



I Monetary Advisory (IMA) was till May 2019 one of the most popular financial entities for investment of savings for Muslims in Karnataka and neighbouring states. The entity had a spectacular rise, and its range of investors included the affluent and beggars, literates and illiterates, the old and the young, working and retired people, and even students. Its main attraction was the incredibly high and consistent returns for several years. The returns were puzzling for bankers and financial wizards. Its investors had become marketing men for IMA, and they got their friends, relatives and neighbours to invest. Even the pulpits of mosques were used to convince Muslims to invest in IMA as supposedly 'Halal' and 'Islamic'. In June 2019, the curtains were drawn on IMA as its head Mr. Mansoor Khan went missing.

Joined the Ranks of Charles Ponzi

Is IMA a unique story of spectacular rise and disastrous fall? No, as similar stories have appeared with monotonous regularity. IMA is one among many, and Mr. Mansoor Khan is a new member who joined the ranks of Charles Ponzi (who perpetrated an infamous scheme in early 1920 and is credited with the 'distinction' of every such scheme named as 'Ponzi Scheme') and Bernard Madoff (who had administered a large Ponzi scheme of about USD 65 billion, the longest surviving Ponzi scheme for a period of 20 years and more).

Greed versus Exploitation IMA – A Page in the Book of Ponzis

It takes 'brains' to be a swindler, but for targeting the Indian Muslim community may be no brains but only liberal use of the words 'Halal' and 'Islamic' is good enough to rob millions!

By Mohamed Ashrafulla

Research analysts of large Ponzi schemes have listed the following indicators of a typical such scheme: Unrealistic returns being promised (ultra-high returns initially, and then toned down); the moneys to pay the investors profit being raised from new investors; as the number of investors grows, the number of new investors must grow exponentially (This is because their moneys are used to pay the previous investors). Do all the investors lose under the scheme? Not necessarily. Some investors gain together with the promoters. But most investors lose heavily in the end.

All the above features were traits

“ IMA is a page in the book of Ponzis, but restoring the faith of the community in the words 'Halal' and 'Islamic' will be a long and hard effort. ”



of IMA. The business plans and storyline of source of profits were changing periodically (gold bullion trading to gold import from mines to gold showroom to schools to healthcare). Moreover, as no genuine business entity has earned and doled out such high profits for several years, only a Ponzi scheme can do that.

'Religious' Tag

Is there anything important and different in the tale of IMA? Yes indeed, there is, and it is the 'religious' tag of the investment being supposedly 'Halal' and 'Islamic'. Inspired by IMA, many

other financial entities promoted by Muslims have mushroomed especially in South India with the tag of 'Halal', 'Islamic', 'Sharia compliant', etc. The marketing and performance characteristics of all such entities is similar i.e., the lure of incredibly high returns, show of investment in metals, no transparent financials and disclosures, limited liability entities, management controlled by family members and money to pay the investors profit being raised from new investors who are made similar promises. Some of these entities have already met the

fate of IMA and more may be in the pipeline. It takes 'brains' to be a swindler, but for targeting the Indian Muslim community may be no brains but only liberal use of the words 'Halal' and 'Islamic' is good enough to rob millions!

The question arises as to who is providing this so-called 'Islamic' certification? Do they have the adequate knowhow to analyze business models and financials? How are they ensuring that the profits are generated from risk-based investments? Is there a process in place for monitoring the business activities to confirm that they are ethical or not? In the absence of a unitary authority for such certifications the answers for these questions are obviously not available.

Moral Courage Needed

The business, political and religious leaders of the Muslim community should make efforts for establishment of an authority to arrange for the certification of entities seeking public funds for Halal, Islamic or Sharia-Compliant Investment. The authority should have moral courage to highlight and notify the public about unethical business practice of any entity doing business using the words 'Halal' and 'Islamic'.

IMA is just a page in the book of Ponzis, but restoring the faith of the community in the words 'Halal' and 'Islamic' will be a long and hard effort.

(The author is Retired Head of Credit Risk Review, Dubai Islamic Bank)

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Some Muslim Contributions to Modern Society

Muslim history is replete with pioneering inventions and discoveries, many of which are ingrained in modern society, such as:

Public Libraries

During the early decades of Islam, mosques acted as hubs for intellectual discourse across the Muslim lands. They were not only places of worship, but also housed libraries full of books on religion, philosophy and science. These libraries were open to the masses and not just the ruling and intellectual elite, as was the common practice then.

Surgical Tools

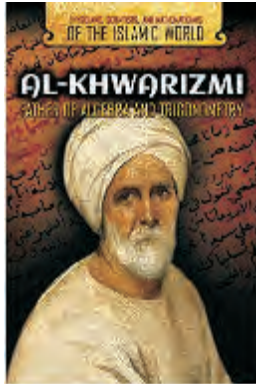


Artistic scene of Al-Zahrawi treating a patient while students look on

The great 10th-century Muslim surgeon Qasim al Zahrawi, described as the father of surgery, invented many surgical tools still used in modern medicine, including the scalpel, the surgical needle and surgical scissors. He also discovered catgut as a reliable material to administer internal stitches as it can be absorbed by the body, preventing the need for a second surgery to remove them.

Algebra

The study of algebra flourished during the Islamic Golden Age under the scholarship of mathematician al-Khwarizmi. The word algebra is derived from 'al-jabr', an operation he used to solve quadratic equations. The introduction of algebra as a unifying theory significantly broadened the concept of mathematics and its development path.



Optics



In the 11th century, the scientist Ibn Haytham overturned ancient ideas of how our eyes see. While some said light rays came out of the eyes, others thought something entered the eyes to represent an object. Through systematic reason and experiment, Ibn Haytham discovered that light is not emitted from the eye itself, but in fact is reflected off an object and enters the eye.

Photo Selected for Intl. Contest

A photograph of the world heritage monument Humayun's Tomb in Delhi taken by Mohsin Javed has been selected for an international photo contest. Mohsin is a final year student of Diploma in Electrical Engineering at the Jamia Millia Islamia. The international selection committee chose the picture among 6625 entries, taking into consideration its quality and creativity. Sixty of the best images, including Mohsin's, have been selected to be part of a travelling exhibition, which has been displayed so far in China, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Oman, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and at UNSECO's Headquarters in Paris. The exhibition will continue to tour in other countries. The selected photographs have been also presented in a photo album, "Youth Lens on the Silk Roads", which reflect the youth's visions and understanding of the Silk Roads common heritage.

Eighteen-year-old Mohsin developed his passion for photography when he was in Class 8. His pictures have been widely



carried by many national and international agencies and publications, including international photo agency Getty Images, Germany's Public

International Broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) website and various magazines in India. Mohsin says he wants to pursue his career in photography.

Overseas Scholarships for Minorities

Bengaluru: The Directorate of Minorities of the Government of Karnataka has invited applications for the National Overseas Scholarship for Minority community students for 2019-20. Students can apply online by logging onto

<https://gokdom.kar.nic.in>. The last date for application either online or through post is July 18, 2019. The overseas scholarships are available for those who want to pursue Masters Degree, Ph.D. or post-doctoral courses in prestigious foreign universities.

Service to humanity can help Muslims regain lost glory: Mahmood Ali



Telangana Home Minister Mr. Mohammed Mahmood Ali visiting the gallery

Hyderabad: Telangana Home Minister Mr. Mohammed Mahmood Ali recently inaugurated an international seminar on the Quran and an International Quran Exhibition organized by the Consulate of Iran in Hyderabad at the Salar Jung Museum. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Home Minister said "Quranic teachings are the need of the hour." He exhorted the community to work towards achieving peace at all strata and donating in charity for helping the underprivileged. He said the Muslim downfall was due to the eventual estrangement and distancing from Quran and the

teachings of the Prophet. Research scholars from Iran and India discussed various aspects of Quranic teachings. A variety of artworks were on display at the exhibition, which also featured more than 100 rare artworks showcasing Islamic calligraphy and rare manuscripts. Deputy Minister of Culture & Islamic Guidance, Government of Iran H.E. Prof. Dr. Abdul Hadi Fiqhizadeh, the Consul General of Iran, Hyderabad Muhammed Haqbin Ghomi, and the Director of the Salar Jung Museum were also present on this occasion.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)



Saudi Arabia: Expats can now become permanent residents

Riyadh: Expats in Saudi Arabia can now apply for permanent residency. The Premium Residency Center has started its services. It has begun receiving and processing the applications electronically. According to a report published in Khaleej Times, applicants can obtain Premium Residency in Saudi Arabia through the comprehensive electronic platform, SAPRC. They have to upload all necessary documents

and make payment online. Two types of Premium Residency are provided. They are "Permanent premium residency" and "Temporary premium residency". Permanent premium residency is offered after payment of one-time lifetime fee whereas Temporary premium residency is given for an annual fee. This new system will provide an opportunity for expats who want to settle or invest in the country.

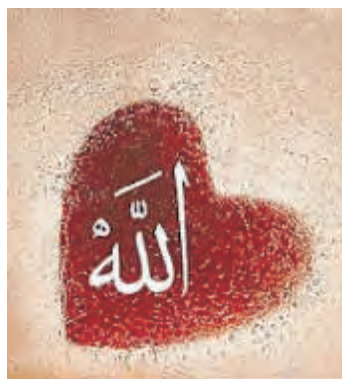
Remembering God True Zikr



The Quran repeatedly tells us to remember God. This is what is known as zikrullah. One should remember God as often as one can. There may be some distractions in which you are engaged or some work in which your mind is focused, but even these may also lead, in an indirect manner, to the remembrance of God. When your own divine feelings, your remembrance of and love and praise for God, take expression in words, that is zikr. These words could be in your own language or in the Arabic language.

these divine blessings of sunshine, of the air, of gravity you would not be able to go out for a stroll. If you recount all these divine bounties associated with your walk, then you are remembering God, you are engaging in zikr while walking. So, in this way, at every moment, no matter what activity you may be engaged in you can be doing zikr, remembering God, praising, glorifying and thanking Him.

This is a way in which you can engage in zikr remembrance of God throughout your daily life, not just for a few minutes a day,



but rather, all through the day.

Remembering God is not alien to your being. It is interwoven in your being like energy. You and energy are apparently separate, but in fact both are one and the same. So, at every moment there are bounties of God all around you which you can remember. If you awaken in yourself this consciousness at every moment, then you are remembering God at every moment. This is a way in which you can be engaged in the constant zikr of God.

In a report contained in the Sahih al-Bukhari, the Prophet's wife Aisha reports that the Prophet used to remember God on each occasion by making it a point of reference for God's remembrance. So, for the Prophet, remembering God, or zikrullah, and other tasks were not two separate activities, rather both were intermingled.

The human mind has enormous potential. An American writer, Walt Whitman, has said: "I am large enough to contain all these contradictions." He said this in a different context. However, this saying applies here as well. While being engaged in different tasks throughout the day, we can be engaged in zikr as well, reflecting on God's bounties in the context of the tasks we are doing or the things we are seeing. Zikr means living with divine consciousness. When you have attained this state of consciousness, at every moment you will be in a state of zikr, even though you may not be uttering any specific words.

Sometimes, you may find yourself lamenting the past, experiencing negative feelings and thinking

about negative experiences. In this way, your mind is diverted from zikr of God. This is a very common occurrence. But you can convert even this into a means to remember and thank God. If you have had some painful or negative experience in the past, when you recall it today you can convert it into something to be thankful to God. You can think of it as yet



made you reach a better situation today. So, in this way, you can even make the memory of a



another reason for shukr, or thankfulness to God. You can thank God that He did not make you stay on in that negative moment, and that, instead, He

negative or painful experience into yet another opportunity to engage in zikr or remembrance of God.

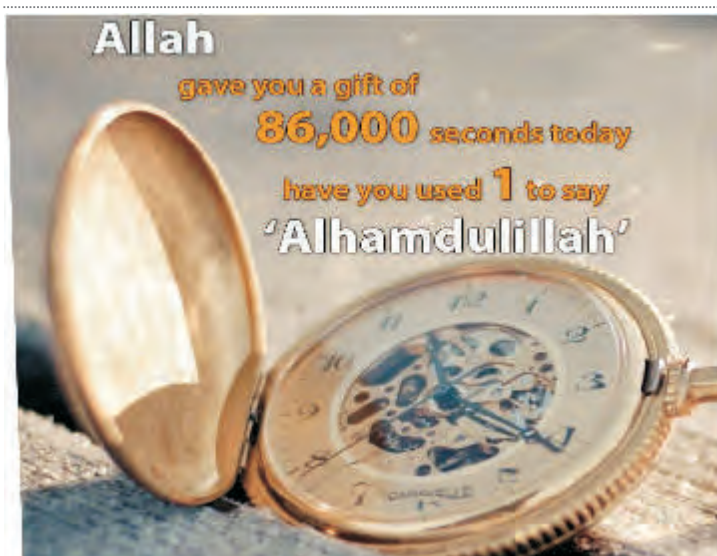
(Taken from spiritofislam.co.in)

Remembering God is not alien to your being. It is interwoven in your being, like energy. You and energy are apparently separate, but in fact both are one and the same. So, at every moment there are bounties of God all around you which you can remember.

It is very simple to remember God to engage in zikr and it is also quite natural. For instance, when you are walking, you can bring to your mind the fact that you are doing so entirely because of the blessings of God. While outdoors, you see the sun up in the sky, and you remember that it is God who is providing you sunlight. You breathe in fresh air while taking a stroll and you remember that it is He who is supplying you with oxygen. When you set your foot down on the ground and lift it up, you remember that it is He who has created gravity, otherwise you would be floating in the air and would not be able to walk on the ground at all. You bring to your mind the realization that without



Participants of the annual interfaith pilgrimage of young adults (organised by the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of the Dalai Lama) at the Qadriya mosque in Bangalore on 26th June 2019. **Islamic Voice** Editor Sadathulla Khan, Ashraf Mahmood and Riyaz Ahmed helped facilitate sessions on Islam for them.



The History of Muslims in New Zealand



By Sumayyah Meehan

The religion of Islam is deeply rooted in the heart of New Zealand. According to the International Muslim Association of New Zealand, there are an estimated 60,000 Muslims living on the windswept shores of the tiny Kiwi-state today who make up just 1% of the population. A diverse mix composed of refugees and immigrants, this ethnically-rich population of Muslims has intricate threads that have been sewn into the fabric of New Zealand history.

The First Muslims to Immigrate to New Zealand

In the spring of 1874, according to a New Zealand government census, a small group of Indian men were the first Muslims to immigrate to the coastal island nation. Hailing from Punjab and Gujarat, the men resided in Dunstan, Otago which was a gold mining settlement. It was not long before their families followed to

begin a new life while embracing a new homeland.

The First Muslim Organization in New Zealand

By the 1950's, there were an estimated 200 Muslims who immigrated to New Zealand from countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Egypt. Together, these early Muslims became a close-knit community and worked hard to set up the "New Zealand Muslim Association." It was out of their commitment and dedication that this group of Muslims was able to raise the funds needed to purchase a piece of land in Ponsonby in 1959.

On March 30, 1979 construction of the very first mosque in New Zealand began with the laying of the foundation for the Ponsonby Mosque which would be renamed, in subsequent years, to the Al-Masjid Al-Jamie.

The First Imam in New Zealand

Having arrived in the late 1960's, New Zealand's first Imam was

Maulana Ahmed Said Musa Patel. An immigrant from Gujarat, India, Imam Patel's duties included leading the daily prayers at the mosque and teaching the Noble Quran to the students. With only 23 students in his first classroom, Imam Patel strove to provide the best Islamic education possible and over the next several years the class grew in numbers.

Due to financial constraints, Imam Patel did not earn a salary at the mosque. He took a variety of jobs in the fields of rope-making, welding and factory-work during his tenure to provide for his family. All the while, he was working diligently to make a lasting impact in the Muslim community. One of his greatest efforts was to take part in a formal

delegation that approached the city council with the request for a dedicated burial ground for Muslims, which set the very first precedent in the country.

Steady Growth and Development
By the end of the 1960's and the 1970's, there was an increase in Muslims from all over the world immigrating to New Zealand as

► Page 09

لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ ۚ إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

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A Home Away From Home!

Warmly accepting others, and being accepted, as a fellow human being beyond religious identities and labels is one of the many wonderful things I learnt during my stay at a Christian Interfaith Ashram.

Surrounded by tall trees and bushes bursting with flowers, the chirping of birds, the excited shrieks of squirrels, the barking of friendly dogs and the occasional braying of a donkey, I must confess I felt I was in something like Paradise! Waking up to a window-view of abundant greenery outside every morning was a dream come true! As it is said, God places you in the right place and the right time and for a right reason. So, here I was in the beautiful Vidyavanam Ashram, a Catholic-run interfaith spiritual centre a little distance from the Bannerghatta National Park in Bangalore.

Father Antony Kalliath, a Catholic priest who is in charge of Vidyavanam ('Forest of Wisdom') Ashram, is a man with a golden heart. He has opened the doors of the ashram to all, irrespective of faith and community. I must admit that with my Muslim name, I was initially a wee bit apprehensive about how I would be accepted. Going by the

By Nigar

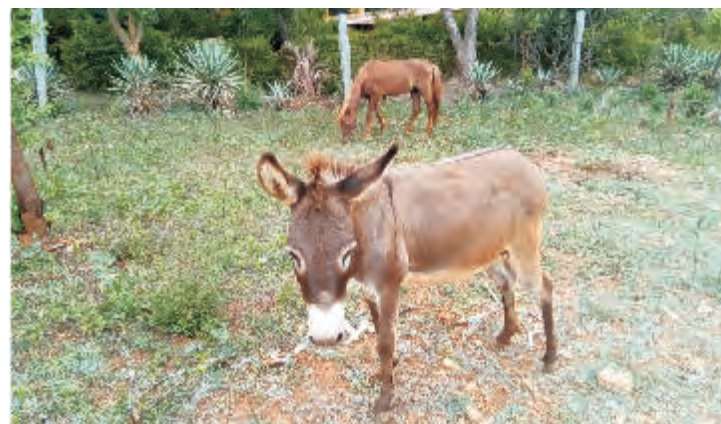
a sense of awe and admiration. Being a horrible cook myself, I wondered how they managed to rustle up super meals three times a day right on time for the ashram folks. Strolling along the silent pathways in the ashram helped me enjoy one of my favourite hobbies—of talking to animals and birds, although I don't know if they understood the names I gave them! So, I was very glad to spot 'Black Forest', the pitch black cat, 'Happy' the horse and 'Dazzle' the donkey who were grazing outside the gate, and many colorful butterflies and tiny birds fluttering about! The ashram is also host to Blacky, Jimmy and Julie, three beautiful dogs who are bestowed with abundant love by Father Antony and other ashram inmates.

The ashram is abundantly green, and so other life-forms, like caterpillars, lizards, beetles, chameleons and even snakes have also made their home here.

way to begin the day is by wishing peace to each other, as they do at Mass. Being in the company of spiritually-minded people, you feel all the more tranquil!

Being at the ashram I was blessed to be able to meet some wonderful people and learn good things from them. One such person is Father Babu, a Catholic priest with many years of experience teaching in schools. He is a very knowledgeable person, and you can chat with him on a wide range of subjects, from making movies to Mars! He is the author of several books, including a collection of poems and a novel that might soon be made into a feature film! You might be able to spot him busy in the kitchen churning out mango pickle, and the same evening he can also guide you through a meditation on the universe in the chapel. I gained a great deal from this wonderful meditation session that he conducted so ably, which provided fascinating insights into how glorious God and vast His creation are and how small we are and how humble we ought to be!

The ashram is an island of



'Dazzle and Happy grazing about!'

tranquility, and serious spiritual seekers find their way here even from across 'the seven seas'. That's how I was able to meet Sister Sutisa, a Catholic nun from Thailand, who was here for a two-month stay to reflect and pray. Working for women and children who are trafficked and abused in Thailand, this energetic sister shared with us some bits of her story of struggle, of how from a girl from an economically poor family she went on to become a nun working for women's rights! Heard of tawakkul, complete faith in God? I was glad to witness this here in the form of Brother Nixon. Having completed several years of priestly education, he set off as a wanderer for over a year across the country with no pennies in his pocket. "People are good.

