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World Tolerance Summit in Dubai

Promoting peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and friendly relations

Dubai: Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Tolerance and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Institute for Tolerance (IIT), officially opened the second day of the second World Tolerance Summit, held this year under the theme *Tolerance in Multiculturalism: Achieving the Social, Economic and Humane Benefits of a Tolerant World*. Over 3,000 participants from over 100 countries and 70 speakers from around the world took part in the summit, organized by the IIT. The event featured a set of interactive sessions and workshops, focused on four themes: economic, social, cultural and media tolerance. It aims to promote peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, acceptance of others and to achieve friendly ties between people, regardless of their faiths, beliefs, cultures and languages.

The special ceremony opened with the launch of a video titled 'Humanity and Access to a Tolerant World', which underlined the instrumental role of tolerance in promoting world peace and security. In his

address to attendees, Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan said that the summit, graced by the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai, serves as a global platform for dialogue and joint action to achieve wellbeing for all. He said: "The summit complements the UAE's efforts to serve society and human beings in the region and the world."

The event included dialogue sessions, workshops and a specialized digital library with more than 80 specialized publications and researches. It featured 36 student projects from 16 local and international universities, and an exhibition that saw participation from over 35 local and international government entities, showcasing their practices and programs to spread the values of tolerance, justice and equality.

The World Tolerance Summit heard from speakers how the leaders of Gulf countries like Bahrain and the UAE have been upholding the values of tolerance and coexistence. Two

speakers from these countries talked about this at a session on "Instilling Communal Peace and Harmony Within Societies."

Dr Shaikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Duaj Al Khalifa, chairman of the board of trustees, King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence in Bahrain said countries cannot develop without promoting tolerance. "There are countries where leaders don't believe in development but look for inciting differences and this would make such countries go into internal conflicts including civil war and this would hinder development and peaceful coexistence because development and tolerance are very related." "We should be optimistic here for the simple reason that we are having great political leaders in Bahrain and the Gulf countries who strongly believe in coexistence and tolerance and they have proved this strongly in the recent years." He cited the existence of a century-old Hindu temple and the establishment of the first church in 1898 in Bahrain as examples of the existence of tolerance in his country for



centuries. "We have a long history of tolerance...and it was not the result of international or external pressures."

Al Khalifa said the UAE leaders are continuing the journey of tolerance upheld by founding father Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. "In both the countries, we know human rights and we believe in the importance of tolerance freedom," he stated.

Brigadier General Dr. Salah Obaid Mohammad Al Ghoul Al Salam, director general of community protection and crime prevention at the UAE

Ministry of Interior echoed similar opinions. He said he was asked if tolerance is a luxury in the UAE. "It is not. We have clear strategies and performance indicators to evaluate tolerance because security is based on the tolerance in the community." He said the coexistence of more than 200 nationalities in the UAE is seen as an opportunity to promote tolerance. "Every nationality, sect and religion has their positive and negative traditions. We learn from all the positive aspects and gain knowledge that promote security."

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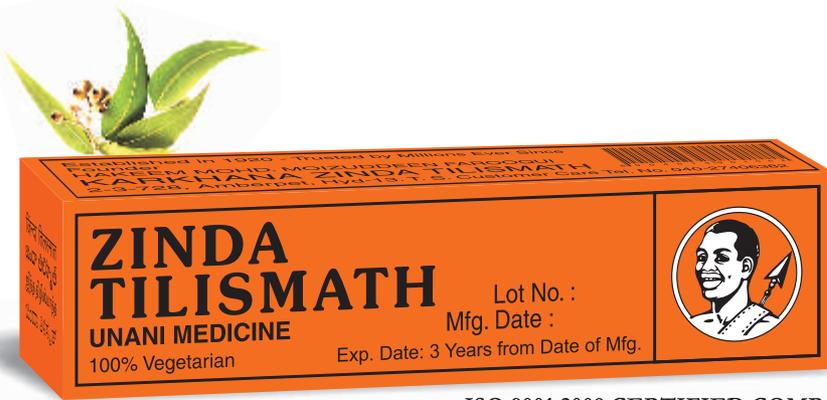
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ECOLOGY

Resource Distribution: The Natural Way

The Quran (2:29) says: "It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth." I cannot think of a clearer and firmer statement of socialism than this verse.

By **Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz**

The proper distribution of resources is a much talked-about issue. In this regard, one can gain valuable insights from the world of nature in this case, from plants.

The leaves of a plant is where the process called photosynthesis takes place. In this process, the plant absorbs water from the soil and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. With the help of sunlight, these are converted into sugar. This happens in the green parts of the plant the leaves. The non-green parts of the plant, including the stem and roots, cannot produce sugar.

The plant's leaves have been blessed by God with the capacity to produce sugar. Once they produce sugar, what do they do? Do they say, "We've worked so hard and produced sugar, so we'll keep it to ourselves" No! As soon as they produce the sugar, which is the plant's food, they send almost all of it to the non-green parts of the plant.

