological Luxury

Indicating that people of different faith traditions must work together, considering each other as allies, Swami Agnivesh opines that the various religions should 'help each other in fulfilling their historic destiny as instruments for peace and human welfare'. The foremost spiritual task in the global village is to foster 'a sense of universal kinship among the peoples of the world', he rightly remarks. 'Today', he rightly says, the interfaith movement 'is not a theological luxury; it is a

practical and historic necessity.' In the light of this, Swami Agnivesh's observation that the 'interfaith movement needs to be erected on the foundation of spirituality, not of institutionalized religion' is very pertinent. Swami Agnivesh rightly notes that interfaith dialogue made little progress over the decades 'largely because it did not look at the horizon beyond religion that is common to all human beings and, therefore, to all religions: the horizon of shared spirituality'. Rather than seeking liberation through sharing, they

Reviewed
By
a Staff Writer

ended up, more often than not, he says, 'showcasing their religious wares or explaining away the aberrations that their religious community harbours.'

Swami Agnivesh offers some very useful suggestions that could help make interfaith dialogue more than just polite theological exchange. He calls us to appreciate what is good and beautiful in other religions.

The book rightly reminds us: 'In its spiritual core, every religion exhorts us to be kind and generous to the needy, compassionate to those who suffer and to stand by the oppressed; for we all belong together and are equally the children of God. We comprise a cosmic family...'

today, the need for a global consciousness, based on concern for the entire planet and all its beings, is increasingly obvious. In this regard, Swami Agnivesh's reminder that 'true spirituality is not the exclusive preserve of any particular religious tradition, but the common heritage of the human species,' is very pertinent, as is his advocacy of a spirituality that is 'a call to practise justice and to liberate the oppressed'. This would be in line with the very spirit of true religion. For, as the book rightly reminds us, 'In its spiritual core, every religion exhorts us to be kind and generous to the needy, compassionate to those who

Religions, Swami Agnivesh says, should be 'nurseries of the culture of hospitality'.

He regards working together in harmony and solidarity for addressing many serious issues that the world is faced with today as a basic foundation for the relationship between the world's religions and those who claim to be their adherents.

In our 'globalised' world

suffer and to stand by the oppressed; for we all belong together and are equally the children of God. We comprise a cosmic family...'

This beautiful book contains many precious gems of wisdom and has a very relevant message for our times. ■

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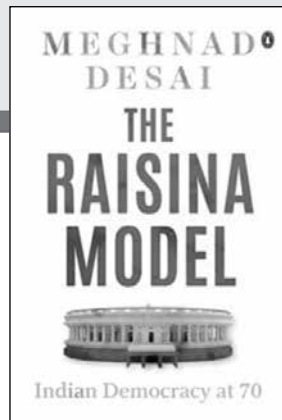
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The India Story

The Raisina Model: Indian Democracy at 70

By Meghnad Desai,
Penguin, Viking
Rs.499
174 Pages.



The Republic of India is approaching its seventieth anniversary. It is time for taking stock of its accomplishments since it began to conduct itself in accordance with its Constitution put in place by a group of extremely erudite and visionary leaders.

Britain is not a republic but a democracy, and the oldest democracy at that. Its system is

industrial base and a voice to be heard and respected around the



called the Westminster model. Author Meghnad Desai, a former teacher at the London School of Economics coins the term 'The Raisina Model' for Indian democracy. Raisina is the hillock over which is built the grandiose edifice of the Indian Parliament, the stately Rashtrapati Bhavan (formerly Viceregal Lodge) and the magnificent buildings of the North and South Blocks..

“ Universal suffrage heralded the political equality, if not social. Even women got the voting rights much ahead of what a nascent democracy was expected to offer. ”

world. Gandhiji had different ideas. He wanted all the seven lakh villages to be the basic unit of administration and handicrafts to

equality, initially political, if not social. Regional identities were allowed to morph into linguistic provinces, thereby increasing the states from 14 in 1947 to 29 by 2014. The historically socially excluded castes were integrated through reservations. The socially and educationally backward ones—known as OBCs—turned into votebanks and still later rose on the political firmament as political parties. By the 1990s, Mandalisation brought in a tectonic shift in the power structure. If the 40-year uninterrupted Congress rule had imparted much-needed stability, Mandalisation diversified the

**Reviewed
By
Maqbool Ahmed Siraj**

polity. Political equality loosened the hold of ritual inequality.

All in the Family

The fact that India was adapting the democracy to its own genius

was more than evident with politicians making hay while the sun shone and political families imparting dynastic dimensions. There was no doubting that family was a key to political imagery in India. The BJP emerged as the rival pole at the Centre with Congress in decline. And none other than Congress' politics was responsible for this. The Babri Masjid—Ramjanambhoomi controversy lent the Hindutva party a handle in the Hindi heartland. The party's effort to closely identify national pride with Hinduism did wonders against the Congress' secular-liberal-Gandhian ethos.

Growth Pangs

However, the credit for taking India into big league of economic powers solely goes to four Congress prime ministers. If

Despite its immense diversity, India has fared well in ensuring socio-political equality among its citizens even as economic inequality threatens to sour the dream its visionary fathers had harboured at the dawn of enacting its Constitution.

Nehru abolished the zamindari system and cut the colonial bonds of dependence through

“ India has adapted the democracy as it fits its own genius. ”

visionary Five-Year Plans in the initial years, Indira Gandhi expanded the reach of banks through nationalization of major commercial banks. Rajiv brought in a computerization and telecom revolution, and Narasimha Rao heralded liberalization, with economy logging 7-8 per cent growth annually. By the turn of the century, liberalization, privatization and globalisation (LPG) were the buzzwords. Surprisingly, there was consensus among the major parties ranging from Congress to BJP. But the Mai-Baap nature of the Indian polity has shown that crony

Pacific countries in 2016 by Transparency International.

Technology Comes to Rescue

Yet, there is hope. Things have been changing, thanks to the IT revolution. Citizens can now furnish visual evidence of inefficiencies of services, and incompetence and wrongdoing of officials. Official doles now reach beneficiaries without delay and obstacles.

Moving Up

India has moved up on several fronts. The gender ratio has moved from 1000 males to 933

women in 2001 Census to 1,000: 944 in 2011. In matters of female work participation, India records 26.8 per cent compared to China's 63.6 per cent.

Challenges

Indian democracy faces the challenge of fragmentation of political parties and inevitability of dependence on alliances and coalitions, which in most cases do not follow any ideological lines. This remain a perpetual threat to stability. Social injustice still remains a major issue. Gender equality is still a challenge. Patriarchy is uniform across

“ Challenges remain aplenty. Caste rather than ideology dictates the contours of alliances and coalitions. Gender equity and equality is a distant dream, with patriarchy still being rife. Economic inequalities expanded in the wake of the liberalization of the economy. ”

Vision for Independent India

Although Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were two major pillars of the freedom struggle, their vision of an independent India differed vastly. Nehru wanted India to be a major regional power, with a well-equipped army, massive

be the mainstay of their economy. The Mahatma's martyrdom averted the ideological clash. But then India negotiated the trajectory of democracy tactfully. Universal suffrage and the voting rights for women—something that took decades even for women in the West—signaled the dawn of

“ Nehru would be remembered for zamindari abolition and laying a solid base for industrial growth; Indira Gandhi expanded the reach of commercial banks; Rajiv Gandhi brought in computerization; and, Narasimha Rao heralded the liberalization. ”

capitalism and the rent-seeking class (be it within political class or bureaucracy) can deny the masses the real dividends of economic growth. This has acted as the bane of Indian economy as there is no political incentive to make banks work efficiently. No wonder then why India was ranked the most corrupt among the 16 Asia

all castes and communities. Caste-based fraternities have incorporated themselves into political outfits and there is no hope of casteism being erased any time soon. How India deals with these and other such issues has to be seen even as it negotiates its journey beyond the 70th milestone. ■

Interfaith Friendships

A Great Means for Personal Growth

By Misem

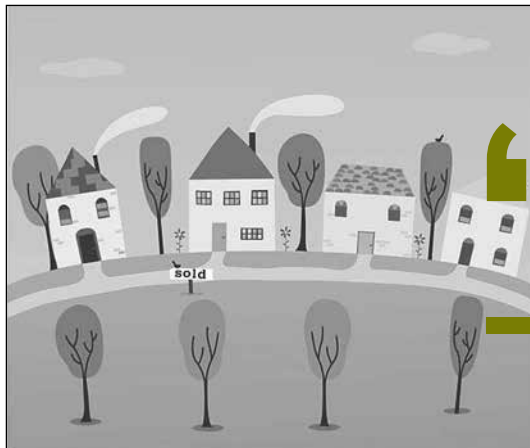
Close personal relationships between people from different faith backgrounds are an important means for promoting interfaith understanding and inter-community harmony. In addition, they can also be a great way for us to grow personally. Such relationships can provide us opportunities to learn good things from other religious traditions and their adherents, which we can employ in our own life, for our own benefit. That's something that I'm reminded of after a recent experience.