They help you, and I have experienced the hand of Providence guarding me all the time", he says, sharing his life-story. Happy spending his time gardening and taking care of other ashram needs, Brother Nixon is a gentle person who wants to help the poor and simply be himself.

And there's Soman ji, an ever-smiling person who knows not just how to plant trees but also how make the ashramites feel comfortable with his ever-helpful nature.

People say home is where one is born, but I feel home is where one feels at peace, happy in heart and soul. At Vidyavanam Ashram, I felt very much at home very tranquil. It helped me focus more deeply on my purpose of life. I thank God and the Ashram for this blessing!



notorious reputation that Muslims have earned owing to the misdeeds of some violent terrorists, my heart sometimes skips a beat now and then when people of other faiths get to know that I follow Islam because I wonder what on earth they must be imagining. But the kindness and welcome I received from Fr. Antony and everyone else at the ashram was overwhelming! Believe me, to be accepted as a fellow human being so warmly is very humbling.

The day I got to the ashram, the hot herbal tea I sipped in the spick and span dining room gave instant relief to my sore throat, which I had brought along with me from the city. The amazingly efficient way the two bubbly girls, Bineta and her cousin sister Surbhi, handled the kitchen filled me with

I ought to consider myself very lucky that I got to see 'Discover Channel' and 'Animal Planet' live every day here, all for free! Life in the ashram is unhurried, yet time here can be spent very meaningfully. Waking up for the fajr prayer and then breakfast, it was wonderful to sit on a stone bench in the splendid outside, chopping vegetables for our lunch (The simple and wonderfully nutritious vegetarian meals here are excellent for the soul, mind and the body, I discovered!). Taking a relaxed stroll in the evening, followed by early dinner and prayers, is a great way to wind up the day!

Truly, the whole earth is a prayer-mat, and this I really experienced sitting in the chapel of the ashram at the morning Mass with the Fathers and Nuns. A wonderful



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www.ministryofminorityaffairs.gov.in (HAJ Division) (Quota allocation PTO for Haj 2019)

Abu Dhabi officially recognizes non-Muslim places of worship

"Anyone who has been living here for many years should have the right to practice his religion in a proper way," said Sultan Al Dhaheri.



In a move that echoes the aims of the country's Year of Tolerance, Abu Dhabi has announced its plans to legally recognize 19 non-Muslim places of worship across the emirate. The decision was made in a bid to assist the day-to-day running of the religious institutions which will now be regulated by the Department of Community Development.

Speaking at a news conference recently, the executive director of community participation and sport at the department, Sultan Al Dhaheri, said:

"Previously, such bodies were not officially recognized by the law. Now, these places of worship will have a point of contact in government to address any issues

over their day-to-day operations."

"We have met with their leaders and explained to them the guidelines and we will be holding workshops for them. We have a partnership relationship with them and are working side by side," he added.

Al Dhaheri also explained that the UAE's welcoming of other faiths is nothing new.

"[Non-Muslim] houses of worship have long existed in the country; the first church existed even before the union [of the UAE in 1971], so for more than 40 years," he said.

"Anyone who has been living here for many years should have the right to practice his religion in a proper way," he stressed.

At the time being, there are 17 Christian churches of varying denominations across Abu Dhabi, in addition to one Gurdwara. A Hindu temple in the capital is also set to open for worship in 2020 after it was granted an official license.

The UAE has been serious about promoting coexistence and tolerance. In 2015, an anti-discrimination law was passed in the Emirates in an effort to prevent any behavior that could potentially spread discrimination within the community. Under the law, any act that triggers religious hatred "through any form of expression, which covers speech and the written word, books, pamphlets or online media" is prohibited.

The UAE is also considered the first country to have a minister of tolerance, a day (Nov. 16) dubbed "International Day for Tolerance," and a year dedicated to it. In

December 2018, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance. Recently, the first Christian site to ever be discovered in the UAE was opened to the public. In February, Pope Francis visited the UAE for a 48-hour trip, marking a historic moment for interfaith relations in the Gulf state.

The UAE is home to expats from around the world and includes many houses of worship where people can freely practice their religions. There are 40 churches in the country (including those in Abu Dhabi) up from 25 in 2005. There are two Hindu temples in Dubai and a Gurdwara.



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Deputy Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Issues Fatwa against Child Marriage

One of the world's most prestigious centres of Islamic learning has issued a fatwa against child marriage, saying marriage should be based on the consent of both parties and "particularly the young woman". The deputy grand imam of al-Azhar, considered by some Muslims to be a very high authority of Islamic jurisprudence, hammered out the document with his team and young activists at the first African summit on child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), which took place in Senegal in West Africa recently.

If news of the fatwa's existence can reach imams in countries with

Jaha Dukureh, a Gambian campaigner and the founder of Safe Hands for Girls, herself a survivor of child marriage and FGM, who drove a successful campaign to end FGM in her country. Dukureh, who went to Egypt to talk to the al-Azhar clerics last year, described how towards the end of the summit she realised that the fatwa had not yet been issued and went to talk to the imam, Salah Abbas. She, the

African Union youth envoy Aya Chebbi and the Syrian journalist Abdalaziz Alhamza worked with the Egyptian imams to turn their rough draft, scrawled on hotel notepaper, into a formal document.

"We sat there on the floor with them, writing the fatwa. They had to call Egypt to ensure that everything was in line. And then there was a back and forth about the languages, because in Arabic

things can be translated different ways. To me, it was just amazing watching that process."

Four in 10 young women in sub-Saharan Africa are married before their 18th birthday. Boys are affected too: according to recent UN data, roughly one in 30 worldwide were married as children, with the highest number in Central African Republic, where almost a third of boys and men were child grooms. The problem is

not limited to Africa – across the world, 12 million girls are married in childhood every year.

"When you force a girl to get married, you've given someone the right to rape her over and over again," said Dukureh, who was married at 15 and again at 17. "And every single day, every time she's touched ... you don't forget. I don't think you forget that. I don't think you ever get over that."

►► Page 9



Aya Chebbi and Abdalaziz Alhamza with the deputy grand imam of al-Azhar, second from left, and his team.

high rates of child marriage, activists hope that the practice can be stopped, as they could not deny al-Azhar's authority.

"Marriage in Islam is based on the consent of both parties, particularly the young woman. Such consent requires the young woman to have reached the age of maturity and reason, so that her consent is validly given," the fatwa read, adding that this age was 18, and quoting parts of the Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad to support it.

The summit was organised by

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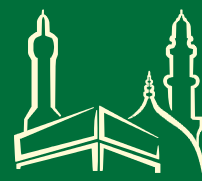
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King Abdullah of Jordan slams 'hate-filled outlaws of Islam'



Singapore's President Halimah Yacob welcomes Jordan's King Abdullah in Singapore

Attacks on interfaith harmony, mutual respect and trust are the "world's single most important threat," King Abdullah of Jordan warned. Speaking recently at the International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS) in Singapore, he condemned both "outlaws of Islam and extremist Islamophobes." "Perpetrators of hate-filled messages are distorting our religion's great heritage and teachings," he said. He called on the global community to tackle this challenge by "resisting hatred and exclusion," supporting economic growth and protecting the environment.

In a keynote speech, the Jordanian ruler urged 700 delegates from 40 countries to apply the golden rule. "Loving one's neighbor is not just an ideal. It is the golden rule that enables all of us to live side by side, to look beyond ourselves, and to achieve what we can only achieve in common."

The conference was organized by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) with the support of Singapore's Ministry of Culture, Community

and Youth. Ong Keng Yong, executive deputy chairman of RSIS, described the Singapore conference as a platform for constructive dialogue to strengthen mutual trust and understanding across communities. "Singapore is a multiracial, multi-religious society, and we work hard to keep our country peaceful and secure. At the same time, we are part of the global community, which faces challenges posed by increased connectivity, intensifying identity politics, and infinite technological development," he said.

King Abdullah listed Jordanian efforts including the Amman Message, the Common Word Initiative, and UN World Interfaith Week. When it comes to hate speech on the internet, solutions are not exclusively the responsibility of governments and big companies, he said. "In a very real way, the internet belongs to its users. Moderate, positive voices need to reclaim this space and redirect the dialogue away from misinformation, insults and fear,

and toward understanding and respect. Young men and women have a vital role in speaking up on social media and social networking sites, and using their talent for innovation to promote mutual understanding and hope." The Jordanian monarch also called for a "holistic approach to address security and the issues that extremists exploit." "We must also help to resolve conflicts, especially the core crisis of my region, the long denial of Palestinian statehood. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has fueled global discord and radicalism. We all need a lasting peace, meeting the needs of both sides, with a viable, independent, sovereign Palestinian state, on 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, but living side by side with Israel, in peace and security. "We must safeguard Jerusalem, a holy city to billions of people around the world. As Hashemite Custodian of Jerusalem's Islamic and Christian holy sites, I am bound by a special duty. But for all of us, Jerusalem must be a unifying city of peace."

US Senate passes bill to block Saudi arms sales

The US Senate recently passed a resolution that would block the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, offering a rebuke to U.S. President Donald Trump. The bipartisan bill passed with a 53-45 vote, and is the first of 22 resolutions that are aimed at blocking the military sales to the Middle East. The vote was the first in a series of three back-to-back votes, and would potentially stop billions of dollars in munitions sales to Riyadh. However, the bill still has to pass through the House and it is likely that Trump will veto the bill, and the Senate does not seem to have enough of a majority to override a potential veto.

Democrats and Republicans have joined forces in their anger at the Trump administration over using its declaration of an emergency over Iran to bypass Congress and approve arms sales to the Kingdom. The nearly two dozen joint resolutions of disapproval are meant to rebuke the Trump administration's declaration. Earlier, Trump had invoked a rarely used provision of U.S. arms

control laws to circumvent Congress and authorize weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and Gulf allies. While arms sales usually go through a 30-day congressional review period, the provision allows for this process to be skipped in the case of an emergency.

Congress was notified by the Trump administration of the invocation and was shown a deal comprising 22 separate arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan valued at \$8.1 billion. A group of Senators, both Democrat and Republican and led by Sen. Bob Menendez and Sen. Lindsey Graham, had initially filed 22 resolutions of disapproval, one for each of the arms sales the White House approved.

There is also bipartisan anger within Congress over the Trump administration's support for Saudi Arabia despite pressure from lawmakers to punish the country over the murder of Saudi journalist and *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi last October.

UK: Arms sales to Saudi Arabia declared unlawful

U.K. weapons exports to Saudi Arabia have been declared unlawful as they have contributed to high levels of civilian deaths and casualties in the bombing of Yemen by Saudi-led coalition forces, Britain's court of appeal said recently. The ruling was passed down by three senior judges after they accepted the legal challenge from the Campaign Against Arms Trade group, which has accused the government of licensing arms sales when it was clear their sales could breach international law.

According to Campaign Against Arms Trade, around £4.7 billion (\$5.9 million) worth of arms exports to Saudi Arabia have been licensed by the government since the Saudi-led intervention began in 2015 with record sales taking place before 2018.

The U.K. government "made no concluded assessments of whether the Saudi-led coalition had committed violations of international humanitarian law in the past, during the Yemen conflict, and made no attempt to do so," the court said.

The U.K. government has said it would challenge the ruling that its arms sales to the kingdom are unlawful as they contribute to

high civilian fatalities in the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

An estimated 8.4 million people are at risk of severe famine and more than 22 million people, 75 percent of Yemen's population, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Impoverished Yemen has been wracked by conflict since 2014, when the Houthi rebels overran much of the country, including capital Sanaa. The conflict escalated in 2015 when Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Arab allies launched a wide-ranging military campaign aimed at rolling back Houthi gains and shoring up the country's Saudi-backed government. The war has resulted in a collapsed economy and a cholera outbreak that has affected over 1.1 million people.

Calls have been made to governments across the globe to halt weapon sales to Saudi Arabia, resulting in GermU.K. weapons exports to Saudi Arabia have been declared unlawful as they have contributed to high levels of civilian deaths and casualties in the bombing of Yemen by Saudi-led coalition forces, Britain's court of appeal said recently. The ruling was passed down by three senior judges after they accepted the legal challenge from the

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Iraq officially invites Pope Francis to visit

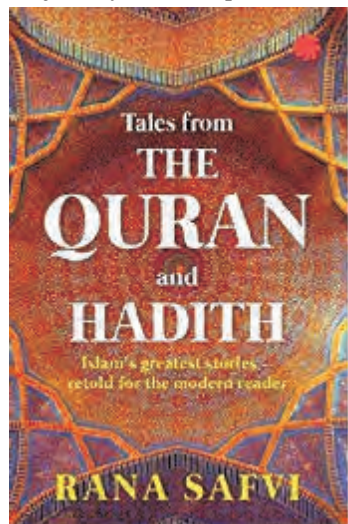
Iraqi President Barham Saleh has sent an official invitation to Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, to visit Iraq after the Pope said he would like to travel to Iraq despite security conditions. "I am honored to officially extend an invitation to Your Holiness to visit Iraq - the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of Abraham, the father of the faithful and messenger of the divine religions," Saleh said in the letter. "Your holiness' visit will be an opportunity to remind and enlighten Iraq and the world that this land gave humanity its first laws, irrigated agriculture and a legacy of cooperation among

people" of different religions, it said.

Saleh said he hoped the visit would be "a milestone in the healing process and Iraq can once more be a peaceful land where the mosaic of religions and faiths can live together in harmony again as they did for millennia."

Pope Francis has made boosting ties between Christianity and Islam a cornerstone of his papacy. He has this year visited Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates and Morocco. The pope had already visited several Muslim countries in previous years, including Turkey in 2014, Azerbaijan in 2016 and Egypt in 2017.

Born to an IPS father and a teacher mother, writer Rana Safvi has a great affinity for books from childhood. A mother of two grown-up kids, a food connoisseur, a blogger and a prolific writer of books like 'Where Stones Speak', 'The Forgotten cities of Delhi' and 'Tales from Quran and Hadith,' she might have started a little late, but her journey has been spectacular.



Saleha: Tell us about your childhood? And your aspirations as a child?

Rana Safvi: As a child, I do not think I aspired to become anything. Those days were gentle. When we were growing up, we just played, had fun, went to school and did the usual things. I did not have much ambition at that time.

Later on, I wanted to join the Civil Services and cleared the preliminary exams. At that time I got married and was happy taking care of the house and the children, and did not pursue it further. After sometime I did start my career as a teacher.

Saleha: Do you believe writing is an innate art or it can be learned in due course of time? When precisely did you explore the writer in you?

Rana Safvi: I am sure writing can be an innate art because I did not learn it. I have been good at writing since my childhood days. I was fond of both reading and writing. My journey as a writer started

Rana Safvi: 'Age is not a barrier - You can always start afresh'

organically. When I started writing on my blog, people liked it and insisted that I write more often for different magazines. It was later in 2011 that I began writing for magazines and books.

Saleha: What intrigued you about the monuments? As your book's title reads "Where Stones Speak: Historical Trails in Mehrauli, the First City of Delhi"; how did you listen to the voices of the stones?

Rana Safvi: I have always been fascinated by the rubbles and monuments. History was my subject in college, and I used to visit monuments as a child as well. But when I came to Delhi and visited the monuments, I realized that their story had not been told correctly. It grabbed my attention, and I started writing about it.

Saleha: Not only that it has not been told properly, but also we have witnessed incidents where an attempt to distort the history has been made. How do you feel about it?

Rana Safvi: That is happening now; it did not happen earlier. It is crucial that we take out the fact-based research and put it in straightforward stories so that everyone can read it.

Saleha: Do you also believe that the existing and upcoming generations will draw inspirations from their past, and therefore it is imperative for them to be aware of their history?

Rana Safvi: Of course, we learn from history. If we know our mistakes from the pasts, we can avoid it in the future.

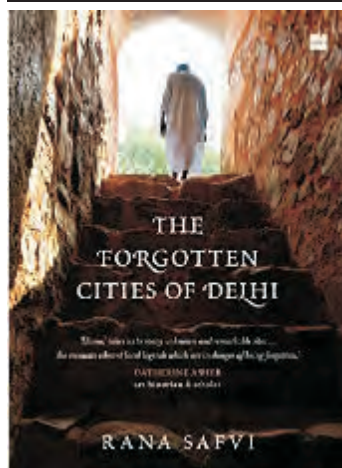
Saleha: We know that you are quite a Twitterati, you have created #Shair which has caught a lot of attention. How did this idea strike you and what is it all about?

Rana Safvi: I just thought that so many people are tweeting on Urdu verses so why not do it



systematically and form a community. So we created the Shair community, and we call it Shair Parivar. We have a schedule every day when everyone tweets. Like today is the birthday of Noshi Gilani, someday it is some topics like Ishq and we all tweet about it.

(Interview by Saleha Ahmad)



Now it has at least 2500 people, we meet once in a while, and there are around a hundred tweets every day. We have come closer to each other and a lot of friendships has blossomed.

Saleha: Since you express your ideas frequently on these social platforms, have you ever faced trolling?

Rana Safvi: Oh yes, lots and lots of it. I used to get upset initially, but now I have realized that it is their job, they are paid for it. So, I ignore and block them.

Saleha: Through your work, we

have found that you firmly believe in *Ganga Jamuni Tahzeeb*. Has Aligarh Muslim University played a vital role in this faith of yours?

Rana Safvi: Undoubtedly, the first chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, "Sultan Jahan Begum" was a woman, the first student who graduated was Mr. Ishwari Prasad, the first principal was a British. The university has broken stereotypes. Though the name has the word "Muslim" in it, it has always had students from every region and every religion.

Saleha: What are you planning to write next?

Rana Safvi: I am already working on the third part of the book *Where Stones Speak*.

Saleha: I am sure you are truly inspirational to many women who read your work and listen to you. What is your message to them?

Rana Safvi: My message to women is to live their life the way they want. It is never too late. Many women feel that now that they have given up their dream for their children and once they grow up, they will have nothing to do. That is not true. I started at the age of 55; they can start whenever they want, whenever they are comfortable. Age is not the barrier, you can always start afresh.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

◀ Page 4

The History of Muslims in New Zealand

both immigrants and refugees from war-torn lands. As a result, two additional Muslim associations were formed to accommodate the needs of the growing population. In 1962, the International Muslim Association of New Zealand was formed in Wellington. In 1977, the Muslim Association of Canterbury was formed.

Yet it was not until 1979 that all three Muslim associations came together to create the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ). Today, FIANZ has grown to include even more Muslim associations in New Zealand.

FIANZ's mission grew out of the mindset of the first Muslims to land in New Zealand and is based on the Noble Quran and the traditions of the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him), "...to guide the New Zealand Muslims in the promotion of religious, social, educational, cultural and economic activities in accordance with the principles of Islam as enshrined in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. FIANZ endeavors to build better understanding between the Muslim community and the various ethnic and religious communities in New Zealand so as to live harmoniously and cohesively for better life for all."

Since the 1980's, the population of Muslims has grown and gave New Zealand a colorful mosaic of Islamic cultures that merge together to create a landscape of peace, brotherhood and a shared bond that is based on a dedication to working for the common good.

◀ Page 7

Deputy Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Issues Fatwa against Child Marriage

"I don't think we understand the depth of what this [fatwa] could potentially do, and especially in communities where people continue to use religion to justify millions of girls' pain and suffering."

Part of the target group is Dukureh's own father, an influential imam in Gambia. "If I go to my dad, and give him the same statement that al-Azhar did, he wouldn't listen to me. But if the

deputy grand imam of al-Azhar is here, yes," Dukureh said. Her father appeared in a Guardian documentary made about her fight to stop FGM. She convinced him not to allow his baby daughter to be cut the first girl in their family not to go through FGM.

Child marriage was something he never discussed, though. Dukureh convinced her father to come to the summit. He later said: "I cried so much, because I learned so

much."