This happens in accordance with a universal law, which is known as the law of diffusion. According to this law, things move from a regions of high concentration to a region of low concentration. In other words, they move to where there is a need. In this case, sugar moves from the leaves, where it is produced, to the stem and roots of a plant, parts of the plant that do not have the capacity to produce sugar but they need it.

This example of a plant provides us with valuable insights into how resources should be distributed in society. Resources should not be hoarded up by those who possess them. Rather, they should be diffused among others. We should freely share them with those who lack them and need them.

The Quran (2:29) says: "It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth." I cannot think of a clearer and more firm statement of socialism than this verse. It is binding on people to share the resources we have been blessed with material as



Resources should not be hoarded up by those who possess them. Rather, they should be diffused among others. We should freely share them with those who lack them and need them.

well as non-material resources such as time and abilities with people who aren't so blessed. But do we do that? Do we bother about orphans, widows, the sick and the poor, even those living in our vicinity?

There is another precious lesson in resource distribution that a plant can teach us. As the plant grows, the number of its leaves increases, and so more sugar is produced. This sugar is more than what is required by the leaves, the stem and the roots. So, then, what does the plant do? It doesn't hoard this sugar, saying, "I made it, so I'll save it up." No! It is satisfied with what it has and doesn't crave for more. Instead, it transforms the excess sugar into "reserve food" stored in fruits or grains, which it offers freely to whoever needs them!

This is just the way we should relate to the many blessings, material as well as other, that God has blessed us with: we should, of course, avail of them ourselves, but at the same time also freely sharing them with those who need them.

(The author has written extensively on Islam, science and environment. He can be contacted on maparvaiz@gmail.com)

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Australian Imams Launch Manual To Debunk Misconceptions about Islam

“It is not only important to break down barriers and misconceptions, but also for young Australian Muslims to gain a better understanding of the teachings of Islam from a scholarly source, rather than an unknown and unreliable internet source,” Hass Dellal, Executive Director of the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF), says. The 12-page manual is titled “An Introductory Resource Manual: Islam and Living in Australia.” The manual

was launched by the Board of Imams Victoria to help young Australian Muslims who turn to the internet to learn about their faith.

“A lot of youth, when they want to understand something about Islam, the easiest way to get that information is to jump online,” Imam BekimHasani says. “But sometimes the information that they get, they get from people who we know nothing about and we do not know if they are qualified to give that

information.”

Imam Hasani said the resource aims at reaching both Muslims and non-Muslims. “A lot of people, without knowing the true meaning of Islam, they put us all in the same basket,” he said. So when they have something online where they can actually learn, the true meaning of these topics and the true meaning of Islam, it will be easier for them to understand where we are coming from. “Islam has nothing to do with violence. We religious leaders and Islam, in general, are against any form of violence.”

According to the 2016 Australian Census, the number of Muslims in Australia constituted 604,200 people, or 2.6% of the total Australian population.

Schools with Islamic Values Top UK Charts in GCSE League

London: British Schools that are run in accordance with Islamic values top the charts in GCSE league table. The first three Muslim faith schools that have topped the British government's ranking of secondary school performance are: Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School, Eden Boys' School and Eden Girls' school and *securing a total of four in the top ten*. All three top position schools that are run according to Islamic and British

values were classified as “well above average” on the Progress 8 scale. In a statement, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) said that the statistics showed faith schools were “in fact high-achieving despite negative perceptions.”



Bangladesh Interfaith Forum Inaugurated

Leaders of different religious communities in Bangladesh called upon their fellow citizens to reject violence in the name of religion and work to establish peace by upholding harmony. No religion allows violence, they said at the inauguration of the Bangladesh Inter-Religious Forum for Peace and Harmony (BIRFPH) in Dhaka recently. The forum's coordinator Syed Tayabul Bashar said their main objective was to establish peace and protect those who might fall victim to rumours and religious hatred.

At the programme, Islamic scholar Maulana Farid Uddin Masud said Islam as a religion considers love as its “core value.” “Only love and affection can solve problems, not hatred,” he said. “Not only as a Muslim, but as a human being, I urge all to learn how to respect each other and be affectionate towards others.” A disturbing trend to demean others has emerged all over the world, he

said, adding against such a backdrop, launching a forum to work for religious harmony was a timely step. “Goodness and love must prevail if we are to bring change to the society.”

Addressing the event, Bangladesh Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi said it was the responsibility of the country's majority community to protect the minorities. He urged all to work under a common umbrella and address common problems together.

Bishop Paul Sishir Sarker, former moderator of the Church of Bangladesh, said an individual “enlightened by the message of religion” could bring peace, while one who misunderstood religion could cause destruction. He said the message people got from religion was important and stressed the need for conveying messages of inter-religious harmony to people of all ages.