The other day, three of us friends visited a home of women who belong to a religious order that stresses a simple lifestyle while living among economically and socially vulnerable people. Younger members of the congregation take up 'small' jobs, such as labouring in a factory or serving in a home for the mentally-challenged. While bringing them an income, their work enables them to interact with 'ordinary' people and to live out their faith among them.

Bring Down Walls Between People

The hours we spent with the sisters that day proved to be a

great learning experience. We learnt something about their dedication to service to the needy as they shared snippets from their life. One sister referred to her work among people affected with leprosy. Another recounted her close relationship with a



Our theological differences do not stand in the way of my being able to discern good things in their religious tradition as they seek to live it out and to imbibe these myself to grow as a person.

The warm welcome we received from the sisters, their good cheer and the enthusiasm with which they responded to our queries about their

closer together.

- ◆ A spirituality that should make one cheerful and also open to people of other faiths and backgrounds.

My friendly encounter with the sisters that day opened me to appreciable aspects of their way of life that I could benefit from if I adopted them.

life made our visit truly memorable.

I do not belong to the religious tradition with which the sisters are affiliated, and some of my religious views may differ considerably from theirs. But so what? Our theological differences do not stand in the way of my being able to discern good things in their religious tradition as they seek to live it out and to imbibe these myself to grow as a person. My friendly encounter with the sisters that day opened me to appreciable aspects of their way of life that I could benefit from if I adopted them. These include, for instance:

- ◆ Service of the needy, transcending religious barriers, as an integral part of one's spiritual path and as an effective means for bringing people from diverse faith and community backgrounds

makes one's life simpler.

- ◆ Living in communion with nature.
- ◆ Regular and sustained spiritual companionship and fellowship.

My experiences with the sisters that day reinforced my conviction that nothing can quite take the place of close and positive interfaith personal relationships and interactions in helping build bridges between people from diverse religious backgrounds. Such relationships can help us discover goodness in different religious traditions and their adherents and thereby become more appreciative of them. Going further, adopting and practising the good things we learn from them can become a great means for our own personal growth. ■

"You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself"
(Nelson Mandela)

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Bayt al-Hikma

Reminder of Legacy of Science in Muslim History

Built in the 8th century CE as a library and translation institute, Bayt al-Hikmah, or House of Wisdom, was one of the crowning features of the Abbasid capital of Baghdad. Baghdad's initial development can largely be credited to the caliph Harun al Rashid ('Aaron the Upright'). Under his stewardship, Baghdad began a course that would lead it to become an intellectual and cultural centre. For 500 years Baghdad was host of various academic pursuits, drawing in scholars from all over the world.

The House's Development

Harun's son Al-Ma'mun extended the house both physically and intellectually, overseeing its development into a centre for the study of different branches of knowledge. Housed in the great centre were intellectuals of different traditions, including scientists, translators, philosophers, writers and scribes. It was within the House that Muslims gifted the world with accessibility to works of great philosophers such as Aristotle and Hippocrates. Without the work of the Muslim world at that time, much of the great Greek tradition might have been lost forever. Greek was not the only language that was spoken in the House other than Arabic. Farsi, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syriac and Latin were featured too. Christians and Jews also flocked to the House, where they were welcomed in their pursuit of knowledge. Different Branches of Knowledge The House's focus on knowledge

went well beyond philosophy and theology. Studies in metaphysics, religious sciences, algebra, medicine, physics, biology, chemistry, trigonometry and astronomy are but some of the areas of focus that thrived in this intellectual hub. Having learned the art of making paper through the expeditions of

Our religion is synonymous with intellectual thought and has been since our revelation began with that most beautiful of commandments, "Read!"

be the first scholar to explore the idea that the celestial bodies surrounding us, such as the moon

began debates on matters of philosophy and theology that would continue centuries after

diseases of this organ, symptoms of these diseases and their remedies. The medical texts translated and authored in this period of Muslim history went on to influence medical practice in Europe for centuries, with some texts maintaining their status as references on issues well into the 17th century.



Muslims to China, Baghdad became one of the centers of the

and the planets, were subject to similar laws of physics as we

It is also worth remembering that as bright as the 500 years in Baghdad were, it was by no means an exception. Muslims oversaw the flourishing of knowledge in Andalucia for 7 centuries

production and reproduction of books, systemizing this process so that books were much more accessible.

The astronomy observatory, founded as part of the House, allowed astronomers to observe the universe. Great Scholars and their Great Works Naturally, the House became the academic residence of many great scholars. Ja'far Muhammad ibn Musa ibn Shakir is said to

are on earth. His book, Astral Motion and the Force of Attractions, contained within it ponderings of a physical force that would later be more fully developed by Newton and his universal law of gravity. The "Philosopher of the Arabs", the great Al-Kindi, was another notable resident of the House. Translating the works of Aristotle, and developing them with Islamic theology, Al Kindi

his death. Al-Khwarizimi, the distinguished mathematician, was another of the House's greats. His book, Kitab al-Jabr (The Book of Completion) gave the world the term algebra (from al-Jabr), as well laying out for the first time some of the rules on solving equations.

Hunayn ibn Ishaq, a Syriac Christian, also played a central role in the translation of important texts. His translations of Greek works is said to have helped spawn the development of the field of Muslim medicine. As well as translating, he is believed to have authored 36 books of his own, 21 of which focused on the field of medicine. His book, Ten Treatises on Ophthalmology, described in great detail the anatomy of the eye, as well

The End of a Beautiful Era

The beautiful testament to the power of intellectual endeavor came crashing down, both physically and metaphorically, with the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. Some scholars estimate that as many as 90,000 men, women and children were murdered as the city was sacked. Nothing remained of the House, and legend has it that the river Tigris turned black from the ink of the books that were trashed in its waters, and red from the blood of those slaughtered.

Lessons from the House

There are some lessons that can be drawn from this shining light in history. At a time when it can almost seem like Islam is at odds with science, the reality of the flourishing House is a timely reminder that this could not be further from the truth. When our religion is properly applied, and we are free from the burdens of conflict, intellectual pursuits flourish. Our religion is synonymous with intellectual thought and has been since our revelation began with that most beautiful of commandments, "Read!"

(Extracted from mvslims.com)

PROFILE

Burçin Mutlu-Pakdil

A 2018 TED Fellow discovers a galaxy unlike any other

As a little girl growing up in Turkey, Burçin Mutlu-Pakdil loved the stars.

"How is it possible not to fall in love with stars?" wonders Mutlu-Pakdil. "I find it very difficult not to be curious about the Universe, about the Milky Way and how everything got together. I really want to learn more." Just a few years ago, while earning her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, Mutlu-Pakdil and her colleagues discovered PGC 1000174, a galaxy with qualities so rare they've never been observed anywhere else. For now, it's known as Burçin's Galaxy.

The object was originally detected by Patrick Treuthardt, who was observing a different



galaxy when he spotted it in the background. It piqued the astronomers' attention because of an initial resemblance to Hoag's Object. This rare galaxy is known

for its yellow-orange center surrounded by a detached outer ring.

"Our object looks very similar to Hoag's Object. It has a very symmetric central body with a very symmetric outer ring," explains Mutlu-Pakdil. "But my work showed that there is actually a second ring on this object. This makes it much more complex."

Through extensive imaging and analysis, Mutlu-Pakdil found that, unlike Hoag's Object, this new galaxy has two rings with no visible materials attaching them, a phenomenon not seen before. It

offered the first-ever observation and description of a double-ringed elliptical galaxy.

The optical images reveal that the components of Burçin's Galaxy have different histories. Some parts of the galaxy are significantly older than others. The blue outer ring suggests a newer formation, while the red inner ring indicates the presence of older stars.

Mutlu-Pakdil and her colleagues suspect that this galaxy was formed as some material accumulated into one massive object through gravitational attraction, AKA an accretion event.

However, beyond that, PGC1000174's unique qualities largely remain a mystery. There are about three trillion galaxies in our observable universe and more are being found all the time.

In a way, Mutlu-Pakdil has been challenging the norms of science all her life. Though her parents weren't educated beyond elementary school, they supported her desire to pursue her dreams of the stars. "When I was in college, I was the only female in my class, and I remember I felt so much like an outsider. I felt like I wasn't fitting in," she recalls of her time studying

Yassin's Falafel House

By Joy

Did you know that the immensely popular international magazine 'Reader's Digest' chose an eatery run by Yassin Terou, a Muslim refugee from war-torn Syria, as 'The Nicest Place in America' for the year 2018? 'Yassin's Falafel House', based in two locations in Knoxville, Tennessee, was chosen for this honour from among 450 nominations that were received from across the USA! It wasn't just for its food that Yassin's restaurants won this accolade. Yassin's inspiring personality, expressed through his many acts of love and kindness, have won him wide appreciation across religious and ethnic boundaries, making him just the right person for the award!