As well as the fatwa, the activists, religious and traditional leaders, government ministers and religious officials came up with a declaration on Africans taking a lead to stop FGM and child marriage, which they are asking countries to sign up to. Many organisations aim to eliminate the practices by 2030.

(Extracted from newageislam.com)

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Shias and Sunnis stand shoulder-to-shoulder for Eid Namaz

Setting aside their differences, Shia and Sunni Muslims in Delhi offered Eid ul-Fitrnamaz together at the Shia mosque in Okhla Vihar, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi recently. The joint namaz was organised in an effort to bridge the gap within the Muslim community. A tradition, that started almost five years ago in the Okhla area of the national capital, has now spread to other cities across the country. A similar initiative was taken in Lucknow last year during Bakrid. The main agenda of the tradition is to bring together the Shia and Sunni factions that have been in an ideological conflict with each other since ages. The initiative to hold joint Shia-Sunni namaz was taken under the Shoulder to Shoulder movement started by Delhi residents Syed Asad Haider Zaidi and Mazin Khan. The movement aims to bridge the gap within Muslim community. Zafar Abbas, a journalist who was a part



Joint Shia-Sunni namaz in Delhi. Those with hands folded around their waists are from the Sunni community. Those with hands going straight down are from the Shia community. (Image: Shoulder to Shoulder)

of this congregation, says, "We don't say we are going to make a substantial change overnight, it might take some time, but we do wish the coming generations are not prejudiced against each other.

The barriers need to be broken. The message of brotherhood needs to be spread. In fact, every religion should initiate moves like these to spread brotherhood." (Extracted from indiatoday.in)

These Hindu, Muslim families swapped kidneys, saved lives, broke stereotypes

Breaking religious barriers, a Hindu man donated his kidney to a Kashmiri Muslim, whose wife later donated her kidney to the Hindu donor's wife.

Breaking religious barriers, a Hindu man donated his kidney to a Kashmiri Muslim, whose wife later donated her kidney to the Hindu donor's wife. Abdul Aziz Nazar, a carpenter by profession and aged 53, hails from Kareri village of Baramulla district. Belonging to a poor family, Abdul had lost both the kidneys due to urolithiasis (kidney stones) and was searching for a donor. Nazar had registered his name on an app that matched donors and receivers. Similarly, Sujit Kumar Singh, 46, from Bihar was also

searching for a kidney for his wife Manjula, 42, who was a patient of glomerulonephritis (a kidney disease) and had both her kidneys affected. Sujit Kumar Singh had also registered his wife's name on the app. Interestingly, while Sujit's kidney matched with Abdul Aziz Nazar, his wife Manjula Kumari's blood group matched with Abdul's wife Shazia (50). Doctors of a Mohali, Punjab-based private hospital suggested the kidney swap after the medical parameters of all four Abdul Aziz Nazar, Shazia, Sujit Kumar

Singh, and Manjula perfectly matched with each other. All the four surgeries were conducted on December 3, 2018. Abdul Aziz Nazar said it was not religion, but the life which matters. "I feel very happy that the kidney belongs to a Hindu," he said. Both Sujit Kumar Singh and his wife Manjula Kumari are also happy after surgery. "We were not getting the right kidney. I had never thought that a Muslim woman's organ will save my wife's life," Singh said.

(Extracted from indiatoday.in)

Rs. 55 Crore Haj House inaugurated in Jharkhand

Newly constructed Haj House in Ranchi, Jharkhand

Ranchi: Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das recently inaugurated the Rs 55 crore Haj House in Ranchi, on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr. The five-storeyed Haj House is constructed according to Mughal architecture. Around 1,000 people can offer prayers. A total



of 150 men and 80 women can stay at a time. It is centrally air-conditioned. The earlier Haj House was constructed at the same place at a cost of Rs. 5.50 crore. Despite repair work, the building could not sustain for long and it was demolished.

Hyderabad Mosque Opens Doors for all Communities

In an example of communal harmony, a mosque in Hyderabad opened its doors for members of all communities to visit and understand the principles of Islam. As part of its 'Visit My Mosque' program, the mosque opens its doors on one day in the year for members of all religious communities to visit the shrine and understand the various religious practices under Islam. This year, 'Eid Milap' was held on June 6, and on the occasion, locals were given a chance to visit Masjid-e-Quba. Speaking to ANI, Mahita, a visitor, said, "This is my first visit to a mosque. We thought that normally they don't allow us into a mosque. But the mosque

management has allowed and for the first time, we witnessed how prayers are held. We also got to know many things after coming here about Islam." Syed Mohsin Ali, the organiser of this event, said the main objective is to spread awareness on Islam as well as to bridge the existing gap between religious communities. "We have conducted Visit My Mosque program mainly to promote social harmony and brotherhood and reduce the gap between communities. The objective of this initiative is to invite other communities to our mosque and make them understand how our religious activities take place," he said.

Hindu Girl saves Muslim Family from Mob Attack

By Anuja Jaiswal

Agra: Days after the killing of a two-and-a-half-year-old girl in Aligarh's Tappal area, a Muslim family was allegedly attacked by a mob in Jattari area while they were travelling from Ballabhgarh in Haryana to Aligarh. The family was saved by a Hindu girl, who is their close friend and was travelling with them in a van to attend a function. According to police, the incident occurred around 3 pm in Jattari, when the van with seven passengers on board, including the Hindu girl, was moving towards Maheshpur after crossing Tappal area. One of the travellers, Shafi Mohammad Abbasi, said the goons on motorcycles attacked the van with iron rods. "They beat me, my daughter who wore a veil and our driver," Abbasi said, adding that the

goons would have killed them if 24-year-old Pooja Chauhan, who was travelling with them, had not bravely intervened. "Pooja stepped out and boldly confronted the attackers," he said. Abbasi said he had known Pooja's family for 32 years and considers her one of his daughters. "One member from the mob softened his stand after seeing Pooja. He quietly handed us our car keys and asked us to drive away immediately," Abbasi said. Pooja said, "The mob attacked us just because they realized that the travellers were from the other community, as some of the women were wearing veils. Such incidents should not happen with anyone." The family managed to reach Aligarh later.

(Full report available on timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

Know Your Neighbour

Bringing communities together for peaceful coexistence:

Know Your Neighbour is an initiative started in 2016 to promote communal harmony in West Bengal. It works in association with Social Network for Assistance to People. They organise walks and conversations and build interaction around community-oriented practices and festivities. They also hold public discussion around educational events like film screenings, literary-cultural festivals.

(For more details, see <https://www.sabrangindia.in/video/bringing-communities-together-peaceful-coexistence-know-your-neighbour>)



Interfaith Bonding at a Bangalore Iftar

By Dolcy K.

With members of different communities becoming more intensely interlinked and interdependent across the world, an increased need is felt for occasions for them to interact and learn about and from each other. Such occasions are an important means to overcome mutual misconceptions, which are a major block to harmonious inter-community relations. Commensality or eating together has long been recognised as a means for people to bond together. While sharing a meal, strangers can become friends in just a few minutes! In this regard, interfaith *iftars* during the month of Ramzan have become an increasingly common phenomenon in many countries. Such meals are hosted by Muslims and by others, sometimes in a place of worship (Muslim as well as other), and are attended by people from diverse faith backgrounds. These

get-togethers are being recognised as a valuable means for promoting inter-community harmony and learning. News about interfaith *iftars* were reported in the media from different parts of India this Ramzan. One such iftar was held in Bangalore, jointly organised by the Bangalore-based Inter-Religious Harmony Movement (IRHM) and Mr. Ahsan Jafri and some of his friends, who are associated with a Sufi tradition that is linked to the Khanqah-e Niazia, which is based in Uttar Pradesh. Held in a hall of the Catholic-run St. Joseph's College of Arts and Commerce, the iftar brought together people from different religious backgrounds. Among those who addressed the audience were spiritual speaker Mr. Janakiram and Mr. Dinesh Rao of the Bahai community, who spoke, among other things, about fasting. The *iftar* and Maghrib prayers were followed by a programme of Sufi music and then

dinner.

The Inter-Religious Harmony Movement (IRHM), one of the co-organisers of the programme, was launched several years ago by a Jesuit (Catholic priest) and well-known advocate of interfaith dialogue, the late Fr. Ronnie Prabhu. It is one of the few active interfaith dialogue groups in Bangalore. It organises talks on different spiritual / religious themes by speakers from different faith backgrounds as well as occasional workshops and retreats. The group meets regularly, generally on the second and last Sunday of every month at Ashirvad, a Jesuit-run centre off St. Mark's Road.

If you'd like to be part of the IRHM, please contact the group's Convenor, Ms. Margaret Rebello, on 9632639218

For more details about the IRHM, see <https://islamicvoice.com/bangalores-inter-religious-harmony-movement/>

RSS leader Indresh Kumar visits Darul Uloom Deoband; welcomed with an open heart

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh senior functionary Indresh Kumar visited Islamic seminary Darul Uloom at Deoband in Saharanpur recently. Kumar is the president of Muslim Rashtriya Manch (MRM), an RSS affiliate. As reported by the Pioneer, it was a courtesy visit and he had gone to the seminary with the message of brotherhood and mutual love. Maintaining that its doors were open for everyone, the Darul Uloom gave him warm welcome. After attending a function

organised by MRM in Deoband, Kumar went to Darul Uloom where he was welcomed by Chancellor of seminary, Maulana Abul Qasim Nomani. He was apprised of the history of ulema's role in freedom struggle. Maulana Abul Qasim Nomani said, "Our doors are always open for visitors. We welcomed Indreshji with an open heart." Indresh Kumar said that he went there with the message of mutual love and brotherhood which is only way the country can move

forward to prosperity. He suggested that the government should devise methods to upgrade education and increase job opportunities for everyone. Kumar lamented that there were a few opportunistic leaders who try to create a rift between two communities and create a sense of fear among minorities. 'But we are of the view that all must follow their respective religions and respect others' faiths' he said.

(Extracted from siasat.com)

Rahmani30 shines again

Students of Rahmani Program of Excellence, also known as Rahmani30, have once again achieved great success in the world's toughest undergraduate entrance examination the IIT Advanced exam. 41 out of 109 students of Rahmani30 were successful this year. 92% of (132 out of 143) students were successful at the JEE MAINS. Amazingly all of the students in the female batch were successful at in this exam except for one. Rahmani30 has also now established itself in the world of

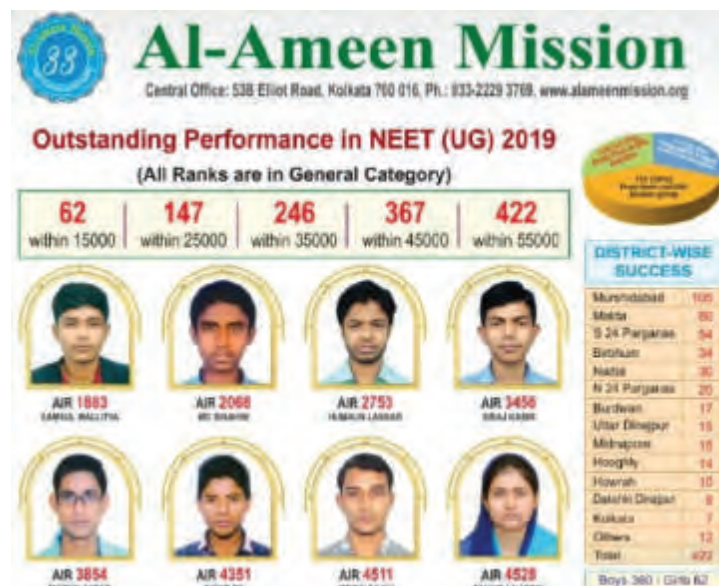
Medical entrance exam preparation. Repeating its last year result of 100% NEET results and significantly increasing number of students with high 550 plus scores; it also replicated the AIIMS success and added JIPMER to its success list. Rahmani Program of Excellence under Rahmani Foundation has been successfully replacing educational hopelessness in the community with the courage to dream big, all the while demonstrating its proven method of success. Maulana Mohammad

Wali Rahmani, who is the founder of this nation-wide program, credits success to the consistent guidance and untiring efforts of Shri. Abhayanand Ji (Ex. DGP Bihar), and sincere and continuous efforts of centre leadership that comprises the faculty, management and staff. He maintains that this result could not have been possible had the students and their parents not partnered with us, especially given our different model of education and training that seeks to convert students into learners.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

West Bengal

422 students of Al-Ameen Mission pass NEET



Kolkata: Al Ameen Mission, a West Bengal-based Muslim NGO, in recent years has produced numerous professionals, including 2500 doctors, 4000 engineers and 65 civil servants. This year Al-Ameen Mission has broken all its previous records as 422 students qualified India's biggest medical entrance exam, NEET, out of which 128 (30.5%) students are from poor and BPL families, 133 (31.5%) are from middle and

upper middle income group and 161 (38%) from lower middle income group.

The man behind the mission is Mr. Nurul Islam, whose vision and tenacity for the betterment and upliftment of the underprivileged has brought great results for the NGO in recent years. He told Muslim Mirror that Ramakrishna Mission truly inspired his inner spirit.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

Announcement

ELANA FINISHING SCHOOL

Elana Finishing School aims at equipping young Muslim women. InshaAllah, we are starting a four-month, thrice-a-week course from the end of July 2019. The course includes cookery, beauty care, nutrition and fitness, the art of makeup and hairstyle, gearing up for married life, values of life and character building, essential social etiquette, communication skills and leadership training. It aims at impart skills that a young lady will need in her multifaceted roles of wife, mother, daughter-in-law and a professional.

*All the topics are based majorly on the Quran, the Seerah and the Sunnah.

*Guest lecturers will be invited to share their expertise on different subjects.

*Registrations have started and there are limited seats for each batch.

Age: 18-38 years.

Venue: Al Noor Academy, Sheriff House, Richmond Road, Bengaluru

For registration, contact 9844521389

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UK: Arms sales to Saudi Arabia declared unlawful

rebels overran much of the country, including capital Sanaa. The conflict escalated in 2015 when Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Arab allies launched a wide-ranging military campaign aimed at rolling back Houthi gains and shoring up the country's Saudi-backed government. The war has resulted in a collapsed economy and a cholera outbreak that has affected over 1.1 million people. Calls have been made to governments across the globe to halt weapon sales to Saudi Arabia, resulting in Germany suspending such sales. The international criticism against the Gulf kingdom

rose especially after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October last year. A damning UN report said Wednesday that the Saudi state was responsible for the Khashoggi murder and called for further investigation into the incident.

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Mosque in Punjab Village Protected by Villagers

The 100 year-old mosque in village Hedon Bet, Machhiwara Tehsil in Ludhiana still stands tall, despite zero Muslim population in the village. The mosque that was built in 1920 lies abandoned for want of worshippers. Thanks to village elders, the mosque has not been demolished or encroached upon by land grabbers. The elders of the village refuse to let anyone demolish it as they believe it's a house of God. The elders of village are firm that as long as they live, the mosque



will stand and they will stand guard to prevent demolition or encroachment. "We will not let anyone demolish the masjid, it is the house of God," says Sarpanch G u r p a l S i n g h t o dailysikhupdates.com. The

residents of the village overwhelmingly support the elder's views and prevent anyone from occupying the abandoned mosque or any plan to demolish it.

The Sikhs have a long history of protecting other's places of worship. The 6th Guru, Guru Hargobind Singh even built a mosque for Muslims.

The Muslim population of the village Hedon Bet of Ludhiana moved to Pakistan in 1947 abandoning their places of worship.

(Extracted from siasat.com)

Orlem Church Reaches out to Muslim Neighbours

Mumbai: For Muslims in Malad, June 3 evening was not a routine affair. For the first time, instead of heading to a nearby mosque to break their Ramzan fast, they had another destination: Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Orlem that had organised an iftar. The church even called out azaan and made arrangements for the devotees to pray namaaz and break their fast. "We normally have this for school children, but this time, I thought we should do it for everyone. So we called for an iftar gathering that was open to other faiths as well. We are all Indians and live and love Indian culture so we prayed for our country. People of all faiths were called for the iftar because we believe in Sabka Malik Ek," said Fr. Michael Pinto, the parish priest. Over 150 people attended the event that even



welcomed men, women and children from communities besides Muslims and Christians. Some of the delighted Muslims in the area expressed their joy at the courtesy extended to them. "Fruits and dates were cut and served like they are done in any iftar party. They had even made arrangement

for a person to given azaan for their prayers. They gave us a lot of respect and we really appreciated that they called us because we live in the same area," said Ruksar Nadiadwala, a resident of Orlem.

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

Kerala Businessman Yusuf Ali gets First Gold Residence Card

Lulu chairman Yousuf Ali receiving first permanent residency in the UAE

Thiruvananthapuram/Abu Dhabi: The Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship UAE announced that it had issued its first gold residence card-permanent residency (PR) to diaspora businessman M.A. Yusuf Ali, Chairman of Lulu Group. Ali, who hails from Thrissur in Kerala, was handed the gold card in Abu Dhabi by Brigadier Saeed Salem Al Shamsi, executive director of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs, as he became the first of 6,800 investors to receive



the PR. The first beneficiaries are investors with total investments exceeding Dh100 billion. Unlike the long-term visa of five to ten

years for businessmen and talented individuals, the Gold Card gives PR to the holder. Ali, who has been based in the UAE for more than 45 years, is considered as one of the biggest business leaders in the Middle East region with his retail and hospitality empire spread across the world, with more than 170 hypermarkets and shopping malls. Lulu employs more than 50,000 people comprising 42 nationalities.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

"Gifting Sunnah" makes Eid more Special



A group of more than 250 youth from different walks of life in Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai united for the cause of spreading love by distributing gifts to public servants in their city on the day of Eid and the next two days. They reached out to nearly 10000 public servants of other faiths who serve the nation all year long. The public servants were from the police department, Metro staff, Pourakarmikas, RTC drivers and conductors, Telecom staff, MWSSB staff, Auto Drivers, ATM security guards, Post Office personnel, Security personnel, Railway Station Staff, Govt Hospital Staff, Media Houses, Bank Staff, Fire Station Staff, Govt School Staff, Govt College Staff, Passport Office Staff, Spastic Society inmates, Schools

for Physically Challenged and others. Before handing the sweet box that had an 'Eid Mubarak' sticker on it in three languages, the volunteers said, "This is a token of appreciation for your services. Eid Mubarak". This trend called # Gifting sunnah started in 2018 where 400 people received the gifts in Bangalore. This year it has spread to three cities in different states.

Gifting is a sunnah of the holy Prophet. About gifting, the Prophet has said, "Exchange gifts, as that will lead to increasing your love for one another" and also "He who does not thank people has not thanked Almighty God". So, to spread love and to thank people, the youth mobilised money from friends, well-wishers and others via crowd funding.

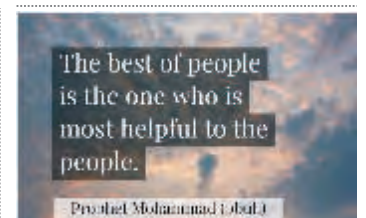
(Extracted from twocircles.net)

Syed Ahmed

Auto Driver Rewarded for Honesty on the Job

Bengaluru: The city Police Commissioner T. Suneel Kumar rewarded a 45-year-old autorickshaw driver for his honesty when he returned a bag containing cash, ATM cards and an expensive mobile phone which was left behind by a passenger. The passenger, identified as Pramod Kumar Jain, took the autorickshaw from Majestic, driven by Syed Ahmed. When Jain got off at the City Railway Station, he left behind a bag containing cash and other valuables. When Syed Ahmed noticed the bag, he waited at the same spot thinking the passenger would return to collect the bag. When the passenger did not return even after hours, Ahmed took the bag to the

city Police Commissioner's office seeking help in returning the bag to its owner. The police checked the bag and found a visiting card of Jain. The police called him to collect the bag, which contained Rs 45,000 in cash, two ATM cards and an I-Phone. The bag was handed over to Jain in the presence of the Commissioner. Kumar gave Ahmed a certificate of appreciation and a cash reward. (Source: deccanchronicle.com)



MBE for Man Who Opened Adoption to Muslims

A British Muslim man has made it to the Queen's Birthday Honors list for his 20-year-work in fostering and helping open adoption to the British Muslim community in Tower Hamlets, London, East London Advertiser reported. "Anywhere I've got an opportunity to get access to the community, I take that opportunity," said Emdad Hossein Talukder, 65, from Kensington who speaks to people about fostering and adoption in hard-to-reach places in his work for the council. In the Queen Elizabeth birthday honor list, Talukder received MBE or "Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire" award.