Yassin is an inspiring example of how one person can make a major difference in promoting goodwill between people from different faith and ethnic backgrounds. In the context of widespread prejudice in the name of religion and ethnicity in large parts of the world, Yassin's life provides valuable lessons for how such prejudice can be overcome—through 'little', everyday acts of love and service.

Asylum in America

Yassin was born in Syria in 1983 and grew up in the country's capital, Damascus. In 2010, the Syrian secret police held Yassin for a month—he had been a critic of the government. He applied for asylum in America, hoping to return to Syria when he was no longer in danger. But things only got worse, with a war in which hundreds of thousands have been killed.

Yassin came to Knoxville in 2011, knowing little English. Life for him in his new home wasn't easy. After filing the papers to legally obtain employment, he couldn't find work. The small Muslim community in town offered to help him with free food and clothing. But Yassin wanted a job. He asked if he could sell sandwiches outside the mosque on Friday after prayers. Then, in 2014 he launched his eatery, which was followed by a second unit, in 2017.

In an article titled 'How Did a Falafel House in Tennessee Become the Nicest Place in America?' published in the 'Reader's Digest' (<https://www.rd.com/true-stories/inspiring/yassin-falafel-house-nicest-place-in-america/>), Jeremy Greenfield shows how this

first-generation Muslim refugee-immigrant in America has won the hearts of many people in the town where he now lives. Yassin, the article says, has "become a beloved local celebrity". His eateries, it relates, "are safe places for everyone, powerful engines of charity, and symbols of the best of America"—which is why 'Yassin's Falafel House' was voted by 'Reader's Digest' as 2018's 'Nicest Place in America'.



Feel Welcomed

One thing that probably draws many people to 'Yassin's Falafel House' is that Yassin makes them feel warmly welcomed. Drocella Mugorewera, executive director of Bridge Refugee Services, a non-profit organisation in Knoxville that helps refugees rebuild their lives in Eastern Tennessee, repeats the word that's often mentioned when talking about Yassin: "He wants everybody to feel welcomed."

Yassin explains that he isn't there just to make money. He's more than just a businessman. He is deeply engaged in social causes that benefit the local society as a whole, and not just his co-religionists. "Yassin's Falafel House" has held fundraisers for community causes, donating a percentage of the profits of each falafel sold. Yassin has been an employer of many of the residents of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). He has also hired people struggling with drug addiction and women fleeing dangerous situations. When,

What a restaurant run by a Muslim refugee and voted 'The Nicest Place in America' for 2018 by 'Reader's Digest' can teach us about interfaith harmony.

in November 2016, fire ripped through a nearby town, killing 14 and damaging or destroying 2,500 homes and businesses, he rented a huge van and helped arrange for essentials for the affected.

Yassin has been actively engaged in promoting interfaith and



way the children thought about their neighbours and refugees and what they should do as Americans and as Christians to welcome all who need a place of refuge. "Prior to that weekend, some of our students and families thought of refugees as these folks who were in some way dangerous. I don't think that can stick if you meet Yassin or meet other refugees like him, because you come to know the people they are", says Ben Winder, the youth pastor at First Baptist at the time.

Anti-Muslim Sentiments

Of course it hasn't been all smooth sailing for Yassin in the face of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments among some people in the country where he now lives. He's probably faced considerable prejudice on these



inter-ethnic harmony, including simply by providing a cheerful atmosphere in his restaurants where everyone is made to feel welcome.

counts himself. But his way of handling these challenges has perhaps won numerous hearts over. Consider, for instance, his response when participating in

“Yassin explains that he isn't there just to make money. He's more than just a businessman. He is deeply engaged in social causes that benefit the local society as a whole, and not just his co-religionists”

When Yassin won a local Rotary Club Peace Award last year for his charitable work, he donated the \$1,000 prize to the Seeds of Abraham, a local nonprofit organisation that brings together youth from different faiths to build connections that lead to understanding and peace.

In-Home Retreat

In 2017, Yassin was invited by a Baptist Christian pastor to talk to a group of children at an "in-home retreat". He cooked the group a meal and then told them about his life. It transformed the

a rally just before Christmas in 2017 to "welcome the stranger," a Christian call to treat friends, neighbours, strangers and even enemies, with love and compassion, when a man draped in the American flag hollered against immigrants, who he claimed were preventing him from getting a job. When it was Yassin's turn to speak at the rally, he invited the man up on stage so they could hold the flag high together. When the man refused, Terou went into the crowd to find him so he could introduce himself and offer to buy him

dinner so they could talk. He also offered the man a job!

"I always do that," Terou told Reader's Digest, "I always invite anyone who hates us to the store. I want them to know us more. When you break bread, you break hate."

Similarly, when one day Yassin learnt that the "Safe Place" sign outside of one of his locations had been vandalized with a white supremacist sticker, he didn't call the police. He didn't even think about pressing charges. Instead, he countered the action with love. He gathered customers, many now friends, outside his restaurant and talked about how he wanted to sit down for a meal with the white supremacists who did it, so they could learn to get along.

For those who hope for a world where people from different backgrounds can live together in peace and harmony and where prejudice in the name of religion and ethnicity are things of the past Yassin's life provides some valuable lessons. It teaches us that:

- ◆ If we want others to appreciate, accept and respect us, we need to be pro-active and appreciate, accept and respect others first. This applies in the case of both individuals and communities.
- ◆ If we make others feel valued and welcomed, they will value and welcome us in turn. Again, this is true for both individuals as well as for entire communities.
- ◆ Acts of loving service can help build bridges of harmony between people from different faith and ethnic backgrounds.
- ◆ The best way to overcome prejudice, including in the name of religion and ethnicity, is by serving others through deeds of kindness, going beyond concern with just one's own social group.
- ◆ Deeply-rooted prejudices, such as in the name of religion and ethnicity, can be overcome. And the only way this can happen is by living out love and compassion and being useful to others.
- ◆ Love alone can overcome hate, transform hearts and build bridges, including between people from different religious and ethnic communities. As is rightly said, "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule." ■

Sheima Salam Sumer earned her Master's degree in Counselor Education from the University of South Carolina, USA, in 2007. She has worked as a professional counselor in a variety of settings—school,

home and office—counseling individuals of all ages as well as families and groups. Here she answers questions on family and children from a spiritual perspective.

God is the True Owner of Everything

Q: 'A family that prays together stays together'. Do you agree? Do you as a family pray together? If so, how important is it for you and why do you do so? How do you think it might help keep the family together and build love and harmony? In contrast, how do you think not praying together might contribute to conflicts in the family?

A: I totally agree: praying together is a practical way to unite the family based on God. Yes, we pray together as a family, and it is the greatest joy for us. It helps us to take a break from the worldly life and remember what matters most. Remembering God together helps us to treat each other with mercy and God-consciousness. If we did not pray together, God

would be on our minds less.

Q: Could you reflect on some aspects of parenting in traditional societies that you feel were particularly valuable and that are rapidly disappearing today?

A: Discipline was more important in traditional parenting that it is today. Today, many parents try to please their children too much. This creates a harmful view in children that life is all about them. Traditional societies taught children to earn things before they receive them. Today, children receive things without understanding their value. Today, there seems to be less family

together time due to modern life's distractions. Also, especially in western societies today, the notion of the father as the leader of the family is disappearing. But the fact is that every organization needs a leader to function effectively, and the family is no different.



Q: Many parents today place the responsibility of their children's development on others, especially the school. They assume that most, if not all, that the children need to learn will be provided for by the school (and then, after school hours, by tutors or by 'experts' in various extra-curricular activities). And so, they spare little time for and with their children, passing

on what is their responsibility to schools and other service-providers, whom they pay. But of course these service-providers cannot give children the emotional nourishment that parents can. Could you please reflect on this? How have you managed with this issue?

A: Yes, I totally agree with you. I homeschool my children. I know my children better than anyone. A teacher or service-provider can never give the same emotional nourishment as parents can. Service providers are trying to fulfill the requirements of a job, but a parent's priority is his/her child. Service providers can't give individual attention. It's not realistic to expect service providers to take the place of parents in raising children.

Q: Some parents think they own their children, that their children are their property, because their children have 'come out' from them and because they provide for them. And so, they feel they can deal with them just as they please. From the spiritual point of view, how do you see this concept of 'ownership'?

A: It is God Who is the true Owner of everything. In the Islamic tradition, which speaks of God's 99 names, one of the names of God is Al-Malik, meaning "The Owner." God is the Owner of everything. That means that parents do not own their children. Children are a gift and a trust from God. We will be held accountable for how we treat them. ■

GUIDANCE

Ecological Advice From Prophet Muhammad

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) taught people to live on less, to protect animal and plant life, and to worship the Creator by being merciful to the creation. What is also distinctive about Prophet Muhammad's advice is the connection between ethical practices and the eternal effects in the life after death, which represents a greater incentive for Muslims to care for the earth and its resources. Here are some sayings which are excellent indicators to reflect the Islamic faith as a relevant environmental 'movement'.

1) A believer is like a growing tree:

"The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind quiets down, the plant becomes straight again..." (Narrated by Abu Hurayra, Bukhari) Prophet Muhammad was teaching Muslims that their life on the path of faith must always progress and beware of climatic changes, just like a young tree. There will be tough times when the storm seems to never end. But patience and persistence in planting roots no

matter what the trouble, will heal both one's own branches and protect the nearest plants.

2) Plant a tree even if it's your last deed:

"If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be



established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it."

3) Planting trees is a renewable source of reward:

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (sadaqah) for him." (Bukhari)

4) Conserve resources even when used for routine rituals

Prophet Muhammad happened to pass by a Companion, Sa'd, as he was performing ablution (wudhu) next to a river. At this, the Prophet said, "Sa'd what is this squandering?"

Sa'd replied: "Can there be an idea of squandering (israf) in ablution?"

The Prophet said: "Yes, even if you are by the side of a flowing river." (Ibn Majah)

5) Keeping the environment sanitary maintains the community

"Beware of the three acts that cause you to be cursed: [1] relieving yourselves in shaded places (that people utilise), in a

walkway or in a watering place." Hygiene and cleanliness (tahara) is so integral to Islam that it is actually a major sub-branch of Muslim belief. Without physical hygiene, prayers are broken. Without clean facilities pollution ruins cities, and without any effort to improve one's own purity, it becomes more difficult to prevent external corruptions like littering.

6) Thus, Prophet Muhammad said:

"Removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity (sadaqah)." (Narrated by Abu Dharr Al-Ghafari)

7) Say no to over-consumption (or at least reduce it):

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas reported that the Prophet said, "The believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry."

8) Eat a little less every day:

Excessive eating is abhorred in Islam. For the days of Ramadan, fasting is precisely a command in order to learn control and when to say 'no'. Prophet Muhammad did not encourage eating a three course meal nor a heavy meal. In the Islamic

law system (Shariah), a person should stop eating as soon as the hunger pangs cease.

"Nothing is worse than a person who fills his stomach. It should be enough for the son of Adam to have a few bites to satisfy his hunger. If he wishes more, it should be: One-third for his food, one-third for his liquids, and one-third for his breath." (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

9) Consider recycling and fixing before buying new items:

When asked about how the Prophet used to live in his house, the Prophet's wife, 'A'ishah, said that he used to repair his own shoes, sew his clothes and carry out all such household chores done without complaint or want for more. The idea behind this was to show Muslims that menial tasks (mehna) were not degrading for God's Prophet. Reusing and repairing things instead of always buying new is not a sign of poverty, they are a sign of power. By performing household duties, the Prophet was saying we can build foundations on less 'stuff', we are in control of what we consume and we don't need more. ■

On Warning Against Pride

According to a hadith, the Prophet said, "There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab and neither for a non-Arab over an Arab; also there is no superiority of a white man over a black man, neither for a black man over a white man except by piety (taqwa)".

This hadith calls upon Muslims to understand the importance of piety and refrain from the idea of superiority. Indeed one's superiority over others will be judged by one's piety, but this judgment can only be done by God Almighty. Therefore piety can't be used as a tool for Muslims to measure themselves against each other.

The Prophet is reported to have warned against pride, which is part of supremacism. He said, "No one who has the weight of a seed of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise."

The Muslims should not feel

pride in any way. They can and should thank God Almighty for any blessings or gifts that they have got in this world. Blessings like good health, good family, good income, Islamic affiliation, deep relationship with God Almighty come as gifts from God Almighty. So in reaction to these gifts, one should maintain one's humbleness and be thankful to God Almighty.

One of the signs of piety is that the more piety one gets, the more humble and kind one becomes towards God Almighty and His creatures. Therefore Muslims should not see themselves above

other Muslims or non-Muslims.

A Gift From God

Islam is a gift from God towards Muslims, as He guides whom He wills to His straight path.



With this gift, Muslims should be thankful and keep presenting good example of morality and

noble character in order for non-Muslims to observe the practical beauty of Islam.

In order for Muslims to present noble characters, they should first differentiate between the sin and the sinner. They can abhor, dislike or disapprove sins like kufr, shirk and disbelief, yet they should not hate the disbeliever or the sinner. They can see them with the eyes of mercy and compassion. If possible, they

the creatures of God Almighty. With this observation of the divine beauty, Muslims should never see themselves above other creatures. Moreover Muslims should follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who according to the Quran is "a Mercy to all worlds".

Therefore, Muslims must see the beloved Prophet as their role model of mercy, kindness

Muslims must see the beloved Prophet as their role model of mercy, kindness and compassion and follow his command of noble character and keep away from supremacism.

can pray for their guidance and returning back to God Almighty.

The Divine Beauty

Islam commands Muslims to be modest and humble so that they can observe the divine beauty in

and compassion and follow his command of noble character and keep away from supremacism.

(Extracted from an article by Kaniz Fatima hosted on www.newageislam.com)

PROFILE

Erwiana Sulistyaningsih

Abused Indonesian Migrant Worker Becomes Rights Activist

When she graduated from a vocational high school in the Indonesian province of East Java back in 2010, all Erwiana Sulistyaningsih wanted was to work and raise money to fund her university studies. She knew her impoverished parents in Ngawi, a district in the province, would never be able to afford her tuition fees. Her father worked on an oil palm plantation in Sumatra, and later for a construction firm in Jakarta. Her mother was a farm worker who had previously worked as a maid in Brunei Darussalam.

To realize her dream, Sulistyaningsih moved to Jakarta to work as a waitress. But the salary was too low to support her goal, so she accepted an offer to work in Hong Kong with the promise of higher remuneration. In May 2013, she departed for the Chinese territory in the hope of returning to her homeland with enough money to see her through higher education and also help her family.

However, what she experienced there completely buried her dreams. She had to work long hours for eight months in her employer's house where she was subjected to imprisonment, starvation, and severe beatings. "I worked 20 hours a day with only

one to three hours' sleep. I was only able to eat once a day, and I was never given any holidays," she said. At that time she was only permitted to drink a small amount of water each day because her boss did not want her to dodge work by taking toilet breaks. "I was also given medication to

prevent menstruation," the 27 year old said. After five weeks of working in such conditions, Sulistyaningsih managed to escape and reported the case to her agent. But she was forced to return to the same job and endure more torture. She said her employer often struck her around the head with a mop handle, causing her to suffer multiple wounds to her scalp as well as a broken nose and several chipped teeth.

Another eight months passed until things got to the point where she was physically unable

With the assistance of migrant workers' advocacy groups, Sulistyaningsih was motivated to take up the fight against both her recruiter and employer

to keep working due to the constant assaults by her brutal boss. Finally she was dumped at Hong Kong airport with just HK\$9 in her pocket, she said. She was 24 at the time.

"I was threatened and told not to report what happened to me to law enforcement agencies or my parents would be killed," she said.

Sulistyaningsih's case caught the world's attention after she was hospitalized and her photos circulated online, prompting rallies in Hong Kong demanding her employer be arrested and brought to justice.

Hong Kong is home to around 300,000 maids, mainly from Indonesia and the Philippines, and criticism from campaign groups over their treatment is growing.

With the assistance of migrant workers' advocacy groups, Sulistyaningsih was motivated to take up the fight against both her recruiter and employer. Her employer, mother-of-two Law

Wan-tung, was later sentenced to six years in jail and ordered to pay her compensation. Despite still being physically weakened by her ordeal, she accepted an offer from the Jesuit-run Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta and graduated some months ago.

"I want to prove that I didn't deserve to be a slave," she said.

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Burçin Mutlu-Pakdil ...

physics at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey.

Throughout her education and career, Mutlu-Pakdil has experienced being a minority in an otherwise male-dominated field. It hasn't slowed her down, but it has made her more passionate about promoting diversity in science and being a mentor to young people.

"I realized, it is not about me, it is society that needs to change," she says. "Now I really want to inspire people to do similar things. So kids from all backgrounds will be able to understand they can do science,

"I am very proud that finally, my dream has come true."

Sulistyaningsih then pledged to dedicate her life to championing human rights and joined the Great Family of Indonesia Migrant Workers, or Kabar Bumi, which advocates for equal rights for migrant labourers. Remembering the torture she experienced in Hong Kong, she said she wants to ensure others don't share a similarly tragic fate. "I don't want other people to suffer the pain I have gone through," she said.

(Extracted from ucanews.com)

too."

Through her work, Mutlu-Pakdil hopes to show people how important it is to learn about our universe. "We are a part of this Universe, and we need to know what is going on in it. We have strong theories about how common galaxies form and evolve, but, for rare ones, we don't have much information," says Mutlu-Pakdil. "Those unique objects present the extreme cases, so they really give us a big picture for the Universe's evolution — they stretch our understanding of everything."