Over the past two decades, Talukder's job took him to churches, mosques, and community and children centers and wherever he thinks he can reach people. As part of his role, the Muslim man has also translated dozens of documents into his native Bengali language to help spread information. Talukder's entry into the world of fostering came when he and his wife, Mahfuza Rahman, brought a foster child into their home for the first time in 1999. They have now

helped a total of four children in the same way.

In 2000, Talukder began work for the council, trying to get more families to take part. The barriers facing those families are ideological as well as practical since the holy Qur'an bans children from taking the name of their adoptive father. As a result, Talukder thought of helping in getting a new legal tool called 'special guardianship' approved by the Shariah Council of Britain in 2005. The new 'Special Guardianship' allows families to look after children until they are 18, but they keep some links to their biological parents. "There are many Muslim children in this country, they also need adoption, because they can't get out [of the system] on a short-term basis. They need long-term families," Talukder explained. In 2017, the Muslim man was granted a special guardianship order for a child he had been looking after since the boy was two. Now 21, Kabir G married a woman in Bangladesh in 2018.



"I'm happy that, throughout my life, I was able to educate and motivate many people to consider fostering. Despite reaching the age where many people would be thinking about retirement, I'm not leaving. I'm going to stick at it for as long as I can," Talukder hopes.

In Islamic Shari'ah, raising a child who isn't one's genetic child is allowed and, in the case of an orphan, even encouraged. But, according to the Islamic view, the child doesn't become a true child of the 'adoptive' parents. For example, the child is named after the biological, not adoptive, father. The distinct Islamic system for adoption is called 'Kafalah' where the adoptive child can become a 'mahram' to his adopted family if he or she is breastfed by the adoptive mother before the age of two.

Palestine honours Indian with 'Star of Jerusalem' award

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has conferred an Indian national with the Star of Jerusalem medal, one of the highest honours given to foreign nationals by the Palestinian Authority. At an event organised to honour Sheikh Mohammad Munir Ansari recently, Mr. Abbas thanked him for serving Palestine and Jerusalem, the third holiest city for Muslims, with distinction.

The Palestinian President said the Ansari family's presence in the old city of Jerusalem reflects the strong traditional ties between Indian and Palestinian people. He also called upon for strengthening people to people contact between India and Palestine. Mr. Abbas plans to send Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh to India soon to boost tourist inflows from there which can contribute to strong bonding between the two people. Representative of India, Sunil Kumar, who was present the event, also appreciated the role played by the Ansari family in strengthening Indo-Palestine ties. Sheikh Munir Ansari is the Director of Indian Hospice, a unique and historic monument in

the heart of the Holy city, which has become a symbol of India's heritage and presence in the old city of Jerusalem going back to over 800 years. The Indian hospice has been under the direct supervision of a representative from India since 1924. Sheikh Munir Ansari's father, Sheikh Nazir Hassan Ansari, was appointed the first Sheikh of the Hospice from whom the mantle passed on to the incumbent who was born in Jerusalem in 1928 and has spent his whole life here. In 2011, India honoured Sheikh

Munir Ansari with the Pravasi Divas Samman, the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians. In the 12th century, Baba Farid, the famous Sufi saint from Punjab, visited Jerusalem on pilgrimage and prayed in seclusion for 40 days at the current site of the Hospice. It later became a pilgrimage site for Indian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem and was dedicated as a charitable waqf property in trust for a pious purpose.

(Extracted from thehindu.com)

COMMUNITY ROUND UP

Justice For Tabrez

The brutal mob lynching of Tabrez Ansari, a 24 year-old Muslim youth, a welder by profession, in Jharkhand's Saraikela-Kharaswan has evoked widespread outrage from across the country. Citizens and civil rights activists from as many as 50 cities across the country stepped out protesting the incident.

Tabrez, who had come to his home

in Jharkhand to celebrate Eid, was killed merely five kilometres away from his residence by a group of men who tied him to an electric pole and forced him to chant "Jai Shri Ram". He was brutally beaten. As per his family, he had died long before he was brought to the hospital.

(Extracted from sabrangindia.in)

Rouf Ahmed Dar

Kashmiri Tourist Guide Dies After Saving Five Tourists from Drowning



In a heart-sinking incident a Kashmiri tourist guide lost his life after saving five tourists, including two foreigners, from Lidder river at the famous Pahalgam resort. A raft capsized at rafting point in Mawoora Pahalgam in the south Kashmir district on after it was caught in sudden gusty winds and all passengers onboard fell in the Lidder river, the officials said.

Rouf Ahmed Dar managed to save all the passengers but went missing in the aftermath. "Without caring for his own safety he rescued all the tourists from the fast-flowing water of the river, but lost his life," said a local. "Mr Dar successfully saved five tourists, including two foreigners, in the true spirit of trademark Kashmiri hospitality," the officials said. The officials said the body of the brave tourist

guide was retrieved from the river and after completion of medico-legal formalities, it was handed over to his relatives. The guide, who had a diploma in rafting, has been hailed as a brave heart. The Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik has hailed the brave heart guide as a real-life hero and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the victim. The Kashmir Divisional Commissioner has also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for Rouf's family. The victim got married few years ago and is survived by parents, wife and two siblings. Rouf was pursuing a Master's degree in political science from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). He had also done his B.A and B.Ed.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

Mohamed Salah

Mohamed Salah's presence has caused Islamophobia in Liverpool to fall.

Mohamed Salah's presence at Liverpool Football Club in the UK has been a direct cause of a fall in Islamophobia in Liverpool, according to a new study. Research by Stanford University found an 18.9 per cent drop in anti-Muslim hate crimes on Merseyside in the period since Salah signed for Liverpool in June 2017. No other offence had a comparable drop in the same timeframe, while anti-Muslim tweets by Liverpool fans halved compared to other major Premier League clubs.

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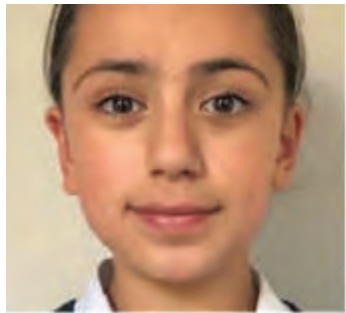
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MONUMENTAL MEMORIALS

Tara Sharifi

11-Year-Old Iranian Girl gets highest Mensa IQ Score, beating Einstein & Hawking

An 11-year-old Iranian high school student in the United Kingdom is making headlines for getting a remarkable result on her Mensa IQ test that even surpasses those of great thinkers such as Albert Einstein and the late Professor Stephen Hawking.

Tara Sharifi, a student at Aylesbury High School, recently took the Mensa IQ test in Oxford where she scored well above the "genius benchmark" of 140. The 11-year-old student scored 162 points on the test, which is two points ahead of Einstein, a theoretical physicist who is considered as one of the two



pillars of modern physics, and famous cosmologist Professor Stephen Hawking. The Mensa IQ test, which needed to be answered within a set time, focused on the student's ability to understand the

meanings of words. "I was shocked when I got the result. I never expected to get such a good score," Sharifi said. With the score she received, Sharifi now qualifies for the Mensa membership, which is also known as the High IQ society. "It was a joint decision between me and my parents to take the test," the girl said. "It will be a wonderful opportunity to meet other people within the Mensa system. I have told some of my friends at school and they were really impressed." She also added that when she becomes older, she would pursue "something related to mathematics."

Anti-Lynching Protest: 5000 People come Together in Jharkhand

In perhaps the largest protest against lynching, over 5,000 people gathered in Dumri in Jharkhand on May 31. The immediate trigger was the lynching on April 10, 2019 of a 50-year-old Adivasi man, Prakash Lakra, a resident of Jurmu village in Dumri block of Gumla who was beaten to death by a group of people from the neighboring village of Jairagi on suspicion of killing a bull. Three others - Peter Kerketta, Belarius Minge and Jenerius Minz - were seriously injured in what can only be described as an instance of lynching. Furthermore, there are questions being raised as to how the local police responded in the aftermath of the case. Deeply disturbed by the inhumanity of the incident over 5,000 people held a demonstration in Dumri on May

31. These included people from Gumla, the state capital of Ranchi and even Latehar where two people suspected of being cow smugglers were lynched and hanged in March 2016. The protest was organised by Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samiti and many of the state's human rights activists were also present at the demonstration. Addressing the gathering, Saroj Hembram of the Jan Sangharsh Samiti said that this incident was examined by her and several other human rights organizations. It was clear in the investigation that the owner of a dead bull, a resident of Jurmu, had spoken to the victims and other villagers to cut off the flesh and remove the skin. When they were doing this, they were attacked by a group of about 35-40 people in Jairagi village. The merciless

blows, kicks and punches continued for three hours! After this the mob left the victims in front of Dumri Police Station around midnight. Rather than sending the victims to the hospital immediately, the police allegedly made them wait in the open for about four hours. By the time he was taken to the local health center, Prakash had died. Saroj Hembram reminded the people that in the last four years in Jharkhand, 11 persons were beaten to death, 9 of whom were Muslims and the remaining two were tribals. Jirom Kuzur of the Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samiti also raised questions about the role of police in the light of the death of Prakash Lakra.

(Extracted from sabrangindia.in)

Story of honest Mumbai cab driver's honesty goes viral after passenger tweets

A Twitter thread about an Ola cab driver, Asif Iqbal Abdul Gaffar Pathan, went viral after a passenger tweeted about how the man had gone out of his way to return a missing wallet. Twitter user @DarthSierra tweeted about this incident to highlight and change prejudices against cab drivers. In the thread, the passenger narrated the entire incident and spoke about the driver's behaviour. An hour after reaching his destination, the man realised that his wallet had been misplaced, so he called the driver to inquire about it. During the conversation, Pathan told the passenger that he had kept the wallet safely with him and was on his way to return it. At 12:30 am, when the driver returned the wallet, the duo realised another

coincidence that both of them had the same birthday. As a token of thanks, the customer shared a picture of Pathan, thanked him for

his noble deed and wished him a happy birthday. People were impressed by Pathan's honesty and tweeted their praise.

Palestinian Origin Prez for El-Salvadore

Nayib Bukele, 37, a man of Palestinian ancestry, has been elected President of El Salvador, a central American country. He was sworn in on June 1. Born in 1981, Bekele was born in San Salvadore to Palestinian migrant father Ormando Ahmed Bukela Qattan, who set up a textile mill and a mosque in Salvador. His mother is a native Salvadoran woman. Bukele has promised to extricate the nation riddled with corruption



and gang violence from the mess it has got into due to distressed economy and social violence. Previously a member of the Leftist party Farabundo Mari National Liberation Front, he broke ranks with it and joined the conservative Arena party. He has named eight women to top government posts, seven of them as cabinet ministers.

INTERVIEW

Saniyasnain Khan, Founder of Goodword Books

Saniyasnain Khan is an Indian television host and children's author, with over 100 children's books to his credit. These are on subjects relating to Islam, and a number of them have been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Swedish, Bosnian, Norwegian, Russian, Uzbek, Turkish, Arabic, Malay, Thai, Malayalam, Bengali, Urdu, etc. His most recent books are 365 Prophet Muhammad Stories, 365 Days with the Quran and Bedtime Quran Stories.



Goodword Books

After doing his post-graduation from the University of Delhi, he began assisting his father, the noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. In 1996, Saniyasnain Khan established Goodword Books, which deals mainly with books on Islamic subjects. Realizing the need to educate the younger generation about the message of Islam as a religion of peace and harmony, he began writing stories for children. His first book, Tell Me About Hajj, was published in 1999. Afterwards he began to write children's books based on the Quran and Hadith.

Goodword Quran Project

In 2009, Goodword started publishing the Quran translations in major languages of the world. So far Goodword has published the Quran in 25 languages including English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Sinhalese, Urdu, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Punjabi, Kannada, Telugu, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, etc.

Q&A

You are a leading publisher of high quality Islamic books for adults and children. How and when did you come into publishing?

In 1976, my father, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, started a magazine, entitled Al-Risala. At that time I was in the tenth class. I used to go to the Chawri Bazar to buy paper and would also visit the printers in the Jama Masjid area quite often. Somehow these visits influenced my choosing to

make publishing a full time career which I did in 1983. In 1996 I founded Goodword Books. From 1983 to 1996, I was engaged in publishing books written mainly by my father in Urdu and English.

Did you start the publishing house primarily for your father's books?

The aim was to print good quality Islamic books. As there was a vacuum in this area at that time, I decided to launch Goodword Books.

Your mission is to educate the new generation about real Islamic values. How are you setting about achieving this goal?

I write stories on Islamic subjects and basically they are from the Quran. Every story that I write has a message and a moral value at the end of it. If we can familiarize the younger generation with these values, they will grow up as peaceful members of society.

How far have you been successful in reaching out to people of other faiths in explaining what Islam is?

We regularly organize lectures on interfaith harmony through CPS International. We attend various conferences in India and abroad which helps us in spreading the spiritual and peaceful message of Islam.

Do you participate in international book fairs?

We have participated in some book fairs in the international market Cape Town, London and Frankfurt and also we take part in major book fairs in India as well. We provide the translations of the Quran in several languages at a subsidized price, which has attracted a lot of attention and has helped in explaining to people the real message of the Quran.

Makkah Charter Calls for Religious Tolerance & Pluralism

The conference of the Muslim World League (MWL) held at Makkah in Saudi Arabia recently has issued a declaration calling for co-existence, pluralism and religious tolerance in the world. Hussein Madavoor, state vice president of the Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen (KNM), who attended the meeting, said the 'Makkah Charter' issued at the conference is a historical document as it addresses almost all the issues concerning the Muslims world over. "Modelled on the Medina Charter drafted by Prophet Muhammad, the Makkah Charter underlines the need for religious freedom and exhorts to stop the hate campaign in the name of the religion," Madavoor said. "There are 30 articles in the Charter that deal with issues like Islamophobia, protection of places of worship and ending

harassment of women," he said. Most important among the articles is the one on Islam and pluralism. "Plurality of faith is a reality and we need to accept it. There is no point in living a utopian world. There are different schools of jurisprudence in Islam and there are other systems of faiths too. How all these can co-exist with any confrontation is a topic discussed at the meeting," Madavoor said.

Another issue discussed at the meeting is teaching the middle path of moderation of Islam to the young generation who does not have a comprehensive understanding of Islam. "The lack of proper knowledge is the reason for dangerous practices like doing hijra to Syria," he said.

The meeting also decided to come out with a proper interpretation of the verses in Quran in the

backdrop of widespread misreading of the holy text. "In Kerala also, we have seen some discussions along these lines. There are attempts to take the verses from out of the context and spread hatred," Madavoor said.

The MWL conference also discussed the ways to counter the rising Islamophobia in the world. "The meeting felt that that the wrong notions of the religion stems from gross misunderstanding. MWL decided to spread authentic knowledge of Islam," he said.

Similar meetings will be held in different the countries with the participation of all the Muslim groups to spread the message of the Makkah Charter to ground level. MWL will take the lead in organising such meetings.

(Extracted from newageislam.com)

Number of Female Judges in Turkey at its Highest

The number of female judges and prosecutors in Turkey has reached its highest in the past few years, according to figures from the country's Ministry of Justice. Out of a total of 20,777 judges and prosecutors on duty, 13,284 are male and 7,493 are female. The judicial reform strategy paper, unveiled recently by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, set the goal to maintain gender equality in personnel recruitment. During the appointment of 1,446 judges and prosecutors at a ceremony on May 22, 758 were men and 688, about 47.5 percent female.

The growth in women judges and

prosecutors is skyrocketing. The number of women judges and prosecutors was 2,664 in 2010, it was 3,549 in 2013 and 3,977 in July 2016. Since 2010, the number of female judges and prosecutors has tripled. While the ratio of women judges and prosecutors was 22.8 percent in 2010, this rate increased to 36 percent with the latest appointments. There are relatively more women judges among the female judicial members entering the profession. Out of the 7,493 women, 6,369 of them are judges, while 1,124 are prosecutors. The number of female judges working in judicial

justice is 3,947. Some 460 judges are in the administrative courts, 448 are in the regional courts of justice, and 118 are in the regional administrative courts. In the Supreme Court, the number of female judges is 718, while the number of women prosecutors is 24. There are 236 female judges and 13 prosecutors in the Council of State. In the Constitutional Court, there are four women judges. Fourteen of the 207 prosecutors in the Council of Judges and Prosecutors are women, while there are 82 female judges and prosecutors out of 82 at the headquarters of the Ministry.

This Kashmiri driver is a model of honesty

Tariq Ahmed, a driver belonging to Shopian district in Jammu and Kashmir, had taken a tourist family, which hails from Bhopal, to the famous Aharbal falls. After returning from the trip, the family forgot their bag in the vehicle. Tariq worked hard to trace the family and finally returned the bag that contained cash, gold and smartphones worth over Rs 10 lakhs, Tourism Department sources said, adding that the family has expressed gratitude at Ahmed's noble and honest gesture.



MISCELLANY

Sikh community presents \$60,000 cheque for New Zealand mosque attack victims



Sikh community presents \$60,000 cheque to Christchurch Mayor to help victims of mosque attacks

The Christchurch mosque shootings were two consecutive attacks at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand during Friday prayer on 15 March 2019. The accused gunman from Australia now faces 51 murder charges and 40 attempted murder charges - along with the terrorism charge.

Over NZ\$10 million were raised for victims of the mosque attacks across three major fundraisers. New Zealand's Sikh community also rallied together to raise more than NZ\$60,000 for victims and their families. The collection was done within five days of posting an appeal on Facebook, with the help of over 1600 donations. This amount was presented to Lianne Dalziel, the Mayor Christchurch on Wednesday, 12 June at a function held at the Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Christchurch. A cheque of NZ\$60,000 was delivered in the presence of the members of the Muslim and Sikh communities. Mr Abdul Aziz from the Linwood Islamic Centre, Mirwaiz from Al Noor Mosque and other members of the Muslim community marked the occasion to appreciate the fundraising efforts of the Sikh community.

This fundraiser was initiated by Auckland-based Jaspreet Singh Rajpura with the support of Sikh

Supreme Society. "No amount of money can change what has happened, or bring back the lives lost. But we can offer our support to victims and their families, so they don't have to bear this burden alone," he said. "This couldn't have been possible without community support. Thank you everyone. Hope we will always stay strong and stand together again and again." Mr Singh said that a collection of NZ\$60,458 surpassed the initial goal of NZ\$50,000 within just five days of starting this fundraiser.

Daljit Singh, the spokesperson of Supreme Sikh Society, thanked all Sikh organizations and the local community for their donations. "We're very thankful to the people who have made financial contributions," he said.

"Our hopes, prayers and practical help go out to each and every victim, bystander or loved one affected."

"Supreme Sikh Society has always been adopting the philosophy of first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji who preached that service to humanity is service to God. He stated that life should be spent in love and service of entire mankind. This belief has been at the core of the Sikh doctrine."

(Extracted from sbs.com.au)



Representatives of Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre attended the function held at the Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Christchurch.

On Urdu and Linguistic Diversity



By Mohammad
Aslam Parvaiz

There is no reason why students of Urdu-medium schools should not be enabled to speak excellent English.

I am from Old Delhi. I was born in Ballimaran our house was just a short distance from where the famous Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib had lived. Ours was an Urdu-speaking family. I studied in an Urdu-medium government school, where the monthly fees was, in those days, 10 paise! After that, I enrolled at the Anglo-Arabic Senior Secondary School, which was also an Urdu-medium school.