(Extracted from sciencenode.org)

Careful Measure Succession of Night and Day

Holy Quran

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent

Say: "Have you considered if God were to make the night perpetual over you, without break, till the Day of Resurrection, is there any deity other than God that could bring you light? Will you not, then, listen?"

Say: 'Have you considered if God were to make the day perpetual over you, without break, till the Day of Resurrection, is there any deity other than God that could bring you a night in which to rest? Will you not, then, see?' It is out of His grace that He has made for you the night and the day, so that you might have rest and seek to obtain some of His bounty, and that you may have cause to be grateful.

Al-Qasas Surah 28: Verses 71-73

28:71-73

These verses alert unbelievers to two great universal signs, the night and the day, and the secrets they involve of what God chooses for His servants. Because of their long familiarity with the succession of night and day, which are sometimes called in Arabic, "the two new ones", people forget their ever-renewing status. Rarely do they admire the sunrise or sunset, and only rarely do they reflect thoughtfully on the spreading of the day or the darkening that ushers in the night.

They do not reflect on the act of grace that brings their succession with all that it involves of mercy and life renewal. The Quran alerts them from the long familiarity that blunts their senses and invites them to reflect on these great universal scenes. It presents them with the possibility of either the night or the day lasting forever, and the terrible consequences of either eventuality. It is a fact that people seldom appreciate things until they lose them or fear that possibility.

Renew the Energy

People miss the light of day when the winter nights become a little longer, and cannot wait for the bright sun when it disappears for a few hours behind clouds. What will they do then if they

People look for the shade when the hours of day stretch and becomes very hot, and they look forward to the coming of the night when the days stretch longer in the summer. They enjoy their repose and rest in the



“ Everything in this universe is determined according to a careful measure, and every little detail is planned. The night is for rest and repose, and the day for work and activity. It is all part of God's grace. ”

lose its light completely, with the night stretching perpetually over their world? This question supposes that they will remain alive in such an eventuality, when all life is in peril unless daylight is forthcoming.

night. All creatures need the night when they can renew the energy they spend during the day. What would happen to them then, should they remain alive, if the day were endlessly perpetuated until the Day of

Judgement? Indeed, all life could perish in a day that never ends.

Everything in this universe is determined according to a careful measure, and every little detail is planned. The night is for rest and repose, and the day for work and activity. It is all part of God's grace. Indeed everything people have is by the grace of God, so that "you may have cause to be grateful," for the blessings and kindness He has granted you. One of these blessings is the succession of night and day. So also are all laws of nature which God has chosen to set in operation, reflecting His knowledge and wisdom.

We should note that the verse speaking of the night being perpetuated forever ended with 'Will you not listen?', while the verse speaking of the other possibility of an endless day, concluded with 'Will you not see?' Both are suitable qualities, because hearing is the important faculty at night, while during the day the primary faculty is sight. This is just an example of how the Quranic style makes extensive use of harmony. ■

SOUL TALK

The Only Person We Can Change

By Mesha

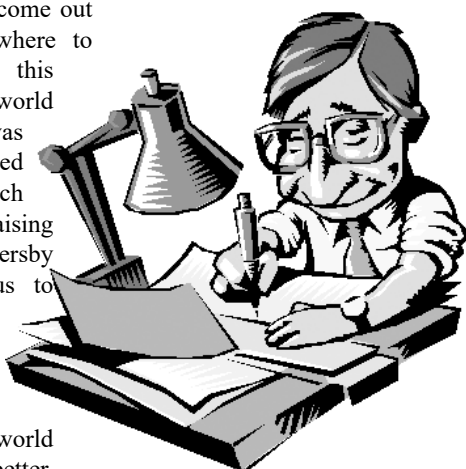
As a college student, Romi was fired by a passion to change the world. The entire world, he thought, was full of problems. He couldn't see (or, rather, he didn't want to see) anything good in it at all. If people would come out into the streets everywhere to demonstrate—against this and that—a whole new world could soon dawn, he was convinced. He attended almost every protest march that was held in town, raising slogans and urging passersby to participate. 'Join us to change the world!', he would enthusiastically appeal to them.

But no matter how hard Romi tried, the world didn't seem to get any better. In fact, going by news reports, it seemed to be sliding further into chaos, and very rapidly at that!

A Very Different Person

Some years later, Romi got married, and in the years that followed, he became the father of three children. He was now a

very different person: his colleagues wouldn't have recognised him! He had completely stopped talking about changing the whole world. His only concern now was changing his wife and his children. He thought they had many faults, and he had set



himself up to get them to rectify them.

'You should behave like this!', 'Don't do that!', 'You ought to know better!', Romi would scold his family, on and on and on, in the hope that they might listen to

The only person you can change is you! You must be the change that you want to see in the world!

him. But no matter how hard he tried to reform them, they didn't seem to change. In fact, the more he went on at them about their faults, the more adamant they seemed to get. 'Don't tell us what to do!' they would snap at him, and this would make him more angry. Soon, things became so bad that they barely talked to him.

slogan-shouting and the other things he had done in chasing his dream of changing the entire world. Then, when he would bring his mind back to the present and think of how the world was further hurtling along into chaos, he would laugh to himself. 'How foolish of me to think I could change the whole world, by

“ Romi would reflect on the words he had heard from a saintly man recently. 'The only person you can change is you! You must be the change that you want to see in the world!', the man had said to him. ”

Chasing His Dream

Some years passed and Romi was an old man now. He would now spend long hours sunk in his chair, reflecting on his life. His mind would travel to his years as a college student. He'd relive the protest marches he had participated in, the

protesting and raising

slogans!" he would say. Romi would also think of the many years he had futilely spent in trying to change his wife and children. Tears would well up in his eyes as he recalled how they had rudely rebuffed him. His well-meant enthusiasm to help

them mend their ways had come to nothing. In fact, it had only turned his home into a veritable battlefield. He had never thought his family would react like that to him.

Then, after ruing how he had wasted so much of his life, Romi would reflect on the words he had heard from a friend recently. 'The only person you can change is you! You must be the change that you want to see in the world!', he had said to him.

When these wise words would come to his mind Romi would wish he had heard them many years earlier, when he was a college student. That way, he might have saved himself many wasted years—of trying, in vain, to reform everyone but himself.

"Please forgive me for my foolishness," Romi would pray to God. "I used to ask you to transform the whole world, and then to transform my family. But never once did I ask you to transform the one person I should have—me! But that's what I request you to please do now, God, before it's too late!" ■

WANTED GROOM

Seeking alliance for a Bangalore Sunni Muslim divorcee age 34 beautiful, diploma, has 6 year old daughter from well to do family. Looking an alliance from a decent educated well settle Sunni Muslim. Contact: 8217586128 E-mail: editor@islamicvoice.com

SM Parents seek alliance for their daughter 30 years, 5'2", beautiful educated religious never married. Groom should be settled educated family professional / businessman. Contact / WhatsApp: 9980854261 E-mail: mazharpasha139@gmail.com

Seeking alliance for a Sunni Muslim girl from a well respected and reputed family aged 23 years, Height 5 feet 5 inches, Complexion fair, Qualification: MSc. The boy must be a graduate, aged between 25-27 preferably established in a good position. Contact: 9483026951 Email: hmlprof23@gmail.com

SM family looking for alliance for their only daughter (divorcee (khula) no issues), 35 years, fair, good-looking, 5'1", master in counselling and psychotherapy, consultant counsellor, having one floor in own house. Groom should be below 40, educated, settled in Bangalore, from a moderately religious nuclear family. Contact/ WhatsApp: 8792840531 E-mail: atiya.zaiba@gmail.com

Bangalore based (Sunni Muslim) seeking alliance for their daughter (26 years, 5'6") MBA, fair & religious. Looking for respectable family. The groom age should be between 28 to 31, educated & well settled professionally/ Businessman working in Bangalore/ Abroad, religious and own house. Contact: +91 9035764425/ 7338609922 E-mail: ayesha.abdulsattar@yahoo.com

Sunni Muslim, Bangalore based Syed family looking alliance for daughter age 26, ht-5.5, fair, religious, Qualification- Bsc Biochemistry and own house. Looking for Bangalore based family age between 27 to 31, qualification BE or MBA, working in Bangalore or Gulf, religious and own house. Contact: +919108564965.

Bengaluru Based well educated Family seeks Alliance for their daughter aged 35 years, M.Tech, working in a reputed M.N.C, height: 5'2" looking for a highly qualified groom belonging to a well educated small family, Age: 35-42, height: 5'6" or above Contact: haqsyed0408@gmail.com

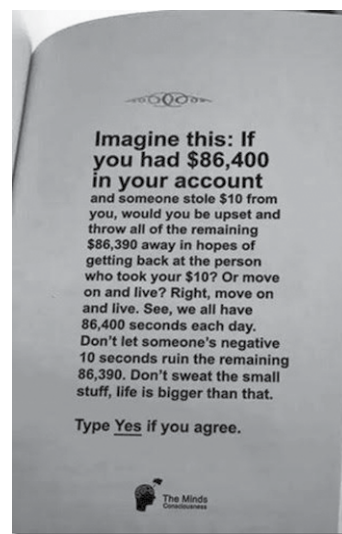
Bangalore based sunni muslim girl, B.E in Electricals and electronics, age :22years, 5'3", wheatish fair, religious, values relation, seek alliance with well settled, professional or settled business man from descent, religious and educated family. Mob no.-9341627020 E-mail id:-nasirkr1234@gmail.com

Bangalore Sunni Muslim parents invite alliance for their daughter, Soft ware Engineer working in MNC, 26 years, 5'2". Seeks alliance with well settled engineer hailing from religious, educated with good family background from Bangalore. Contact: mobile no. 98864 19383 / 8073102016email: nisarahmedmys@gmail.com

SM parents Khan's From Bangalore seeking alliance for their daughter 27 yrs 5.4, BE Working in reputed IT company- very fair from respected family. Groom preferably Engineer/ MBA working in Bangalore Contact/whats app: 9164491745 - 9035830358

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Terms related with Housing (رہائشی سہولیات اور قوانین سے متعلق اصطلاحات)

Eviction: The lawful expulsion of an occupant from real property.
(قانونی بے دخلی)

Kitchenette: A term used for kitchen accessories in bachelor apartments. Usually includes a hot plate, a small refrigerator, and sometimes a microwave.
(مختصر بادریجی خانہ جس میں ایک اسٹو، فریج اور مائکرو ویو (اور کچھ شیف ہوں)۔)

room apartment with a small kitchen and a bathroom.
(ایک کمرے، حمام اور چھوٹے باورچی خانے پر مشتمل مکان)



Transit-Oriented Development

Affordable housing: Housing units that are affordable by that section of society whose income is below the median household income.

(متوسط طبقے سے بھی کم آمدنی والے عوام کے لئے بنائے جانے والے مکانات)

Appreciation: An increase in the value of a property due to changes in market conditions or other causes.

(جائیداد کی مالیت میں اضافہ)

Condominium: A real estate project in which each unit owner has title to a unit in a building, an undivided interest in the common areas of the project and sometimes the exclusive use of certain limited common areas.

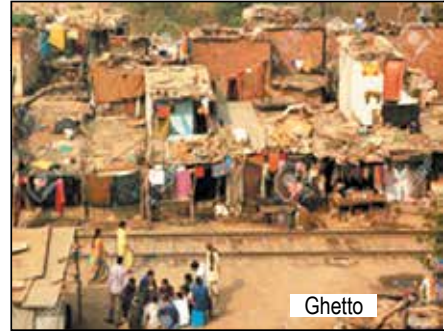
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Condominium

Deed: The legal document conveying title to a property.

(املاک منتقل کرنے کے قانونی دستاویز)



Ghetto

Ghetto: An urban area with low property values and little public or private investment. Ghettos may be characterized by high unemployment, high rates of crime, inadequate municipal services, and high drop-out rates from schools.

وہ شہری علاقے جہاں کی قیمت کم، جرائم زیادہ، شہری سہولیات ناکافی، بے روزگاری اور اسکول ڈراپ آؤٹ (کی شرح اونچی ہو)

Census House: In 1971 Census, 'House' was defined 'as a building or part of a building having a separate main entrance from the road or common courtyard or stair case etc. Used or recognised as a separate unit. It may be inhabited or vacant. It may be used for a residential or non-residential purpose or both'.

(کسی عمارت کا وہ حصہ جس کا داخلہ سڑک سے ملتا ہو اور اسے ایک اکائی مانا جاتا ہو)

Utilities: Term used for the extra charges for gas, electricity, cable television, and water.
(وہ سہولیات جن کے مصارف بقدر استعمال ہوتے ہیں مثلاً بجلی، گیس، پانی، کیبل چینل، انٹرنیٹ وغیرہ)

Sublet: A special arrangement where you live in someone's apartment in their place.
(غنائی کرایہ دار)

Studio Apartment: A single



Studio Apartment

Rent control: Rent controls are government regulations that mandate specific prices and/or freezes on the cost of rent, as well as other requirements for how landlords must operate.
(کرایہ پر لگائی سرکاری تحدید)

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Transit-oriented development

is any effort to strategically create dense urban living around a transit stop, increasing transit ridership. It often appears in the form of large mixed-used apartment buildings and condos near rail stations in urban areas.

(میٹرو لائن یا شہروں کے اطراف کھنی آبادی کے مکانات کا انتظام تاکہ (پبلک ٹرانسپورٹ کا استعمال زیادہ ہو)

Power of Attorney: A document giving a person the right to act for another person, usually to transact specific business, such as the sale of land.

(املاک یا مالیاتی معاملات میں کسی دوسرے کو اختیار سونپنا)

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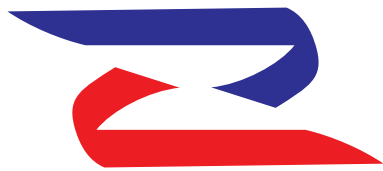
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Gallipoli Home for the Aged

Sydney: The first Islamically-oriented aged-care centre has opened in Sydney, Australia. It is located next door to the famous Auburn-Gallipoli mosque, allowing for a community-integrated approach to aged-care. Catering for up to 108 residents, Gallipoli Home, addresses the religious needs of its Muslim residents in an innovative and culturally-sensitive way.

“When we look at our elderly here, we want them to be respected and we don’t want anyone to be able to speak

disrespectfully to them.” Dr Abdurrahman Asaroglu, Director of the centre says.



“When they want to practise their religion, as it’s their home, we have to provide, and that’s what we were looking forward

to.” he adds.

The centre features halal dining, prayer rooms and open social places. The beds are even turned to face the qiblah. The centre is located next to a mosque, so that it’s still at the centre of the Muslim community.

The centre says it has different Islamic values. One of them is rahma; there is an active compassion, kindness, and respect for their inmates and their families from all cultural and religious backgrounds.

(Extracted from mvslims.com)

Muslim Teacher Cleans Egyptian Church

After her initiative to clean a church with the help of her Muslim girl students was met with a lot of praise, Egyptian teacher Eng. Heba Saad Hashash revealed the details and motivation for her action. In an interview with Al-Arabiya.net, she said she had cleaned the church, despite objections from some people, in order to promote a loving and tolerant homeland where she and her daughters could feel safe, in addition to her other 2,400 students in the city of Mallawi in Minya in southern Egypt, whom

she considers her children as well. She added that she did it for her country and for the Christian Copts who live in the city and who were under difficult and harsh circumstances following the recent terrorist incident on the Monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor, which resulted in the deaths of seven people.

HebaHashash noted that it was her duty as an educator, teacher and school director, to set a good example of peace and coexistence between religions and to educate this generation and the future ones

that for one to be a good Muslim, he needs to believe in Allah, his prophets and their messages.

HebaHashash said that she



brought together a group of 15 students, all of whom received the approval of their families, and went to the church. She herself cleaned the church with a broom as did her students. They also cleaned the library and every inch of the church.

HebaHashash said that she had received praise from the Muslims and Copts of the city for what she had done, revealing her happiness and stressing that the feelings of love and affection between Muslims and Copts in Egypt are real and deep, not just a slogan expressed only in front of the media. She said that she believed in her initiative because it was the embodiment of the real religion and a reflection of her feelings as well as the feelings of all the residents of the city, adding that she will seek to develop such actions in the hearts of her students because they will be mothers in the future and they ought to raise and nurture the next generation based on love and tolerance.

(Extracted from english.alarabiya.net)

Ameena, a Muslim Doll, Wins Toy Award

A doll for a young Muslim girl who wears a hijab has been honored as the Platinum Winner

Alva-Ruiz and Courtney Stillwagon. They launched their project to start a needed conversation with their young children about accepting and learning from people of all different backgrounds, races, cultures, and religions.

In addition to Ameena, Annie is a lovable doll with Down syndrome who wears a blue



and yellow dress – colors that represent awareness for Down syndrome. Lola is a Mexican-American doll who loves to teach friends new Spanish words. The three dolls also won the Tillywig Parents’ Favorite Products Award and the 2018 National Parenting Products Award (NAPPA).

(This was originally published on aboutislam.net).

Kashmiri Artistes Strive To Keep Dying Sufi Music Alive

Once cherished for its divine and soul-stirring mystic tunes, Kashmir valley’s ‘sufiyana mausiqi’ (music of Sufis) does not find many takers nowadays.