In the 9th standard, I chose to study Science: it was a subject that I was deeply interested in. However, people wondered how I, a student of an Urdu-medium school, would manage as Science was taught through the medium of English. I soon realised that there was hardly any material on Science available in Urdu.

In 1992, in order to address this lacuna, I started writing articles on science-related issues in Urdu. I would send them to popular Urdu newspapers that were read by a wide cross-section of the Urdu-speaking public so that they could have a broad reach. Later, I launched the Urdu monthly magazine 'Science', which is still being brought out.

Some people claim that the problem that Urdu faces today is because it now has almost no link with employment. I do not agree with this. Numerous schools and universities advertise for the post of Urdu teachers but these posts remain vacant as there aren't

enough sufficiently qualified applicants. The problem lies in the fact that in many cases, even families that consider themselves 'Urdu-speaking' have stopped speaking the language. That is why Urdu has declined. Somehow, some people wrongly believe that Urdu is synonymous with backwardness and English with progress.

English is the language of today, and it is not surprising that many people want their children to excel in that language. That is perfectly understandable. By all means study and excel in English, but that doesn't mean that one should neglect other languages, including one's mother tongue. There is no reason why students of Urdu-medium schools should not be enabled to speak excellent English. I know of a Hindi-medium school where the students' English is in no way inferior to that of students in English-medium schools. There is the case of a Muslim-run school in Kolkata where students excel in four languages: English, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu.

Progress doesn't mean that one should forget one's roots and culture. Take the case of Japan. Japan has impressive economic and technological progress but its people haven't given up their language. At the same time, we should be open to good influences from different quarters.

No language is superior or inferior. Each has

Do Justice

If God is already so close to us, what does getting close to God mean? It means to be coloured in God's colour, to adopt, imbibe and reflect God's attributes.

Practising justice is a cardinal Islamic teaching. One can conceive of the practice of justice in different ways. One way is to consider how far we are doing justice with regard to the various roles that we play and our different responsibilities. For instance, if one is a student who is getting a scholarship, is one doing justice to the scholarship by spending enough time studying? Or, if one is a teacher, is she doing justice to her work by preparing well enough for her classes?

The reality of whether one is indeed doing justice with regard to one's roles and responsibilities is known only to oneself and to God. The fact that God knows our inner reality, including whether we are indeed doing justice with regard to our roles and responsibilities, is really what counts. We will have to give a full account of this to God.

Justice and Goodness are attributes of God. The spiritual path can be summarised as a process of getting dyed in the colour of God, of imbibing and reflecting the attributes of God, including justice and goodness. For

its own value. I write on issues related to science in Urdu, but I do not advocate that one should engage in higher studies in Science in the Urdu medium. For that, one definitely needs to know English. Nature reveals in diversity, and linguistic diversity is a fact of life. We need to accept diversity as such as it is a law of life. Different types of flowers put together make a beautiful bouquet. In the same way, one can learn

instance, God is merciful, and so we too should be merciful. God is generous, and so we too should be generous. God is just, and so we too should be just.

A father wants his children to become like him. When a child is born, the father is eager to know if it looks like him. He wants to see his reflection in his child. When the child behaves like his father, the father is happy. Think, then, how much it will please God if we reflect God's attributes in our lives!

This is what acquiring closeness to God means. The Quran tells us that God is closer to us than our jugular vein. If God is already so close to us, what does getting close to God mean? It means to be coloured in God's colour, to adopt, imbibe and reflect God's attributes. The greater the degree to which we do so, the closer to God we get.

(Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz is Vice-Chancellor of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. He can be contacted on maparvaiz@gmail.com)

various languages, each of which has its own place and value.

Urdu scholars need to reflect on how they can make the language a medium for intellectual communication and a means for Urdu-speaking people to acquire knowledge. One thing that they can do is to write on a range of social issues and publish their writings in popular Urdu newspapers and magazines and in this way reach a wide readership.

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Help Mariyam Khatoon, widow of Alimuddin Ansari, the Jharkhand lynching victim

Mariyam Khatoon, the widow of Alimuddin Ansari, has been living a sorrowful life since the time her husband was lynched to death in June, 2017 by a mob on suspicion of carrying beef in Jharkhand. Just while Khatoon and her family were trying to cope up with the unexpected misery, her eldest son, Shehzad, passed away in January 2019, after they couldn't afford medical treatment for him.

On June 29, 2017, Alimuddin Ansari (55), was transporting meat in his van from Chitarpur area of Ramgarh. Suspecting that Ansari was carrying beef, a group of cow vigilantes attacked him and set his van on fire before lynching him in full public view at Bazartand locality in Ramgarh. A video of the incident later went viral on social media. Almost a year later, a special fast track court, set up by the Jharkhand High Court (HC), awarded life imprisonment to 11 of the 12 accused on June 21, 2018. However, within a month of the conviction, 10 of the 11 convicts were granted bail by the HC. Also, Khatoon was given a compensation of rupees seven lakhs by the HC. However, no amount of money can compensate for the irreparable loss of Khatoon at the hands of the Hindutva right-wing fundamentalists.



Image Courtesy: Hindustan Times

Just recently, in February 2019, Khatoon said that the government had abandoned them after fulfilling half the promises. She said, "The government abandoned us after fulfilling half the promises it made. We were assured jobs and a ration shop (under the Public Distribution System), but nothing has happened till now. I used to keep doing the rounds of government offices. But I have stopped now," she says. It is not about monetary compensation, she adds, but having a stable source of income.

With no end to her agony, as per the information received by us, now Khatoon's son, Shahbaz (18) is critically ill and admitted to the hospital. On contacting Khatoon, she told us that Shahbaz has

undergone a surgery yesterday after a hole was detected in his intestines. She thus requires money for his further treatment.

On asking about the promise of giving a job, Khatoon said that after the death of her eldest son, who was to get a job, she took her other son, Shahban (19), to the government office pleading that he be given a job. Though all the documents were submitted, Khatoon hasn't received a reply from the authorities yet!

Khatoon says that she will not be able to bear one more grave loss in her life. Thus, on behalf of Khatoon, Sabrang India appeals to everybody to help her in her hard times. Following are

Khatoon's bank details:

Name: Mariyam Khatoon

Bank Name: Union Bank of India

Bank Branch: Ramgarh, Ranchi

Account Number:

542002010010826

IFSC Code: UBIN0554201

(Source:

<https://www.sabrangindia.in/article/help-mariyam-khatoon-widow-alimuddin-ansari-jharkhand-lynching-victim>)

Bahrain Excels in Ratio Of Female Startup Founders

Bahrain is one of the top 10 startup ecosystems with the largest share of female founders, according to the 2019 Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER), launched at the recent TNW conference in Amsterdam. Described as 'the world's most comprehensive and widely-read research on startups', the report is produced by StartUp Genome in partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Congress. With 18% of its startups founded by women, Bahrain topped even internationally recognized startup hubs such as Silicon Valley (16%) and London (15%). Khalid Al Rumaihi, Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board said: "With both female founders and women taking leadership roles throughout the ecosystem, Bahrain is a dynamic and diverse market at the head of new trends that are shaping the way society and business operates."

Dr. Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, Chief Executive of Tamkeen (Bahrain's Labour Fund) pointed

out one of Bahrain's key competitive advantages in the region, which lies in its firm belief in the importance of women as an active player in shaping Bahrain's economic future.

Bahrain has a long history of women in senior leadership positions. Currently, a group of female leaders in FinTech is helping to steer the country's FinTech strategy. Leading female Bahraini startup founders include Hala Sulaiman and Ameera AlQubaiti - co-founders of Alrawi, a successful audiobook startup and Pitch@Palace Global 3.0 People's Choice 2018 Winner. Furthermore, Bahrain's Al Waha Fund of Funds, a \$100 million fund set up by the Bahrain Development Bank, has an all-female leadership.

As for FinTech, in 2018 Bahrain launched FinTech Bay, the Middle East's leading FinTech hub. Interestingly, it's estimated that more than 60% of computer science students at the University of Bahrain in 2018 were women.

Kolkata: Two Mosques to Make Provisions for Women

By Ravik Bhattacharya

Two heritage mosques in Kolkata are making provisions, including separate entries, special halls and washrooms, for Muslim women to offer namaz on the premises through the year. Authorities of the Nakhoda mosque and Tipu Sultan mosque are creating separate halls and washrooms for women after a written request by the Bengal Imam Association. Imam Shafique Qasmi of Nakhoda Masjid popularly known as Badi Masjid confirmed the letter and said plans were afoot. "Yes we have received the letter.

Many women still come and offer namaz at one corner of the masjid but now the managing committee is making better arrangement

s for women. There are three entrances to Nakhoda Masjid and none of them is exclusive for women. A separate place for women to perform ablutions, offer namaz and take rest are planned within the masjid," said Qasmi. "We have seen that there is no proper provision for women to offer namaz in these two renowned mosques. According to the Sharia, women can offer namaz where there is a provision for 'purdah'. However, such provisions are not available. Women visit these mosques even from abroad but can't pray here under present circumstances. Therefore, after discussions, we decided to send a letter to the two mosques," said Md Yahya, chairman of Bengal Imam Association. "We are happy that they agreed to our proposal. Proper arrangements and special halls are

being prepared where women can offer namaz," added Yahya.

The letter, a copy of which was also sent to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation among others, has three requests a separate 'purdah' arrangement for women to offer namaz, a washroom for women and another for people with disabilities. "We have seen that many women, including foreigners, visit the mosques with the intent to offer namaz. But they feel uncomfortable as there are no separate provisions. We are ashamed to see this," the

letter states. Authorities of the two mosques have agreed and started drawing up plans for setting up separate halls and other provisions for women.



While Muslim women are allowed to offer prayers in mosques as per Islamic law, they do not get a chance to pray at many religious spots in Bengal, barring some of the mosques, due to lack of separate provisions for them at many of these spaces. "It would be nice if we have proper provision in mosques to offer namaz. We cannot pray along with men because it is against Islamic law... If proper arrangements are made, women like me would not miss namaz even when outside home," said Amina Khatun, a teacher with an English medium school in South Kolkata.

Tipu Sultan mosque was built in 1842 by Prince Ghulam Muhammed, youngest son of Tipu Sultan, while the foundation stone of Nakhoda mosque was laid on September 11, 1926.

(Taken from indianexpress.com)

Egyptian Women Use Ancient Indonesian Martial Arts to Fight Abuse

In the heart of Egypt's capital, an ancient Indonesian martial arts sport is helping dozens of women stand up to harassment. With the help of Indonesian students, over 1,200 women and children are learning the sport at a cultural centre in Cairo.

"Of course there are problems in the street," Egyptian teenager Rahma Hatem says. "If someone comes near me, I'm able to defend myself well. I have confidence now and no one can harass me because I can face them."

"Pencak Silat" gained

prominence in Egypt in 2003 but started to increase in popularity in 2011, said trainer Roqaya Samaloosi. The women, mostly teenagers and young adults, gather in the Indonesian Cultural Centre weekly and train to enhance self-defence skills and fitness.

Experts surveyed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2017 ranked Cairo as the world's most dangerous megacity for women, based on lack of protection from sexual violence, harmful cultural practices, and poor access to

healthcare and finance.

Pencak Silat dates back to the sixth century, where it was practised on Sumatra island and the Malay peninsula. Two kingdoms, the Sriwijaya in Sumatra and the Majapahit on Java island, used the fighting skills and between the 7th and 16th century ruled much of what is now Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Pencak is the performance aspect of the discipline, while Silat is the fighting and self-defence version of the sport.

Spiritual Lessons From Everyday Events

This book is a precious gem, not to be missed, full of valuable insights on how to live a more meaningful life.

The Moral Vision

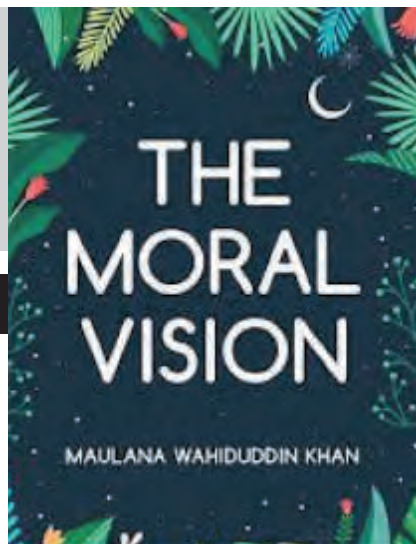
By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Published by Goodword Books, Noida

(www.goodwordbooks.com)

Year: 2018

Pages: 206



Reviewed by
Roshan Shah

Author of several dozen books, New Delhi-based Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is one of the most widely-known present-day Islamic scholars. This delightful book is a collection of more than 100 short essays (mostly of single page length) by the Maulana, each of which highlights one or more moral value and indicates the importance of ethics as the basis of a truly meaningful life.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has a deep understanding of the Islamic scriptural tradition, but in this book he draws insights from other sources too, indicating a universal understanding of spirituality based on an ethical core which people of all faiths might easily connect with. Reflecting the Maulana's understanding that spirituality isn't something cut off from daily life, but, rather, is deeply rooted in it, this book is framed around anecdotes from the lives of people (famous as well as 'ordinary'), aspects of Nature, key events in the history of countries, reports in newspapers, and so on, through which the author derives useful moral lessons which we can put into practice in our everyday lives. In this way, he shows us how every experience can be a source of spiritual growth if we care to reflect on and learn from it. From such experiences, no matter how 'negative' some of them might seem, one can draw spiritual nourishment, growing in awareness of such values as God-consciousness, forgiveness, patience, compassion, determination and positive thinking. The many little stories that this book narrates strikingly highlight these and other such values, embodied mostly in the form of real-life events and phenomena.

A few examples from the book vividly illustrate this powerful technique. In a story titled 'Teacher Tree', the Maulana tells us that the tree-trunk forms only one half of a tree, the roots being the other half. The top half of a tree can only stand erect and verdant

above the ground when the tree is prepared to bury its other half beneath the ground. "A tree stands above the ground, fixing its roots firmly beneath the ground. It grows from beneath, upwards into the air; it does not start at the top and grow downwards", the Maulana notes. "The tree is our teacher", he writes, "imparting to us the lesson of nature that if we seek to progress outwardly, we must first strengthen ourselves inwardly; we must begin from the base of our own selves before we can hope to build society anew."

In another chapter, showing how individuals can draw useful spiritual lessons for their own lives from the history of entire countries, the Maulana highlights the case of Japan. In 1941, Japan attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbour, destroying a large number of American vessels. In retaliation, in 1945, America dropped two atom bombs on Japan on the two major Japanese industrial cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima thus annihilating Japan as a military power. Thereafter, America kept up a tight military and political hold on Japan. However, instead of taking revenge on America for the large-scale atomic devastation, Japan responded peacefully and positively to the new situation. Before World War II, Khan explains, Japan relied on the power of military weapons. But after witnessing the destruction that these weapons caused, it relinquished their use and set about progressing entirely on peaceful lines, so much so that in a few years, it became an economic superpower. Simply by accepting the fact that aggression could not serve dividends and then channelizing its potentials towards the field of industry, Japan reached new heights. It was able to turn its military defeat into an economic victory by abstaining from

retaliation, encouraging patience and perseverance, avoiding provocation and focusing on fields of peaceful activity, getting busy with the task of economic rehabilitation without wasting any time on bewailing lost opportunities, blaming others for one's misfortunes or engaging in pointless nostalgia. Instead of seeking revenge, Japan focussed on availing existing opportunities. It accepted, the Maulana tells us, the blame for its destruction, and, once having done so, was able to seriously work for its own economic uplift.

Perceptive readers can draw numerous from this little snippet of Japanese history for their own personal lives. One of these is how to deal with others in this world of competition. The Maulana notes that one can approach this predicament in two ways: one is to collide with that which obstructs one's path. The other is to circumvent the obstacle and then go one's way (the path adopted by post-World War II Japan). The first, Khan explains, is self-destructive, while the second is much more likely to prove advantageous.

Another story from which the Maulana derives useful spiritual insights relates to the island of Sicily (now part of Italy), which was under Muslim rule for many years until 1090, when it was conquered by the Normans. The founder of the Norman kingdom of Sicily was Roger II (1095-1154). Although he belonged to a nation of conquerors and it was the Muslims whom he had defeated, the Maulana writes that he retained high respect for Arabs and Islam. His coronation mantle

was designed by a Muslim artist and had Arabic inscriptions woven into it. After his coronation, Roger II wanted a chart showing the full extent of the Norman empire. He chose a Muslim cartographer, Al-Idrisi, to design it because the latter was a leading expert in this field. Al-Idrisi went on to prepare an atlas for Roger II, consisting of 70 maps and extensive geographical data. Khan suggests that Roger II's selection of Al-Idrisi for the mammoth task of preparing maps of the whole known world shows that at that time the Muslims' intellectual and academic expertise was widely accepted by others. Although defeated

respect for Muslim scholars and their continued intellectual domination even after military defeat shows that the solutions to the problems of the Muslims in the modern world lies in their cultivating technological capability, and establishing dominance in the field of modern scientific knowledge. This can be achieved not by protests and militant "fundamentalism", but by earnest academic endeavour alone; it can be acquired by seeking to give to the world, rather than just take from it.

Wise words these!

This book is a precious gem, not to be missed, full of valuable insights on how to live a more

“ Roger II's selection of Al-Idrisi for the mammoth task of preparing maps of the whole known world shows that at that time the Muslims' intellectual and academic expertise was widely accepted by others. ”

militarily in Sicily, Muslims continued their intellectual and academic brilliance, even in the court of the conqueror.

The Maulana contrasts this with what he regards as the present-day Muslims' predicament. He writes: 'Muslims today complain of their political, economic and military subjection to non-Muslim nations. They think they can take back, by protest and militancy, what has been seized from them. But the case of Roger II of Sicily his

meaningful life. The approach to spiritual growth that it articulates, based on deriving lessons from every single event and situation, is a valuable tool that perceptive readers can use in their own lives, with great benefit to themselves and others. Just as scriptures can be a source of moral instruction and spiritual growth, so too can 'everyday' experiences our own as well as others this book teaches us. well as others this book teaches us.

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Saniyasnain Khan,
Founder of Goodword Books

How do you find the time to write regularly?

Writing is a junoon, a passion, and for your passion you always have abundant time.

How would you describe a good book?

A good book should inspire the reader; that is the most important factor. Also a good book in my case should bring me closer to God. It could be on any subject. For example, after reading Stephen Hawking's A Brief History of Time, I was filled with awe and admiration for the manner in which God has created our huge universe. If creation itself is so big, then how big is its Creator?

You have published and distributed the translation of the Quran in more than 25 languages. Please shed some light upon this project of yours.

Yes, we have published translations of Quran in more than 25 languages international and Indian. With the help of CPS International, the NGO founded by my father, and its Chapters in India and abroad, we are distributing the Quran in schools,

hospitals, mosques, museums and other places of tourist interest.

We have devoted teams of Quran volunteers in different countries, who are helping in disseminating the peaceful message of the Quran worldwide, so that it reaches every home.

In the present age, we have witnessed, a phenomenal rise in digital books and apps. How will this new digital platform help in spreading the word of God?

Realizing the importance of the internet and social media to take the Quran into each home, we are using every available online opportunity to organize e-dawah. We are developing the Goodword Quran App to make the perusal and understanding of the Quran easy for readers. This App will have features and resources to make the reading experience of the Quran very easy and friendly.

(Extracted from Spirit of Islam magazine)

(Saniyasnain Khan can be reached at

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Mohammed Shujatullah

Mohammed Shujatullah, a student of Pharm D from Sultan ul-Uloom College of Pharmacy, Hyderabad, began serving free breakfast to the needy three years ago and is continuing to do so till date without the break of a single day!

share to someone else'. Shujat was impressed not just with the honesty of the old man but his belief in Providence. Shujat says, he got to thinking, 'Here is a homeless beggar, who does not even know if he will get the next meal, yet he has such a firm belief in the Almighty who is the provider of one and all.' And after this, he began serving food packets on a daily basis to the persons on the streets.

Serving breakfast at Niloufer Hospital

One day, he had a chance to go to a Government Hospital, where he saw people from different districts and villages come to Hyderabad for treatment and they lived in the hospital for days together with their attendants. They find it difficult to buy food due to monetary problems. So the idea of serving breakfast struck him.

Mobilising Funds

Fortunately for Shujat, his father has 12 siblings and all of them with their children are in a good position. He capitalised on this and made quick calls to all of them and asked them all to donate their one day's salary to him. He explained to them what he would do with the funds. And soon he had enough money to enable him to serve breakfast twice a week in one Government Hospital. And soon friends and other extended family started donating. "As they say, little drops make a mighty ocean, funds started to come steadily and soon I was able to serve breakfast on a daily basis," he told TwoCircles.net.

The daily expense for Upma for approximately 1000 persons with 25 kilos of semolina comes to Rs. 5000/- including the auto charges and the cost of disposable cutlery. On why he chose Upma, Shujat says, "Upma is easy to make and if I attempt any other item there will be a difference in the planned budget." And when his service came to light through media, more people began to donate. And Shujat who was getting immense satisfaction from feeding the poor, decided to start a foundation for charity and service. So in 2016, he registered 'Humanity First Foundation'.

Humanity First Foundation

Through the foundation, Shujat reached out to potential donors through friends, social media platforms and also crowdfunding via the Internet. His activities also expanded gradually and he now distributes blankets to people on



the streets; free supper in the nights to beggars, donates books and other things in orphanages, helps very poor families with their monthly ration.

Once the foundation was registered, his contacts also grew. Other like-minded NGOs

contacted him to work in collaboration. So now Shujat has extended his services to an old age home on the suburbs of Hyderabad where he supplies medicines, adult diapers and groceries, supports a livelihood programme for women by

running a tailoring centre in a neighbouring town and providing them sewing machines and conducting free medical camps. He even identifies homeless old people who have no one to take care of them and admits them in old age homes.

What the future holds for him and the Foundation

Shujatullah shared with TwoCircles.net, that he is able to do all this not just because of the good values instilled by his parents but also because of the support his friends, family and donors have been rendering. And he is one busy person juggling his internship at Aster Prime Hospital after serving breakfast in the hospitals which he finishes by 9.15. After coming home from the hospital, after a quick bite, he goes to overlook the functioning of the small Urdu medium school started by his grandfather. His father is a retired government employee and mother a homemaker. Shujat has no intention of going abroad or even out of Hyderabad even though he got several offers. For him, his foundation comes first. "I hope my life partner will have the same passion as me so I can continue my work with the same zeal", he says laughingly when asked about the future. "I am going to continue to serve the poor as long as I can" he added.

(To know more about Shujat and his work and to help him, mail him at

humanityfirstfoundation2016

@gmail.com call him at

9676054142)

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

READER'S CORNER

Humane Values Need to Be at the Very Heart of Education

By Fr. Babu Thattil CMI

Education is a process of reaching out from what one is to what one ought to be. It begins from the very conception of a child in the womb and carries on until he/she reaches the final destination in this world i.e. death. Experience is the best teacher, and everything a person experiences throughout his/her life can be a valuable source of education or learning. Understood in this way, education is a lifelong process. It isn't something that is learnt only in formal educational institutions such as schools and colleges and that one pays a fee to acquire. Life itself is one vast school!

Education is the search within, to bring out the potential inherent in oneself that is as yet unutilized and undiscovered. Education can be compared with the process of the blooming of a flowering plant. The flower comes from within the plant, not from outside. Likewise,

the potential to acquire knowledge and wisdom is already there in each one of us. Teachers and others can only help us nurture it.

What should be the goal of education? For most people in the 'modern' world, education is only a means for getting a 'good' job and earning as much money as possible. I feel this is a curse. Focusing simply on scoring high marks in exams and a result-oriented learning go completely against what education ought to be. One consequence of this sort of 'education' is that the pressure put on the students from various corners often becomes unbearable for students. Little or no attention is given to the students' character formation. With many years of experience of teaching and managing schools I can say that I am really worried about the present educational system and where it seems to be heading.

Unless the whole system of

education is redefined and rearticulated, the situation can only get more alarming. We need to give much more attention to value-based education. Ethical and moral values should have a much more prominent place in education. Marks in exams must come only after that. Fraternity, righteousness, concern for others, respect for elders and teachers, respect for other faiths and cultures and other such humane values must be given the top priority. Any 'education' without self-discipline and character formation will be a threat to the very human race.

(The author is a Catholic priest from the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate [CMI]

congregation with many years of teaching in schools. He is presently Associate Director of Vidyavanam Ashram, Bangalore)



Pope Francis declares 'climate emergency' and urges action

Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, has declared a global "climate emergency," warning of the dangers of global heating and that a failure to act urgently to reduce greenhouse gases would be "a brutal act of injustice toward the poor and future generations." The pontiff also endorsed the 1.5C limit on temperature rises that some countries are now aiming for, referring to warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of "catastrophic" effects if we crossed such a threshold. He said a "radical energy transition" would be needed to stay within that limit, and urged young people and businesses to take a leading role. "Future generations stand to inherit a greatly spoiled world. Our children and grandchildren should not have to pay the cost of our generation's irresponsibility," he said, in his strongest and most direct intervention yet on the climate crisis. "Indeed, as is becoming increasingly clear,

young people are calling for a change."

The Pope's plea came as he met the leaders of some of the world's biggest multinational oil companies in the Vatican on June 14 to impress upon them the urgency and scale of the challenge and their central role in tackling the emissions crisis. It followed a similar meeting last year, but this time the Pope's stance was tougher as he warned that time was running out and urged them to hear "the increasingly desperate cries of the earth and its poor".

The chief executives or chairs of BP, ExxonMobil, Shell, Total, Conoco Philips, Chevron and several major investors including Black Rock and Hermes, responded by calling on governments to put in place carbon pricing to encourage low-carbon innovation, and called for greater financial transparency to aid investors. However, they made no pledges to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and set

no timetable for action.

In two statements, which came at the end of a two-day meeting in the Vatican that was addressed by the Pope and led by senior Vatican churchmen, the signatories called for a "combination of policies and carbon pricing mechanisms ... designed in a way that simultaneously delivers innovation and investment in low-carbon solutions while assisting those least able to pay".

Emissions are rising at their fastest level in close to a decade, leaving an ever shorter period to prevent dangerous levels of global heating. Every year of high emissions takes the world closer to the brink, because it adds to the stock of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which can take a century to dissipate. Recently, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere showed the second highest annual increase since continuous records began more than 60 years ago.

Trump created 'phony' emergency to bypass Congress to approve arms sales to Saudi Arabia?

US President Donald Trump has been accused of creating a "phony" emergency to bypass Congress to approve an \$8 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia. The White House said it was making an emergency provision within the country's arms control law to enable the billions of dollars of arms sales to the Saudi kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, the US's strongest allies in the Persian

Gulf. The recourse helps the president spare congressional review for the exports. The Trump administration had cited "alleged threats from Iran" to justify resorting to the provision. R. Clarke Cooper, the State Department's assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where he was grilled over the \$8

billion "emergency" arms sale to Saudis. Democratic members of the House committee said the president's action violated the law because there was no actual emergency. They also said Trump's action shows that the United States is tolerating worst human rights abuses by Saudi Arabia in its war on Yemen.

(Extracted from newageislam.com)

UN to Commemorate Religious Persecution Victims

The United Nations has established an International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief. The U.N.'s General Assembly passed the resolution without objection recently, setting August 22 as the day commemorating victims of anti-religious violence. "The world has been experiencing an unprecedented rise of violence against religious communities and people belonging to religious minorities," said Jacek

Czaputowicz, Poland's foreign minister, speaking before the General Assembly. Poland introduced the resolution creating the day. He cited recent "appalling acts of violence" against mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand and Easter Sunday bombings of churches in Sri Lanka. "Hatred towards religious groups may lead to mass killing of innocent people," Czaputowicz said. He cited surveys showing that a third of the world's population suffers from "some form of religious

persecution." In some countries, he said, some religious adherents are prohibited from practising their rituals even in their own homes. "The right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, commonly referred to as a right to religious freedom or belief, is a universal right of every human being. This right is a cornerstone of many other rights. Any act of violence against people belonging to religious minorities cannot be accepted," Czaputowicz said.

Nigeria

Muslims & Christians take steps towards reconciliation

Recently, a group of Muslims visited Christian widows and orphans in north western Nigeria and donated food, clothing and school items as part of efforts to enhance peaceful coexistence among different faiths. "I can't believe they came and visited me," said Judy Ugwu, a mother of four who lives in Kaduna state in north western Nigeria. "They have given me enough food and clothes. I want to forgive every Muslim who has wronged me in any way." Ugwu, 38, who is a Christian, lost her husband early this year when gunmen dressed in military uniforms and armed with AK47 rifles, machetes and sticks attacked her village of Kajuru and killed more than 60 people. She accused the majority Hausa-Fulani tribe, who are predominantly Muslim and herders of cattle, for brutally

murdering her husband. "I had vowed never to forgive them," she said. "They wanted to finish us (non-Muslims) during elections so that their people can ascend to power, but God protected his people."

There has been constant conflict in northern Nigeria for decades, pitting the majority Muslim population against the minority Christian population. In Kaduna state, the Hausa-Fulani tribe makes up 60% of the population, and the non-Muslim minorities who are mainly farmers make up the remaining 40%. The minority Christian populations have for decades accused Muslims of using elections to control political and economic power in the state by only electing Muslim leaders.

(Extracted from religionnews.com)

Pope Francis hopes to visit Iraq in 2020



Announcing his desire to visit Iraq in 2020, Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, has called for a peaceful resolution to crises in the Middle East. He also warned that God would unleash his wrath on hypocritical leaders who liked to talk about peace while selling weapons to

warring nations. "People escaping, crowded on boats, they cry out, seeking hope, not knowing which ports will be able to welcome them in a Europe which opens its ports to vessels that have to load sophisticated and costly weapons, capable of wreaking havoc that doesn't even spare children," he said. The pope made his comments during a meeting on June 10 with a Vatican coalition of funding agencies, known by its Italian acronym ROACO. Pope Francis said their meetings with experts would help them "hear the cry of the many who have been robbed over these years of hope." They included people from Syria, where the risk of a major humanitarian crisis still looms, he said, underlining the plight of so many people left without food, medicine, schools and loved ones who have died or been killed. While people may be "insensitive" to such tragedy, God is not, because he is moved by the cries of his children, and he seeks to protect and guide them with tenderness, the Pope said. The Pope said his thoughts were also with Iraq, "where I have the desire to go next year."



Muslims Save Hundreds from London Building Fire

Muslims leaving fajr prayer from a mosque in East London recently risked their lives by running into a burning block tower to rescue hundreds of people who were asleep, WTX News reported. A local resident said "They made sure everyone got out. They knocked on each door until someone opened.

There were six or seven of them and they were only young. If it wasn't for them we would never have got out." At about 2.40am members of Madina Mosque, near the Lea Bridge roundabout, in Hackney, spotted a fire on the eighth floor of Gooch House on Kenninghall Road. Running towards the building, they began

banging on all doors to wake everyone up. Madina Mosque chair Mohammed Sidat said he was extremely proud and that it showed a side of Islam people didn't always get to hear about. The blaze, caused by a discarded cigarette, was brought under control within an hour.

(Taken from aboutislam.net)

'I am a Baby in Islam': US Singer Della Miles

American singer Miles, vocalist for Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston, has converted to Islam, saying she learned much about the faith during her stay in Turkey, Anadolu Agency reported. "Everything is new for me at the moment," said Della Miles. "I consider myself a baby in Islam because there is so much to learn." Born into an extended family of 5 brothers and sisters, Miles was born into a musical family. Her mother sang and directed music in church while her father was a jazz enthusiast and owner of a music venue. Also



a songwriter, Miles took to the stage with German actor and musician Marius Muller-Western hagen. In 2012, she took a leading role in the American opera Lulu and later portrayed

the wife of former US President Barack Obama in Hope. The Obama Musical Story. Miles has also worked on tribute albums for Turkish musicians.

(Taken from aboutislam.net)

Sri Lanka to set up religious reconciliation council

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says he accepts the recent announcement of Buddhist prelates and will take steps to set up a council to dispel the suspicions and misconceptions among religions and build religious reconciliation.

The premier told a function in Baddegama recently that a religious reconciliation council will be established under the leadership of all religious leaders. The main objective of this programme is to reconcile religions and communities, he

added. Wickremesinghe noted that whatever religious views they hold, everyone should have the right to practice their religion freely.

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

Buddhists Offer White Roses to Muslims

On 16 May 2019, a group of Buddhists in Myanmar's capital, Yangon, launched a 'White Rose' campaign which offers roses to Muslims who are fasting during Ramadan. The campaign was organized to show solidarity with Muslims after Buddhist mobs gathered around a number of temporary Muslim prayer houses and demanded that prayer services be suspended. On the evenings of 14



and 15 May, mobs of more than 100 Buddhist extremists attempted to prevent Muslim prayers, demanding that three

prayer houses set up for Ramadan observance in the South Dagon area of Yangon be closed down. In response, Buddhist monk Bandatta Seidatta, more famously known as Asia Light Sayardaw, created the White Rose campaign. Bandatta Seidatta visited the South Dagon Muslim community on the evening of 16 May to offer them white roses as a way of providing encouragement and support.

Myanmar

Arrest Warrant issued on Anti-Muslim Monk



Yangon: The Myanmar police have issued an arrest warrant against Wirathu, an ultra-nationalist Buddhist monk known for his anti-Muslim stance. The warrant was issued under Article 124(a) of the legal code, which forbids incitement of hatred or contempt against the government. The monk is accused of making defamatory remarks against Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The monk is known for his tirades against Muslims, including comments that sparked a wave of sectarian violence against the community in central Myanmar in 2013 and for supporting the military operation that led to over 700,000 Rohingya fleeing to neighbouring Bangladesh in

2017. Wirathu was the most visible face of the 969 movement a Buddhist group that opposed expansion of Islam in Myanmar, and the now defunct Patriotic Association of Myanmar, whose anti-Muslim position led the government to pass several laws considered discriminatory against Muslims. His controversial comments, which also include calling for a boycott of Muslim businesses and hailing the assassination of a Muslim lawyer close to Suu Kyi, prompted Facebook to close his account and led the Thai authorities to ban his entry into the country, where he was scheduled to deliver a sermon.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

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In the Name of God, the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent

The Sculptor

Al-Waqiah

(The Inevitable Event)

Surah: 56: Verses 58-59

"Have you seen the seed that you spill? Do you create it, or are We its creators?"

In this noble verse of the eternal, the Presence of the Real makes manifest His power of creation over the world's folk so that they will know that the artisan without cause is He, the enactor without tool is He, the all-subjugating without cause is He, the all-forgiving without delay is He, the all-curtaining of every slip is He.

He is the Lord who created a subtle form from frail water and



drop. He set up many diverse paintings with "Be!", so it comes to be [2:117]: mutually similar

limbs, opposites like unto each other, every limb adorned with one sort of beauty, not more than its limit, not less than its measure. To each He gave an attribute, and in each He placed a strength: senses in the brain, splendour on the forehead, beauty in the nose, perfect loveliness in the hair, appetite in the veins, faith in the heart, love in the secret core and recognition in the spirit [...] So many marvels and wonders from a drop of water! The intelligent man gazes on His artisanry, but the heedless man is asleep.

(Compiled From: "Kashf al-Asrar wa Uddat al-Abrar" Rashid al-Din Maybudi)

REFLECTIONS

The Seasonal Piety of Ramzan!

Islam is a holistic religion, and Allah's system doesn't work like a calculator. His system is based on *meezan* (measuring scale or yardstick), that weighs the good and bad deeds instead of calculating them.

Ramzan is a blessed month for Muslims world over. Majority of Muslims observe the month of Ramzan with utmost devotion and religious fervour following Islamic injunctions strictly that usher a phase of 'inflated piety'.

In Islam, religious rituals and commandments are not an end in themselves. They are a means to an end that need to be observed to inculcate divine attributes individually. During Ramzan the mosques fill up with mostly seasonal worshippers. Millions of gallons of water are consumed for the ablution purposes by Muslims. The environment of 'piety', 'religiosity' and 'Muslimness' is evident in society and guarded loyally by the seasonally pious Muslims. This overwhelming observance of Islamic rituals is manifested only in mosques and makeshift kiosks that are erected in various public parks, compounds and vacant lands adjacent to mosques.

But the Ramzan spirit, that is the essence of this month, is missing in our individual and collective lives.

By Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander

Very rarely it happens that Ramzan transforms our souls and leaves an indelible imprint on our characters. The post Ramzan activities of most Muslims are a testimony of this fact. The mosques once again crave for the big congregations, but millions of gallons of water are saved in the process, as the seasonal Muslims wait for next Ramzan to attend mosques for the daily five prayers.

Blurs the Vision

What are the reasons for the drastic decline and disdain towards 'piety' and 'rituals' once the Shawwal moon has been sighted? I can infer a few reasons from my observations. The Muslim masses have been fed on the religious diet of *Sawaab* (Blessings earned due to observance of Islamic rituals). The *Sawaab* paradigm blurs the vision of most Muslims that doesn't help them realize the true spirit and end results that Islam wants to inculcate among Muslims.

The *Sawaab* paradigm is invoked voraciously during Ramzan that makes Muslims cling to mosques in order to earn most *Sawaab*. The *Sawaab* is one dimension or reward that is bestowed on Muslims by Allah but to render it as an epicentre of Islamic activism deprives Muslims of the real spirit of Islam.

Ramzan is a month that should inculcate the spirit of Justice, compassion, mercy, brotherhood and equality among Muslims. We can witness a small manifestation of religious observance in mosques while our market places, offices and families remain deprived from the core values that Islam and Ramzan want to inculcate among Muslims.

Another big miscalculation by Muslims is that they think that Allah judges Muslims on basis of good deeds and evil deeds. This system according to their flawed opinion works like a calculator that adds and multiplies their good deeds while deducting their bad deeds. Thus, if they both pray and accept bribes they still can crave for heaven and think that Allah will forgive them.

Measuring Scale or Yardstick

Ramzan being among the most blessed months, that offers the evil souls a unique opportunity to cleanse themselves and then return to their old routine after Ramzan, repeating the vicious circle over

HADITH ILLUMINATES THE PATH

Caution

Jabir ibn Abdullah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Secure your doors, tie up your waterskins, turn over your vessels, cover up your dishes, and put off your lights. Satan does not open a secured door, untie a knot, or uncover a dish. However, a mouse could set a house on fire'. [Bukhari, Tirmidhi]

This hadith provides very useful instructions which remain valid for most people. The first instruction is to secure our doors before going to sleep. Today, in most places, this goes without saying because burglary is very common. But it need not be so. There are places in many parts of the world where people are safe from burglars, either because they live in a small community where everyone knows everyone else, or where social conditions provide enough security. Yet, one may not be safe from other creatures finding their way into homes causing people some harm when they are asleep. Hence, securing our doors provides the necessary standard of safety. Today, people have water supplied into their homes by pipes and tanks, where it is safe from ordinary contamination. However, in times past, people had to make sure that they had sufficient water for their drinking and home use. Hence, they stored it in containers, some types of which were made of hide or some other material. It is such containers, and indeed any other type, that the Prophet wanted to make sure were tightened so as to prevent any harmful object or

insect from falling into them. The same applies to any plate, pot or saucepan where food is kept. While today we leave much of our food in fridges, there remains around the house much food that may be left exposed. The important thing in this hadith is not to leave food exposed overnight. Some insect might get into it or dust and harmful particles might drop on it, making it a cause of harm instead of a source of nourishment. Putting off the light is the next injunction in this hadith, particularly when we talk about oil lamps and similar lights. Such a lamp may be blown over by wind, or by a cat, and it could then cause a fire. This is what the Prophet warns against when he mentions that a mouse could set a house on fire. What attracts a mouse is the wick of a lamp, and it could pull it and cause the lamp to fall over, spilling its oil and causing a fire. Hence, the Prophet repeatedly warned against leaving lamps on at night, or in a position where a mouse could pull at it.