Though a good number of youngsters get attracted to other forms of music, a small handful of them are striving to keep alive the famed music of the Sufis. “Other music genres are everywhere, but it is a challenge to keep alive something that is rare and special. Unfortunately, we have only five to six Sufi music groups here at present even as Kashmir has produced many great artistes of this form in the past. Youngsters do not adopt this field anymore,” said Rayees Wathori, an artiste who plays sitar

in a ‘sufiyana mausiqi’ troupe. He said the music was first adopted by Kashmiri ‘Bhand-e-Peather’ (folk theatre) artistes after it was brought to the Valley by Central



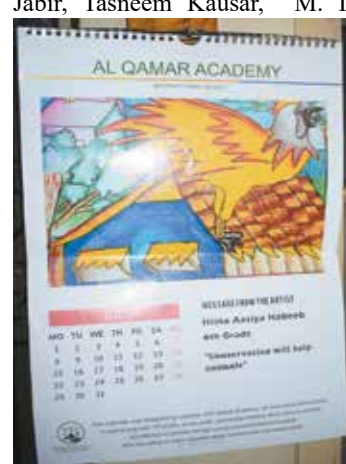
Asian and Persian Sufis in the 14th century. “Bhand-e-Peather artistes were the first to adopt it. We have been trying to rope in children to take up Sufi music, but it is hard to attract youth,” said Wathori.

(Extracted from tribuneindia.com)

Eco-Calendar by Al-Qamar Academy

Chennai: Al-Qamar Academy here has brought out an Eco-Calendar for the year 2019 which has been designed by its students highlighting the issues pertaining to the environment. Now when

with several NGOs. The graphics used are from Hafsa Uwaise, Zoya bin Taher, Anam Fathima, Shahana Shameer, Ishaal Azeez, Sarah Malang, Samara Malang, Khadijah Abdus Sattar, Hasna Jabir, Tasneem Kausar, M. I.



the Climate-change is a major issue engaging the attention of the people across the nations, raising consciousness regarding threats emanating from man’s misuse or overuse of natural resources is a major concern. The Academy has displayed twelve different graphics drawn by students of the Academy during workshops held in the school in collaboration

Saleem and Hiina Aasiya Habeeb. Ms. Anisa Jamal, Correspondent of the Academy says the graphics were done at workshops held in the school in partnership with YOUNCAN, a non-profit organization which aims to improve eco-literacy. Al-Qamar Academy is located at 14-Kalyani Nagar, Kottivakkam, Chennai-41, Ph: 044-24511226.

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By A Staff Writer

You don't have to be widely-known to be an inspiration to others. Sometimes, you can come across very inspiring people in places you would least expect them to find them—as happened with me recently. I was with two friends in a busy locality in Motinagar (Matadahalli), in

bits of his inspiring life-story. He was born in a village in Kolar district in Karnataka. The son of a school master, he was one among eight siblings. His family was of very modest means, he explained, and it wasn't easy for them to manage on his father's salary. The

Mushtaq Ahmed

An Inspiring Role Model

Son of a school master, Mushtaq Ahmed's family was of very modest means. Later, he did a BA and a course in computers. In 1998, this enterprising man decided to set up a computer training centre of his own.

Ahmed's computer institute, which caters to some 60 students, boys and girls, is now in its 21st year. It offers a range of software- and hardware-related courses, and at reasonable rates. Its students come from different communities.

A substantial number are from economically poor families. Ahmed says that some are provided substantial discounts. While of course there are many such institutes elsewhere, what's particularly inspiring about this

one is how its founder, a man from a modest economic and educational background, was inspired to set it up and keep it going all these many years. Not only is it a means of livelihood for him, it has also been providing a useful service, in a cheerful ambience, to many young people, who might justly regard Mushtaq Ahmed as an inspiration to emulate.

(Mushtaq Ahmed can be contacted on mush8352@gmail.com Mobile: 9845193425) I Tech Institute of Computers, #1, Adi Kabir Ashram Road, 1st Floor, 1st Main Road, Moti Nagar (Matadahalli), Bangalore 560032



Ahmed's computer institute, which caters to some 60 students, boys and girls, is now in its 21st year. It offers a range of software- and hardware-related courses, and at reasonable rates. Its students come from different communities. A substantial number are from economically poor families.

Bangalore, when I happened to meet Mushtaq Ahmed, Director of I-Tech Institute of Computers. When he invited us to his office, I had no idea what to expect. Over tea and biscuits, this friendly and confident man, who is probably in his early 50s, shared with us

family later shifted to Bangalore, where Ahmed continued with his studies—in an Urdu-medium school. Later, he did a BA and a course in computers. In 1998, this enterprising man decided to set up a computer training centre of his own.

Adams
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The Workshop Removes Dust from the Eyes

The Discover Yourself Workshop was organized by Fikr Care in Nagpur on 4-5th January 2019, and in Mumbai, it was held on 12-14th January 2019 at Caliph Hotel, Powai.

Some of the Participants share their Experiences:



Nagpur



Nagpur

Duniyaa mein kuch bane ya na bane Inshallah, I will try inshaan bane rahe.

BUSHRA: Normally I used to travel to work agitated. I didn't like going to office. Even till Monday evening after seeing my office emails about pending work I was grumbling. But when I reached home, I thought that this is what Allah has decreed for me and I accepted it willingly. So many people don't have a job, but I do, and I must be grateful. Earlier I used to have a negative opinion about my boss but then I thought that this boss gave me 2 days leave to attend DYS and I met Dr Sadath Sir who gave me new insights to see my life from a new perspective. Yesterday, I went and thank my boss and I thank Allah for giving me a boss like him. Everyone has goodness in them but sometimes

couldn't concentrate and I lost focus completely.

I used to read Quran and sometimes understand, but couldn't get it as I used to read with the lens of the mind. Now I see verses of the Quran, my boss, my colleagues, my relatives and people around me from the lens of the heart and slowly I am getting it.

I had been looking for answers and happiness at wrong places all my life. I wouldn't have realized this had not been for Dr Sadath Sir. Jazakallah Khair Sadath Sir and all the organizers of this workshop and my sisters in faith Safura and Shehnaz Bano who pressurized me to attend this workshop. But foremost I thank Allah who sent you all as a medium to guide me. I pray that Allah grant you all and all the participants of DYS Jannat ul Firdous and grant you all whatever

Fark To Sirf Rango Ka Hai, Manchahe Rangon Se Bane To Tasveer, Aur Anchahe Rango Se Bane To Takdeer.

SHABBIR: Last day of DYS, I invited some of my friends, they were sitting at the back. One of them was a non-Muslim and was going to sign divorce file in this week due to not accepting his father/mother-in-law's past behavior. Due to some incidents and the DYS gift exchange session that touched him, that while going back home, he started saying that it is he who is not able to accept to his father/mother-in-law's past reactions and it has nothing to do with them. He decided to give a try and not to go ahead with divorce, planning to meet his wife's parents soon and take responsibility of her. A portion of DYS workshop is enough to transform you, no matter whether sir is talking in Hindi or English.

YAKUB: I would like to share some of my experiences that I never felt before.... Last day of DYS when I was leaving back to home for Pune, I was waiting for the bus at Chembur, I was very happy and full of positive energy, observing all around people like a human being. That I never used to observe earlier. I was waiting for the bus from 10 pm till 11:30 pm, but I did not find any bus on my route, I was worried. Then suddenly I felt like why I am worried, I accepted the situation (Reality) and started looking for possibilities... and Alhumdulillah, Soon I found one private passenger car going to Pune, I got into it and left from Mumbai. The Car broke down in the mid of Mumbai-Pune express way, near to Khandala, it was 2:00 am and now I again started using my brainwhat I did... why I chose this car and all kind of thoughts were running inside my mind. Then again, I thought about Sadath sir's explanation about submission and

- ◆ It is a life changing experience. In today's world our younger generation must, and should attend this workshop.
- ◆ I got the ability to live without fear.
- ◆ The workshop was effective and realistic. It changed my way of thinking.
- ◆ The workshop is useful as it is based on real life experiences. It helped me to come out of the box, to be human and live in the present.
- ◆ The workshop was like a refresher course which removes dust from your eyes and improves clarity.
- ◆ After the workshop, I realized my true potential. I found Myself which would not have been possible if I had not attended the workshop.
- ◆ I discovered myself and I started to see everyone as human beings.
- ◆ I learnt to let go and live in the world of reality. I felt peace and happy. For example, today morning I lost my cell phone and I let go of it and accepted the reality willingly. I am at peace.
- ◆ Ankhe Kholne wala workshop.
- ◆ It is useful because it deals with our own life and internal soul, to discover our self and how to change oneself in the light of Islam.
- ◆ I discovered now, the real Islamic way of living life, to understand my Creator, myself and others better.
- ◆ Before, I kept grudges for others and now I let go off all the grudges. Great workshop, best three days of my life.
- ◆ It helped me to connect to Allah. Lived with "I" the ego with lot of blind spots in the world of opinions and judgments. After the workshop, I am a better person who is more generous.