(Compiled From: "Al-Adab al-Mufrad with Full Commentary: A Perfect Code of Manners and Morality" Adil Salahi)

decades. Islam is a holistic religion and Allah's system doesn't work like a calculator, but his system is based on *Meezan* (measuring scale or yardstick), that weighs the good and bad deeds instead of calculating them.

Quran exhorts Muslims to enter into the fold of Islam completely. A true Muslim can't have double, split or hypocritical personality. A true Muslim can be either a corrupt official or a practicing Muslim. He can't be both at the same time. He can't please both Allah and Satan; he has to choose one of the two. Those who are thinking that they can please both masters would gain consent of none. The spirit of Ramzan and observing prayers is that, one ends his relationship with Satan, upholds and inculcates the core values of Islam particularly the compassion towards poor, downtrodden and wretched of the earth.

The other reason for the epidemic increase in the observance levels of Islamic piety is due to environment and peer pressure during Ramzan.

It is a month during which most Muslims enquire about the absence of others particularly in the Dawn and Night prayers. This pressure motivates many to join the prayers, but this habit is discontinued by most in the aftermath of Ramzan.

Ramzan is observed by Muslims world over every year but very rarely its real spirit and fruits are bestowed on Muslims due to their own flawed understanding of Islam. An average Muslim observes Ramzan for decades strictly without any real transformation taking place that Ramzan aims for. Ramzan has been made synonymous by Muslims with seasonal piety and prayers whereas Ramzan and Islam aims at making Muslims compassionate, contributing and merciful citizens who bring glad tidings and fill the earth with tolerance, love and peace. But this spirit keeps evading Muslims every Ramzan.

(Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander is a writer based in Srinagar)

(Taken from newageislam.com)

“What are the reasons for the drastic decline and disdain towards 'piety' and 'rituals' once the Shawwal moon has been sighted? I can infer a few reasons from my observations. The Muslim masses have been fed on the religious diet of Sawaab (Blessings earned due to observance of Islamic rituals).”

Sharing Discover Yourself

By Khadija Taylor

I wanted to share my Eid story, an incredible experience highlighting to me some of the most profound lessons that I have learn from Sadathullah Khan Sir's Discover Yourself workshop.

As Allah commands us not to cut what He has ordered to be joined and Sadath Sir gave us an assignment to forgive and ask forgiveness from our relatives, I've been working on it since last Ramadan along with my mother. Alhamdulillah we've been able to ask forgiveness from almost all the major people we needed to and we are working towards rebuilding our relations. Just a couple of them remain, one of who is my paternal aunt. She lives in another town and we tried to travel multiple times yet failed. We made *dua* this Ramadan for our family's unity again and with God's grace we got to travel to the town due to death of a relative on Eid day. So this made this Eid day experience one out of ordinary.

Now, I always got hurt, worried or emotionally affected whenever I had any hard conversations with someone close to me. I would pick on their emotions, words and opinions and then had a hard time healing myself. Sadath Sir advised me to be detached with the people and circumstances when dealing with them for I could never be there for others if I myself break.

So now back to my aunt's incident: My mother and I made the intention to go and we decided that whatever be her response, it would be her responsibility. We were going only for the sake of Allah to play the role we were meant to as part of the family, and we were only concerned and responsible for our part. We decided to knock the door of her heart and invite her to unite, irrespective of whether she opened the door or not.

Somehow we managed to search and reached her house. It was a surprise for her! She behaved in a

very hostile way right from the beginning. The first words she uttered were like: "Why have you come here, after all these years of absence?" It went on like: "23 years is too long and you were away. Now what's the use?"....."You should have come when our mother (i.e. my grandma) was alive. It's too late now." And on she went with similar rigidity.

Aunt reacted as if we had come to her because we needed her for something, that we wanted some kind of personal benefit and so we are approaching her softly. She seemed to feel in power over us as if she was doing a great job by keeping her heart closed. Still, we managed to calmly convey our purpose for coming. We let her know about our understanding of Allah's command. And we took leave. Even when we were leaving and my mom held her hand warmly, aunt stood like a stick looking like a stubborn child.

Had I been the earlier me, it would have certainly affected me a lot. I would have been attached to the outcome I expected. So, when things turned out the opposite, I would have had a lot of heaviness, been angry, defensive, hurt, made judgements about what a bad person she was and how rudely she behaved.. I would have said things like, "It's no use talking to her! Now we know again why we had enmity! Better stay away in future..." Blah blah blah!

Now, I did notice all the rude behaviour. She didn't even ask us how we are doing, how we came all the way, and so on. But it did not affect us at all. Instead, we could observe her immature behaviour and notice how she was losing herself and even the opportunity Allah bought in front of her. I felt pity on her. I could see her as a human being, and I had enough kindness to give her. I donned a warm smile and didn't hesitate in making eye contact. My own response amazed me! It happened because we were on a

mission for the sake of Allah alone. We were focused only on our deeds, our *ibadah*. We were only concerned about our own role as part of our family life. That we just wanted to clean our slate from sins.

So, I learned this powerful lesson of how to be detached. Sometimes, you may feel hurt and it's ok it's part of being human but do not let the hurtful feelings consume you. Come from the background of doing things for Allah alone. Focus on the *ibadah*, on your deeds, rather than on what people are thinking, doing or saying to you. Never stop doing good deeds just because others are wronging you. Do not blame the injustices in your life and fall in despair. Rather, live in reality and act on what you can do to bring a difference. It will make you more grateful.

If you do your part for Allah, He intervenes and strengthens your heart and protects you from breaking.

There is thin line between striving to achieve something and being attached to the outcome. It's not about desensitizing yourself, denying what comes forth or making yourself hard.

Yes, you desire something, you have goals and dreams, you strive with all your potentials and resources, you make *dua*, but please don't get stuck on the outcome or have unrealistic expectations: you are burdening others if you do. Leave it to Allah. Surrender to His will. His will is with His wisdom. And when you do, then even if you fail, it won't break you, for it could not have been better than this.

And remember, if you slip (for you will and I always do) it's ok, don't beat yourself up. We are created imperfect and we are all on a journey towards Allah. Just keep learning, keep moving, and be gentle on yourself.

DYS workshop participant Mothilal shares

A "Discover Yourself" workshop was held in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, in April 2019. Participant Mothilal shares his experiences:

The "Discover Yourself" workshop was a life-changing experience for me. It provided me many lessons and helped me recognise that the journey of life consists of mixed movements, ups and downs. Mentor Dr. Sadath Khan wonderfully feels the pulse of participants, and his workshop is designed even to reach a common man, providing insights that we do not find in regular academic books.

My special thanks to Mohammed Iqbal, my colleague, guide and well-wisher for inviting me to this workshop.

In the workshop I learned that one must always compare one's life with the benchmark of Absolute Truth and that, instead of always

being in the comfort zone, one should sometimes think out of the box. Another lesson is the importance of mutual respect, even with a small child. Forgiveness is means detachment with the past, and it brings one into the present, is yet another learning lesson I got. So too is the point that if you are in the present, success is in your hand.

I wish this programme reaches greater heights and helps plant seeds of transformation in every individual who participates in the workshop. For me personally, it was a major paradigm shift and life-changing experience. I trust it will help me deal with the challenges of life and enable me to live consciously.

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Interview With Fr. Sebastian Athappilly On the Bankruptcy of Atheism

Father Sebastian Athappilly, a noted Indian Catholic priest, is the author of a recently published thought-provoking book 'The Delusion of Atheism' (Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 2017). He is associated with Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, one of India's leading centres of Catholic learning. In this interview with Roshan Shah, he reflects on a range of issues, related to atheism and faith.

Q: What inspired you to write this book on Atheism? What are some of your major arguments?

A: My encounters (disputes and discussions) with atheists on the one hand, and the stunning and fascinating experiences of God's existence and His loving providence, on the other, inspired and motivated me to write the book.

My observations and reflections on how things in this world correspond to one another in a kind of mutual compatibility and "dove-tailing" led me to the necessity of a Mastermind behind it all. This is manifested also in our own body, where each organ is structured in view of something outside of the whole system. For instance, the nose is made in such a way that it has nostrils to allow the passage of air coming from outside. The ears are shaped to receive sound waves from outside. The reproductive system shows that it is envisaged and developed in view of another body. This arrangement in which one organ or item is interlinked with another element or organ outside is not possible of itself. It is possible only if directed by a Conductor in a kind of a universal concert or orchestra and that is God. Mere chance, as many atheists claim, cannot bring it about. That all the bodies

invariably follow this structure of development simply cannot be by chance.

Even atheists have to admit that the elements of this Earth have their predictable properties and are governed by certain fixed laws. To hold that the universe came to exist by mere chance and that it is governed by mere chance and that the laws that govern the universe came about by mere chance one needs stronger faith than the faith of the theist in God the Creator! The "faith" of the atheists is thus stronger, but ridiculous!

Atheists sometimes point to the problem of evil and suffering in the world and use it as an argument for their claim about the non-existence of God. But they have no answer to the existence of so much good and beautiful in this world. Nor do they have any meaningful solution to overcome evil in the world. Denying God's existence is no solution to the problems of the world. It is, above all, faith in God that urges us to help people in their suffering. Atheism has no inner dynamism or intrinsic potential to inspire people for selfless love and service. It only leads people to violence, despair and anxiety.

In addition to this, one must also ask why there is something at all rather than nothing. Nothingness might have been an option. But

instead of nothing, we experience something that is, that exists; we have an undeniable reality before us. And being cannot emerge from non-being or nothing. In other words, non-being or nothingness cannot be the ground of being or reality. If at all there is reality really, there should be also the Ground or Source of reality really which is God. On an imaginary or fictive hook you cannot hang a real fan!

Q: Besides your personal reflections and reading, did interactions and discussions with atheists also provide insights for your book? If so, could you please provide some details?

The insights I gained from discussions with atheists were in the form of counter-arguments. For instance, atheists often argue that we cannot prove God's existence. This atheistic "argument" is not at all an argument, for this is not a proof against God's existence. If someone is unable to prove the reality or existence of an entity, it only means that the concerned person is incapable of it, or that the concerned reality is of a different sphere, surpassing the possibilities of proof according to the prevalent tools and methods. Physical realities are objects that can be analysed with the help of physical and material tools and

experiments. Spiritual realities cannot be treated the same way as physical realities. Each being has its own properties. The special nature of God surpasses and overrides all human means to locate and prove Him as though He were a being among the many beings of this world.

The atheistic statement that we cannot prove God's existence is in itself not a proof against His existence. It is illogical to conclude the non-existence of something just because you are not able to prove its existence. No one has disproved God's existence to date, and no atheist has also proved that God does not exist.

Secondly, many important things in our life do not depend upon proofs. We do many significant things in our life without first proving them. A great part of our life is based on reasonable trust. Is it only after a proof or DNA test that we have accepted our parents as our parents?

Some atheists argue that the believers have created a God for the sake of consolation in face of the bitter experiences in this world, caused by nature as well as society; God is, for the atheists, hence a creation of mere wishful thinking. This argument backfires in the counter direction: atheism can be equally said to be the creation of wishful thinking of atheists in order to avoid any

sanction against, or accountability for, their evil deeds. Faith in God helps us, in fact, to face the crises of this world more peacefully and serenely than otherwise. What is wrong with that? Simply because something helps us in our difficulties does not necessarily mean that it is an illusion or a product of wishful thinking. Food and water really help us, for example, in our hunger and thirst. Are they, therefore, illusions?

Q: Violence, hate, misogyny, discrimination, oppression, superstition etc. have long been sought to be justified in the name of religion. Many people might lose faith in God because of the terrible things that have been (and continue to be) done in the name of God and religion. In this context, do you agree that 'religious' people are to a considerable extent responsible for many people losing faith in God and turning atheist? If so, what do you think needs to be done?

A: Unfortunately, violence, hate, oppression, etc. have happened in the name of religion or God. This occurs because of a distorted idea of God and religion, on the one hand, and for political and economic reasons, on the other. If hate and killing are carried out in resonance with the teachings of a particular religious tradition, it is really bad. Such an understanding of religion has nothing to do with God, for God is life, love, justice, and peace. It can, however, happen that members of an authentic religion practice evil deeds which are condemned by their very religion. In this case, they would be acting against their religion. This has to be condemned by the respective religious authorities, showing the reasons for this condemnation from within their religion.

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By

Shahin Ashraf Ali

"Dadi, I think there is some connection between Charlie Chaplin, Dada (grandpa) and Abba!" Ifra told her grandma one day.

"Charlie Chaplin, that famous late comedian, and your Dada?! I do not know of any connection whatsoever between the two. As far as your Abba is concerned, I remember as a young boy he enjoyed Charlie Chaplin movies. Then later on I guess he grew out of his Charlie Chaplin craze," Dadi responded.

Ifra was a keenly observant girl. She took note of things that most people overlooked. No one else in her family were aware that in Grandpa's presence abbaseemed ill at ease with any topic related to Charlie Chaplin. He even switched the television channel airing a movie or any programme on the late actor if grandpa was around. What's more, Ifra had even noticed the unmistakable glint in grandpa's eyes every time Abba did so.

"There is some connection. And I am going to find out." Ifra told herself.

Ifra went to her Grandpa, who was enjoying his evening cup of tea in the balcony all by himself. Grandma and mummy were watching their favorite serial on television.

"Dada, I want to ask you something," she said.

Grandpa looked at her questioningly, "What my dear?"

"What is the connection between you, Abba and Charlie Chaplin?"

Abba, Dada & Charlie Chaplin

Ifra was a keenly observant girl. She took note of things that most people overlooked.



I could not believe my favorite comedian was such a stern person in reality.

putting the magazine aside.

she asked.

Grandpa almost choked on his tea. He coughed, caught his breath and then burst out laughing!

"First tell me my angel, what makes you think so?" Grandpa wanted to know.

Ifra grinned, "You know, Dada. It is you who keep telling everyone proudly, my Ifra is a very observant girl!"

"Yes, yes, indeed. There is a connection." Grandpa admitted.

"I knew it!" Ifra exclaimed with glee.

"But, I strongly feel, you should get to know about it from your Abba," said grandpa. "Ask him, just like you asked me," he encouraged her.

That evening, when Abba was relaxing on the living room couch reading a magazine, Ifra went to him and said, "Abba, I want to ask you something."

"Yes, my jaan (dear)," said Abba,

"What is the connection between you, Dada and Charlie Chaplin?" she asked.

Abba looked stunned for a moment. He studied his young daughter's face. Slowly, a smile spread on his face. Cupping Ifra's face with his hands he said, "You are so sensitive and observant!"

He planted a kiss on her head and began to narrate, "When I was young, I was a fan of the legendary Charlie Chaplin. Your Dada was a serious sort of person and I used to tease him by saying, 'I wish I had Charlie Chaplin for a father!' Then one day, I found a magazine cutting taped on my study table. It was an interview of Charlie Chaplin's daughter. A part of the interview was highlighted with a marker pen. Charlie Chaplin was a horrid perfectionist, so the mood on the sets was almost tense. He was very strict and we were punished severely if we did not do well at school. I could not believe my favorite comedian was such a stern person in reality. But most importantly, I realized that day that my teasing had deeply affected Dada. I went to Dada and told him that I may compare him with anyone else, but I would never ever want to trade him for any other father," Abba explained. "I do enjoy watching Charlie Chaplin movies even today, but not in Dada's presence. Perhaps, I am still making amends for the years of teasing and the pain it caused to him."

"And I would never ever, ever, trade you for anyone else. You are the best father in the world!" Ifra exclaimed, hugging her Abba tightly.

(Shahin Ashraf Ali is an author of children's books, a freelance journalist and teacher. She teaches memorizing techniques to school students in Mumbai.)

NATURE & ENVIRONMENT

Greener Earth in Support of 'One Tree by One Person'

Bangalore: 'Greener Earth', an event to encourage tree planting and showcase the adverse effects of air pollution, was recently organized at the Magnifique Public School, 'One Tree by One Person' campus also called as Centre for Education, Environment, Culture and Human Excellence on Kanakapura Main Road. Students, staff and parents of the students from different schools, and people from different walks of life participated in the event.

Environmentalism, Author, Educationist Motivational Speaker and Founder of the Global Environment Movement One Tree by One Person, U S Moinuddin, interacted with the audience and said in his speech, "Major cities like Bangalore are experiencing a transition which is eventually coming at the expense of the health of the people. In the year 1971 there were about 1 lakh



U S Moinuddin with Sonia Singh

vehicles in Bangalore, now there are more than 80 Lakh vehicles moving on the roads. Toxic gases emitted from the vehicles are considerably responsible for lung diseases, cardiovascular diseases, allergies and skin diseases." He also highlighted the importance of planting trees and their role in slowing global warming. Many people participated in the event. Prof R Janardhan, Pro Vice Chancellor Dayananda Sagar University said in his speech, "The

initiative to ensure each citizen to plant one sapling is truly a great one. Our society should collectively encourage One Tree by One Person to make our world a better place to live in."

Sonia Singh, Aviation coach and Mrs. India 2018 said, "Children need to become aware of the ill effects of air pollution, and also, when a culture is developed in which

they understand about the role of trees for our survival, they grow up into responsible adults."

Admiring the green environment in the school campus, Ganesh Kumar, Managing Director and Founder of Sheen Sports Alliance, said in his speech, "Education and Environment go hand in hand in the campus, it is an amazing feel to learn in a campus full of trees." Students from various schools performed mimes and role plays to display their concern towards making our earth greener and safer.

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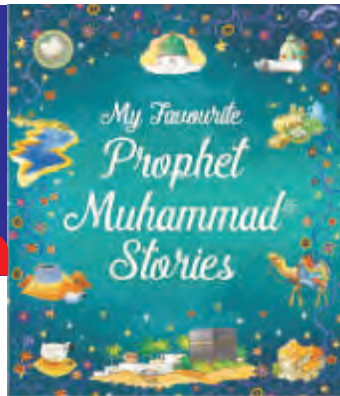
Reviewed by Nigar

In my zeal to read an authentic biography of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), I felt that some of the old biographies might be too 'heavy'. Moreover, I didn't know how much of it could be real fact and how much fiction. So, I preferred going back to the kids' shelf and was delighted to discover Saniyasnain Khan's book titled *My Favourite Prophet Muhammad Stories*. Published by Goodword Books, this colorful book, splashed with beautiful illustrations by Gurmeet, takes you back many, many centuries and is a lovely way for children and adults alike to learn about the early life of the Prophet. The book is packed with fascinating accounts about people and places. We learn about the Kabah and how the pilgrimage to it was organized. We learn about the role of Mecca in major trade-routes. We learn about many incidents such as the re-digging of the Zam Zam well and The Year of Elephants, as well as the birth of Prophet Muhammad, his childhood in the desert and his early life in Makkah. *My Favourite Prophet Muhammad Stories* encourages children to discover for themselves the message of the life of the Prophet and to find their own ways of applying the Prophet's timeless teachings to their lives.

Saniyasnain Khan has put in a tremendous amount of hard work to make the book lively and spiritually enlightening at the same time. The illustrations of the houses in Mecca centuries ago as the illustrator conceives them are

very attractive, and so also are pictures of the food of those times! The images of pretty camels strolling in the desert and a herd of plump, woolly sheep grazing make you wish that you lived in those 'good old' times! If you really want to know how Mecca was then, this book is a good way to get a good idea it depicts a beautiful town that is minus the opulent malls and five star hotels which today surround the Haram.

One of the chapters I liked best was the one titled: "Every Prophet was a Shepherd." In the early years of his youth, we learn that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would take the herds of sheep and goats of the people of Makkah outside the city to let them graze. In this way, he started earning at a young age. In later days, the Prophet told his Companions that there was no Prophet who had ever lived on this earth who had not worked as a shepherd. The Companions asked in surprise, "You too, O Prophet." To which the Prophet said, "Yes, I too." How I wish we could live in times where people still grazed sheep and camels and travelled about in caravans along long trade routes! Although this fascinating book may look like that it is for kids, adults too will find it informative. One critical comment though: I must confess that I am not at all happy about the way the book ends: very abruptly, and much too soon at the time when the Prophet returns from his trade caravan from Syria to Makkah. If the subsequent phases of the Prophet's life are recounted in other books by the author, it would have



been useful to indicate this at the end of the book.

That said, Goodword Books are doing an excellent job with their impressive range of books on Islam, and this one is definitely a precious treat.

(Do write to Saniyasnain Khan on info@goodwordbooks.com to buy the book!)

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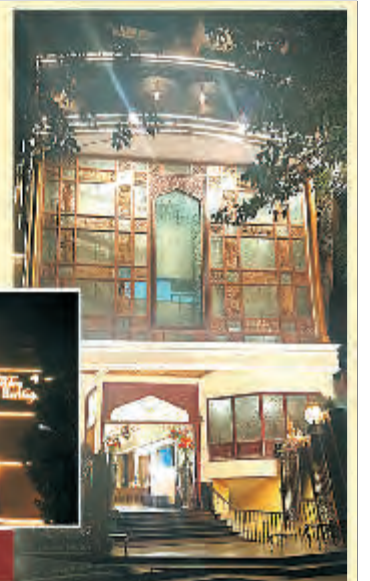
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Some Top International Trainers and Coaches Share Their Views About the Discover Yourself Workshop

Huma Ahmed (Trainer, Certified Transformational Coach, Inspirational Speaker & Author, Bahrain)

Discover Yourself Workshop by Sadathullah Khan is a one of a kind workshop delivering you more value than you can imagine at a price so low that you can't believe it. You pay so less in exchange for so much. I am a Certified Life Coach, Trainer, and Author so my level and experience of the workshop were completely different from someone who hasn't invested much or coached or trained people in personal development in order to become a better version of themselves. The workshop was packed with value, and I found the trainer extremely professional, organized, engaging and experienced in terms of knowledge and delivery. He delivered the workshop based on the audience using effective examples they could relate to pitching in humour to keep the mood light even with such a deep topic. I found many answers to the deeper questions of self-discovery and self-enhancement with many practical and simple tools to implement. When a Certified Self-Discovery & Mindset Coach who is well-acquainted with the science and art of coaching and personal development found such immense value, imagine how much would some-one who haven't been on this path will.

As a person who regards approaching life through the lens of spirituality and as a Muslim, I highly recommend this workshop to anyone who wants to gain clarity and design a life full of happiness, meaning, fulfillment and countless rewards not just for here but the Hereafter too. My rating: 5 stars! If you really and truly love yourself, don't think, just go for it. You will be glad you did.

Dr. Syed Habeeb (Author, Leadership Coach, Director Edu. & HR, Bengaluru)

A man who always stands for

others to make a sizable and significant impact in their lives: that is Sadathullah Khan for you. I have had the privilege of interacting with Sadathullah Sab closely and found him all the while concerned and caring about others. A lateral thinker, Sadathullah is a man who feels for the masses and is always willing to sacrifice his own comfort to see others smiling. A God-conscious individual, Sadathullah walks the extra mile to fulfill his passion of making a difference at the grassroot levels of society and to the nucleus of any nation "the family". He has successfully conducted scores of empowerment programs across the world, especially for women, and has brought about a transformation in their way of thinking and way of life. I wish him all the very best always!

Khadija Taylor (Trainer, Coach, Johannesburg, South Africa)

This course is amazing! It is based on how to move from the world of falsehood into the world of truth ('Haq'). Words cannot do justice to this course. Please try attend. It is worth every moment. I have done meditation for over 40 years, attending positive thinking courses and have laboured to bring my mind in control. This course deals with the heart.

Mariam Roshnee (Trainer Coach, South Africa)

I have much to say to you Khan Saab, and I thank you. I am so grateful Alhamdulillah. May Allah grant you your rightful reward.

Rizwan Khaleel (Captain at Air India Express)

Sadathulla has been at it for years... What we refer to as success for him is only possible when the participant is successful. Sadathulla's success is not important: the participant's success is the focus. He encourages people to embrace humanity within... a deep sense of being united with all of humanity.

Ahmed Hussain (worked with Dr. Sadathullah in Alupco, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)

An exemplary personality, totally dedicated to the service of humanity. May Allah Shower immense mercies and blessings on him during his lifetime.

Fathima Khan, Trainer Coach, Botswana

This is what I got from the workshop: Discover Yourself is aptly referred to as a *workshop* because it is an interactive process of transformation. It is NOT a course with information that one can read and write an exam in order to pass. The workshop is unique because every human being can relate to it, from the most "illiterate" to the highest "qualified" as it takes you on a journey, back to the basics of life, which every human being yearns for to love and peace. After attending four workshops, I am now starting to feel a renewed energy that I want to share with others. I am not defined by a title or by how others see me. I am defined by my character. From this workshop, I have learned that love is a component of the heart and that every human being has love in our heart. Hatred is a product of the mind, born as a result of your own bad thoughts, which only you can get rid of. I want to thank Khan Saheb for showing me this way of life.



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Humanity destroyed 83 percent wild animals: study reveals



Humankind is revealed as simultaneously insignificant and utterly dominant in the grand scheme of life on Earth by a groundbreaking new assessment of all life on the planet. The world's 7.6 billion people represent just 0.01 percent of all living things, according to the study. Yet since the dawn of civilization, humanity has caused the loss of 83 percent of all wild mammals and half of plants, while livestock kept by humans abounds. The new work is the first comprehensive estimate of the weight of every class of living creature and overturns some long-held assumptions. Bacteria are indeed a major life form – 13 percent of everything – but plants overshadow everything, representing 82 percent of all living matter. All other creatures, from insects to fungi, to fish and animals, make up just 5 percent of the world's biomass.

Another surprise is that the

teeming life in the oceans represents just 1 percent of all biomass. The vast majority of life is land-based and a large chunk – an eighth – is bacteria buried deep below the surface.

The new work reveals that farmed poultry today makes up 70 percent of all birds on the planet, with just 30 percent being wild. The picture is even more stark for mammals—60 percent of all mammals on Earth are livestock, mostly cattle and pigs, 36 percent are human and just 4 percent are wild animals.

The destruction of wild habitat for farming, logging and development has resulted in the start of what many scientists consider the sixth mass extinction of life to occur in the Earth's four billion year history. About half the Earth's animals are thought to have been lost in the last 50 years.

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

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Kamali's Helping Hand!!!

Having seen suffering first hand and losing his wife to cancer, Syed Zameeruddin Kamali today volunteers at Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Bangalore, guiding and helping patients both morally and monetarily.

Having seen suffering first hand and losing his wife to cancer, Syed Zameeruddin Kamali today volunteers at Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Bangalore, guiding and helping patients both morally and monetarily.

Syed Zameeruddin Kamali is an epitome of modesty. This humble man is very happy not being written about, and people like him are unsung heroes and a source of inspiration to humanity at large.

Bangalore-based Kamali and his wife Shama were the ideal made-for-each-other couple. Kamali had his own business, while Shama was a home maker and unfortunately a cancer patient. In 1997, clouds of discomfort surrounded their peaceful life when Shama began feeling unwell and had to see doctors, who initially thought her symptoms were just hormonal disorders.

Back then, people hesitated to talk about cancer. Shama was taken to a local hospital, but later as friends suggested, detailed investigations were performed, and that is when the family met Dr. B.S. Srinath, Surgical oncologist and Managing director of Bangalore Institute of Oncology, now the Managing Trustee and Head of the institution of Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre. After investigations, Shama was diagnosed with breast cancer and the treatment began, from Surgery to Chemotherapy and Radiation. The immense moral and medical support from Dr. B.S. Srinath, Dr. Sanjiv Sharma, Dr. Shekar Patil and Dr. Karthik and S. Rishi, helped the family to go through this traumatic phase. As Kamali recalls, this gave him a big lesson that more than medicines, a cancer patient needs moral and emotional support from all quarters.

As Kamali puts forth, Shama did not lose hope but in fact she turned into a counsellor for fellow cancer patients, guiding patients at Kidwai Hospital, St. John's Hospital and Bangalore Institute of Oncology hospital. In 2005, Shama and Kamali joined some other likeminded cancer survivors and founded an NGO, "Cancer Information Centre" (CIC) to help cancer patients and also create awareness about cancer in the society. This inspired Kamali, and

he joined Shama in 2007, volunteering in Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital, talking to patients, lending them emotional and moral support. While Shama lost the battle to cancer on April 25th 2011, Kamali continued to keep her spirit alive by keeping up his regular volunteering work in Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital.

Today, Kamali is the 'Go-To' person in Shankara Hospital, a friendly and familiar guide to patients who need assistance and guidance. He can be spotted everyday from 3.00pm to 6.00pm interacting with patients in the hospital, giving them step by step directions, co-ordinating between different departments and patiently listening to problems and complaints, especially the poorer patients arriving from rural areas for treatment. In addition, he handles the security arrangements and house-keeping at the hospital, apart from taking care of the pantry management.

The ethos of Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital & Research Centre is all about giving state-of the art treatment to all at an affordable cost. It is a joint venture of Sri Shankara Cancer Foundation and Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Charitable Trust of Sringeri. This hospital is located in the heart of Bangalore. It provides expertise in all super-specialities of cancer and has many highly qualified and dedicated doctors as consultants. What makes this hospital stand out is its very humanitarian approach towards all patients. In fact, here the doctors have a golden heart. When they realise that any patient is in his or her terminal stage, their treatment of the patient in their last stages is very humane. The patient and the family is not only made to feel comfortable emotionally, but the full team at Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre ensure that with minimum expenses on the treatment, the family can manage their life ahead without becoming financially bankrupt. Not only is the terminal patient treated well with full dignity, even the family is counselled to handle the end stage of their family member with grace and peace. A large chunk of patients who come here for treatment have travelled miles from their villages and are economically poor. At Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital, they experience kindness and generosity extended by the doctors and the staff team.

Kamali shares this same ethos of helping the poor and leading a meaningful life by being useful to

others in need. "I have seen suffering first hand. I have seen how a cancer patient needs so much support from family and friends and the society. I was extremely lucky that my dear friend Mr. S.G. Chaturvedi stood by me like a rock, lending me the much needed moral and emotional

the family suffering from cancer, the first and most important thing is to have a family friend to whom you can confide your fears and worries and also who will stand by you like a rock of support. I am grateful to God for sending Mr. Chaturvedi as the light at the end of the tunnel during the tough

“ 59 year-old Kamali is an inspiration to others who can use their time and knowledge to help people in need. His selfless efforts to make patients feel comfortable, saving them the trouble from running pillar to post, is nothing less than service to God! ”

support during the traumatic times when I had to face the reality of Shama's cancer. He kept me in positive mode always and was instrumental in helping me to stay brave and carry on my role as Shama's caregiver courageously. I feel that whenever any member in

times" recalls Mr. Kamali emotionally.

"After having lost my wife to cancer, I understand what so many others must be going through. So, by being around in Shankara Cancer Hospital volunteering time for the patients, I feel I can be of some use

to humanity", he says. "Also, I want people to spread awareness that cancer is not contagious and that early detection is very important. But staying positive and talking to patients, I try in my own way to tell them that cancer is not the end of the world. It can be managed with support from society, apart from medical treatment. Volunteering is a very important good deed which everybody should do", says Kamali. He says that he is ever grateful to Dr. B.S. Srinath and the Hospital for giving him an opportunity to serve humanity.

59 year-old Kamali is an inspiration to others who can use their time and knowledge to help people in need. His selfless efforts to make patients feel comfortable, saving them the trouble from running pillar to post, is nothing less than service to God!

(Mr. Syed Zameeruddin Kamali can be reached at:

Venue: Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital & Research Centre located at 1st Cross, Shankarapuram, Shankar Mutt Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560004.

**Time: Between 3.00pm to 6.00pm Email id: Kamali_6633@yahoo.com
Contact Details: 080-26981130 / 080-26981000 / 080-46484401
(By Nigar & Dolcy)**

National Academic Depository

Digital Storehouse of Degrees

The Union Government has come up with a facility whereby students can store their degrees in a website managed by the Ministry for Human Resources. These can be retrieved any time and from anywhere when needed or employers can be referred to see and verify them by using the unique number or code assigned to the recipients. The facility has been developed by the National Academic Depository (NAD).

It is often the case that students or job aspirants face the risk of loss, theft or spoilage of their degree, diploma, certificates or awards while transporting them in the physical form. Even the ones stored at homes or institutions may get destroyed due to termites or humidity or salinity of the air. Besides there is always the risk of their fake replicas or forged ones could be used by others. The NAD

will do away all these.

The Depository has been developed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in pursuance of a decision by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2016. The facility is likely to benefit nearly five crore students every year. India has 55 boards for evaluation of school education at the 10th standard (SSLC) level, 359 State Universities, 123 deemed universities, 47 Central Universities and 260 private Universities. Besides, there are 107 institutions of excellence such as BITS, Pilani, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore; MIDS, Chennai; NITs, IISERs, NISERs, IITs, and some centrally-funded institutions. The various school exam boards themselves issue nearly 3.65 crore certificates.

The NAD is a digital storehouse which besides preserving the documents will ensure that process of retrieval is easy, transparent and flawless. Besides, the mechanism will be totally transparent. The paperless depository was conceived on the lines of dematerialization of financial securities. The UGC will be directing all boards, universities and other educational institutions to upload the certificates, diplomas, and degrees onto the website. Each

“ The risk of loss, theft or decay of important documents will be eliminated with the preservation of all documents pertaining to one's educational accomplishments. ”

student will be provided a unique number to access the documents which will be based on Aadhaar numbers. He or she can authorize the employers to access the documents for verification process. The facility will save immense amount of resources being spent on photocopying and sending of these documents by posts, couriers or after by email after due scanning. The freshers from colleges and universities can upload their documents free of cost till be age of 27. The NAD will maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the documents. The creation of the NAD is a huge advance towards easing the pain of the students seeking admissions, applying for jobs or seeking visa for immigration or jobs abroad. For more details log onto: www.nad.gov.in

(Contributed by Maqbool Ahmed Siraj)

On the Bankruptcy of Atheism

Religious leaders should recognize that hate and violence do not belong to authentic religion and that it is against God. They should be bold enough to condemn such activities. This would be possible, however, only if the teachings of the concerned religion plainly and unambiguously condemn hate and violence. But if the original message is clearly in favour of violence, we need a thorough assessment and critical reconsideration.

Q: In some cases, it is immature, fearsome, brutal or otherwise unhelpful and alienating notions of God preached by some religionists that turn people away from God. Also, many people may turn away from God because of the insistence by priests on unverifiable beliefs and dogmas and rituals, which they claim are absolutely necessary for salvation. Do you agree with this? If so, what do you think religious scholars, priests etc. should do?

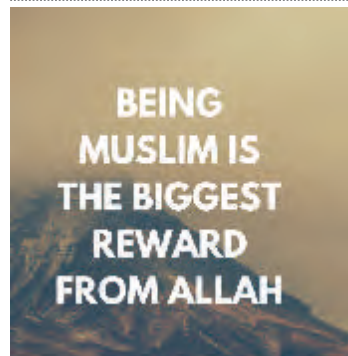
A: Since we are limited and God is Infinite, our notions about God will definitely be imperfect. This is not surprising. Perfect notions about God can be communicated by God alone. In other words, only God can reveal God perfectly and adequately. In this sense we speak of self-revelation and self-communication of God. Even in that case, as long as the recipients are imperfect beings, their notions can also be imperfect. Imperfect and fearful notions about God can also alienate people from God and even make people think there could be no God. In that case, they are only rejecting the wrong notions of

God.

What religious people should do in this regard is to be aware of their own limitations in speaking about God. We can speak about God only analogically.

Q: Do you think there could be something positive in the growing phenomenon of atheism across the world? Do you think the atheist critique might help people of faith refine their understandings of God, Religion and Spirituality?

A: Atheistic critiques of religion can help us refine our understandings of God. For instance, Marxist atheism has criticized certain notions of God, religion and spirituality that have tolerated social injustice. This is, in fact, a call and reminder to the believers to return to the original message of the scriptures, where God, through the prophets, always condemns the oppression of the poor and social injustice. Religion is not merely a private affair between myself and my God but has something to do with the society and the world; spirituality is not confined to some prayers and ascetical practices, but is oriented to the socio-political system and ecology/nature.



Terms Related with Writing Works (حریر و تصنیف سے متعلق اصطلاحات)

Assignment: A piece of writing that a writer has been assigned to write by an editor or publisher for a pre-determined fee.

(تقوین شش شدہ تحریری کام)

Ballad: A narrative folksong, usually created by common people and passed on orally.

(رومانوی، جذباتی گیت)

Book Review: A summary of a book, including its critique.

(تبصرہ، کتب)

Copyediting: Checking for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and word usage.

(ادارت)

CV: Curriculum Vitae - a short one page resume.

(تعلیم و تجربہ کا مختصر احوال)

Draft: A completed version of a writing which may be rewritten, revised, or polished.

(تحریری مسودہ کا ابتدائی خاکہ)

Dummy: Hand drawn mock-up of what a page will look like in print.

(طباعت سے قبل مطبوعہ مسودہ کی نقل)

Elegy: A mournful, contemplative lyric poem written to commemorate someone who is dead, often ending in a consolation.

(مرثیہ)

Genre: The type or category of writing - like mystery, science fiction, romance, fantasy, etc.

(صنف ادب و تحریر)

Ghostwriter: A writer who is paid to write for someone else. A ghostwriter does not get a byline

or any credit. Usually celebrities hire ghostwriters and then sell the book under their own names.

(کراہیہ کا مصنف)

Hardcover: Book bound with hard cardboard cover, then covered with a paper dust jacket.

(مجلد کتاب)

Manuscript: Author's copy of a novel, non-fiction writing, article, or screenplay.

(دستی تحریر)

Obituary: News of death especially in a newspaper.

(وفات کی اطلاع، تعزیت نامہ)

Overview: A brief description of a novel or non-fiction book intended to introduce the work to a publisher.

(عمومی جائزہ)

Ode: A lengthy lyric poem that often expresses lofty emotions in a dignified style.

(جذباتی نظم)

Paradox: A statement that initially appears to be contradictory but then, on closer inspection, turns out to make sense. E.g. "The Child is Father of the Man" (Wordsworth Quote).

(بظاہر مبہل بات مگر حقیقت)

Parody: A humorous imitation of another, usually serious, work.

(مزاحیہ نقالی)

Plagiarism: Presenting another author's works or words as your own.

(تحریری سرقت)

Pseudonym: An alias used by a writer desiring not to use his or her

real name. Also known as "pen name".

(تخلص، مثال کے طور پر، اردو شاعر مرزا

اسد اللہ خان، غالب تخلص رکھتے تھے)

Quatrain: A four-line stanza. Quatrains are the most common stanzaic form in the English language, having various meters and rhyme schemes.

(رباعی)

Royalties: A percentage of the cover price of a book paid to the author. Royalties are only paid after the book has earned out and are usually paid on a monthly or quarterly basis.

(کتب کا حق تصنیف)

Simile: Comparing two different things using the words 'like' or 'as'. For example - The water was cold as ice.

(تمثیل)

Synopsis: Brief summary of a story, manuscript, or book, told in present tense prose which is usually two to three paragraphs in length.

(تحقیقی مطالعہ کا ابتدائی خاکہ)



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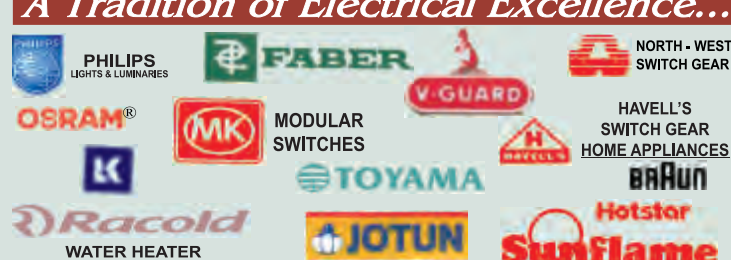
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