Mumbai

Mumbai



Mumbai

SNEHAL KALDA: It is an incredible way to help others to realize the purpose of life. I was very upset earlier about many things which today seems less important to me. I have accepted myself with all the mistakes and weaknesses, yet I am happy because I know my strength as well. I felt great when I let go of my past by forgiving myself and others who have been a major reason of my tears at times. It was really pleasing and soothing in few aspects. I am blessed enough to come and attend this workshop. Thank you, sir. I want to rectify the general idea of many other people about Muslims, and I also want Muslims to realise that not all other people think bad of Muslims.' (NAGPUR)

their mind overpowers their heart and because of that they behave contrary to our expectations and sometimes also because they have their own perspective. But instead of accepting others we develop negative opinion about others. Like them our mind also overpowers our heart.

Dr Sadath Sir made me realize that for past 2 years I was either living in the past or in the future but never in the present. And because of that it affected my personal and professional life. I

you wish for in this life and the next.

ATIYA: In the whole session I didn't speak a single word because I was just observing the whole session very deeply and I want to come on stage and express my words but I am very emotional, so I stop myself. Alhamduillah great experience. sir was like a blessing from Allah to guide and connect me to Allah. I wrote shayari for that which I learnt in these three days. *Zindagi Tasveer Bhi Hai Aur Takdeer Bhi,*

denial immediately I accepted the situation and started looking for possibilities. Alhumdulillah, soon we were on road for Pune!! On the way I remembered that my Younger sister had asked for some chocolates, when I was leaving from Pune for the workshop. She always asked for things whenever I am out of home place, but I always ignored and never bought anything for her and used to give all the excuses. But Yesterday, I bought some

chocolates for her from Lonavala (expressway) and when I reached home at 3:20 am, she was waiting for me and as soon as she opened the door she asked " bhaiya, did you bring something for me from Mumbai" And I was looking in her eyes and I really got emotional....I never felt this before!!! Jazak Allah Khair. Sadath sir, DYS support team and Nida Kazi for suggesting the workshop....Alhumdulillah, I discovered myself!!

Schedule of DYS Workshop on Page No. 24



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How God Helped the Pinewood Cats

By Binkles

Two little kids, Dolcy and Chinku, were friends and lived in Pinewood Apartments, in a busy town called Rick-Rock. They had many friends in the neighbourhood. Every evening after school, they played games like hide-and-seek, musical chairs and lock-and-key.

A family of pretty cats had made Pinewood Apartments their home. They climbed about in the trees, and at night they slept under the cars. The children loved to play with them. They had given them names: Patchy, Socks, Baby Inosent and Dorothy. They kept bowls of water and food out for them every day.

That year it was an especially cold winter. The cats felt very cold at night. They kept awake for hours, meowing loudly. Now, some inhabitants of Pinewood Apartments didn't like that. They complained that it disturbed their sleep. So, one day they held a

meeting and decided that if the children stopped giving food to the cats, they would go away to another place. The head of the grown-ups' committee, Mr. Morry, ordered that the cats'



food-bowls be taken away.

When the kids heard this, they were very sad. They got together to work on a way out. They thought and thought and thought...but no one could come up with a practical plan. Just then, Chinku set upon a great idea! "The adults don't listen to us, but God does. So, let's speak to Him about the matter and request Him to handle it", she said.

"Wuppy! What a wonderful idea! Tonight, let's all pray to God to

The cats felt very cold at night. They kept awake for hours, meowing loudly. Now, some inhabitants of Pinewood Apartments didn't like that.

help the cats get their food," squealed Dolcy.

And that night that's what all the kids in Pinewood Apartments did. They prayed to God to help the

cats at home to eat. It was too cold to go out to a restaurant. We phoned the pizza shop to send us two pizzas, and we waited and waited until midnight but they didn't turn up. And so, we had to go to

"Uncle, do you realise that the cats may have felt just the same way because you stopped us from giving them food and took away their food-bowls," Chinku blurted.

bed on an empty stomach! It was really awful!"

"Uncle, do you realise that the cats may have felt just the same way because you stopped us from giving them food and took away their food-bowls," Chinku blurted.

Dolcy couldn't believe how boldly Chinku had spoken her mind to Mr. Morry.

But instead of getting angry, as Dolcy thought he might, Mr. Morry replied very gently: "You're right, dear. Maybe God wanted to show us what it means

to feel hungry. I really shouldn't have told you kids to stop giving food to the cats. May be God wanted me to learn a lesson. I'm so sorry children. Please continue to give food to the cats. I'll arrange for their food-bowls to be returned."

The children could hardly believe their ears! They were so happy! And before they could say anything, Mr. Morry opened his wallet. He took out a big sum of money and handed it to them. "Please take this and arrange for a special New Year's treat for the cats!" he said, a smile spreading across his face.

"God gives food to all His creatures. How wrong of me to think I could interfere in that!" Mr. Morry continued.

"Thank you so much!" screamed Dolcy and Chinku in delight. Then, the two friends, along with all the other children of Pinewood Apartments, excitedly set off to the pet shop to fetch food for the cats, who later had a wonderful feast!

So kids, remember: it's God who gives all things to everyone, and it's good always to pray to God for all things! ■

Did You Know?



Wonders of God's Earth

How much water does the earth have?

There are more than 326 million trillion gallons of water on Earth.



Less than three percent of all this water is freshwater and of that

amount, more than two-thirds is locked up in ice caps and glaciers.

What keeps our atmosphere attached to Earth?

Our atmosphere is a mixture of gases that surround Earth. It is kept in place by the pull of Earth's gravity. If Earth was a much smaller planet, like Mercury or Pluto, its gravity would be too weak to hold a large atmosphere. ■

Words of Wisdom

"I love those who can smile in trouble, who can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection." (Leonardo da Vinci)

"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy" (Leo Buscaglia)

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By Mesha Oh!

Romy was turning 13 in a couple of weeks' time. He was very excited at the thought of becoming a teenager! But his parents were very worried. And they had adequate reason to be: Romy was a very irresponsible boy. He just didn't like doing things himself. He wanted others to do almost everything for him. He even expected his father to do his homework for him, and when he wanted water to drink, he'd call out to his mother to fetch it for him from the kitchen.

Romy couldn't be entirely blamed though for his behaviour. His parents had thoroughly spoiled him, you see. They gave in to every whim and fancy of his, wrongly thinking that this was the right way to express their love for him.

Difficult To Do Things

One day, Romy's parents visited a friend of theirs, Mrs. Ton, who was a leading child counsellor. They poured their heart to her. "Romy's entering his teens, and he is so, so irresponsible," they

explained. "If he doesn't change now, he's going to find it very difficult to do things for himself as an adult."

After listening to Romy's parents patiently Mrs. Ton explained to them how Romy's behaviour had much to do with their wrong parenting. "Instead of doing everything for him, you must encourage him to do at least small things for himself", she suggested. "When you go back home, try out



this little experiment. Give Romy one task to do every day. It should be something that he enjoys. You'll likely notice some very good changes in him in a short while. It will probably make him a more responsible person."

Take Care of the Garden

Romy's parents discussed Mrs. Ton's suggestion on their way home. Then, they hit upon a brilliant plan! They would ask Romy to take up the responsibility of watering the plants in the garden every day, instead of having the gardener do it. They knew that Romy loved plants,

Romy's parents were very happy to note how confident, punctual, responsible and caring their son had become—virtues that he had learnt in just a few weeks through caring for the garden.

and that this was something that he would really enjoy! As they had hoped, Romy was very happy when his parents

things too. No longer did he expect other people to do them for him. Earlier, his mother would clean up his room, make his bed and polish his shoes. But now,

Romy couldn't be entirely blamed though for his behaviour. His parents had thoroughly spoiled him, you see. They gave in to every whim and fancy of his, wrongly thinking that this was the right way to express their love for him.

suggested to him next morning that he take care of the garden. "Wow! Thank you! That's so nice of you!" he exclaimed as he gave his parents a big hug.

From that day onwards, every afternoon, after returning from school, Romy would spend an hour working in the garden. He loved watering the plants, speaking to the trees, admiring the flowers and laughing with the dragonflies and butterflies that flitted about! That hour he spent in the garden became the highlight of his day!

Within just a few weeks, Romy's parents noticed that Romy was no longer the lazy, irresponsible child whom they had been so worried about. Taking up the responsibility for the garden, he had become a much more responsible boy. Caring for the plants, he had become a much more caring. He was now enthusiastic about doing other

responsible and caring their son had become—virtues that he had learnt in just a few weeks through caring for the garden.

Romy's parents were very grateful to God for the great change in Romy. They were also very grateful to Mrs. Ton—for her wonderful advice. And guess what they did? On Romy's 13th birthday, they went over to her place to thank her, along with a present that Romy had specially prepared for her: a tub full of fresh vegetables and fruits from their garden!

Learning Lesson: Parents should encourage their children to increasingly take responsibility for some things in the home. In this way, they will help their children to become more caring and confident and capable of handling challenges. ■

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