▶▶ Page 11



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Islamic Spiritual Literature in Hindi

By Qalamdar

Headed by the 95 year-old Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, one of India's most well-known contemporary religious scholars and authors, the New Delhi-based Centre for Peace and Spirituality is a great resource for Islamic literature on a wide range of subjects. Over the years, CPS and the associated Goodword Books publishing

house have brought out an impressive range of spiritual books and booklets, authored mainly by the Maulana himself. Most of this literature is in Urdu and English, but increasingly in other languages, too, including Hindi. For Hindi readers searching for literature that articulates a truly meaningful understanding of Islamic spirituality and that addresses many issues associated with Islam about which much misunderstanding exists, this corpus of Hindi writings is a precious treasure. CPS has a Hindi translation team, which consists of dedicated CPS members who have devoted their lives to spread the message of peace, spirituality and wisdom gained from their understanding of

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Islam through Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. As of now, Goodword Books have published about thirty

books/booklets in Hindi, all of these being translations of Urdu writings by the Maulana. They deal with a variety of spiritual subjects, God's Creation Plan, basic teachings of Islam, life and death, the purpose of human life, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the search for Truth, lessons from history and a Hindi translation of the Quran, titled Pavitra Quran, which is almost 500 pages long. Several more Hindi books and booklets on various topics are in different stages of editing, proofreading and printing. Among these upcoming books is Islam: Adhunik Yug Ka Nirmata, which is a translation of the Maulana's book Islam: The Creator of

the Modern Age. As its name suggests, this book is about the role that Islam played in the emergence of modern civilization. Another Hindi book that may be released shortly is Dharm Aur Adhunik Chunauti. This is a translation of the Maulana's Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge, which has already been translated and published in English, as God Arises, and in Arabic, as Al-Islam Yatahadda. This is one of the most highly acclaimed works of the Maulana, especially in the Middle East. It uses scientific discoveries and modern knowledge to seek to prove the existence of God. The book draws arguments from well-accepted scientific laws and principles which were put to use by agnostics and atheists to seek

to deny the existence of God. The book also explains the limitations of science in seeking to determine Absolute Truth. CPS and Goodword Books are also planning to bring out a regular Islamic spiritual magazine in Hindi, articulating the Maulana's understanding of Islam, on the lines of Al-Risala, an Urdu monthly founded by the Maulana way back in 1976, and the English monthly Spirit of Islam, of which the Maulana is the Chief Editor.

In 2019 alone Goodword Books brought out eight beautifully-designed booklets in Hindi, being translated from Maulana's Urdu writings. This set of includes Jihad Kya Hai? ('What is Jihad?'), Maut Ki Yaad ('Remembrance of Death'), Saccha Rasta ('The True Path'), Ishvar Aur Insaan ('God and Man'), Ekishvarvaad Ki Sacchai ('The Truth of Monotheism'), Tazkiya: Atma Ki Shuddhikaran ('Tazkiya: The Purification of the Soul'), Insaan Apne Aap Ko Pahchaan ('Man, Know Thyself') and Safal Jeevan Ke Saidhantik Neeyam ('Rules For a Successful Life'). These booklets deal with basic Islamic beliefs and concepts and outline in simple terms the Islamic spiritual path. The language is literary yet easy to understand. The booklets are priced between Rs.30 and Rs.45 each, and the whole set of booklets can be procured along with the Hindi translation of the Quran at a sum of Rs. 180.

For more details, see <http://goodwordbooks.com/su/bcat/hindi-books>
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UAE Commits to Rebuilding Two Churches in Iraq

The United Arab Emirates has announced plans to help rebuild two Christian churches destroyed by ISIS terrorists. The UAE has expanded its collaboration with a United Nations initiative called Revive the Spirit of Mosul, an international effort to reconstruct Iraq's once second-largest city. According to a press release, a new agreement reiterating UAE's support for the initiative was signed at the U.N.'s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization headquarters in Paris. The agreement serves as an extension to an agreement signed by UAE leaders in April 2018, in which the UAE government committed \$50.4 million to help rebuild the city's



historic Grand Al-Nouri Mosque.

The new agreement commits UAE to restore the historic Al-Tahira Syriac-Catholic Church and Al-Saa'a Church in Mosul. According to *Gulf News*, UNESCO General Director Audrey Azoulay said the new restoration projects aim to "reclaim the true spirit" of Mosul as being a "peaceful coexistence between different

religious and ethnic groups."

UAE's vow to help rebuild Christian churches in Mosul comes as the Persian Gulf country has marked 2019 as its "Year of Tolerance." UAE has been one of the most devoted Middle Eastern nations when it comes to promoting the idea of religious freedom and tolerance in the last few years. Earlier this year, UAE hosted a regional religious freedom summit and hosted the first papal visit to the Arabian Peninsula. Most recently, plans were announced for the construction of the Abrahamic Family House an interfaith complex that will house a church, synagogue, and mosque Saadiyat Island near Abu Dhabi.

Sunnis & Shias Pray Together In This Azerbaijani Mosque

This may not be common elsewhere, but at the Heydar Mosque in Azerbaijan, both Sunni and Shia Muslims come together every Friday for prayers. This mosque is the largest in Azerbaijan and in the entire Caucasus, was built just 5 years ago in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, but it has already become a symbol of peace, tolerance and unity.

"Our mosque the Heydar Mosque is unique, everyone here is equal there is no



difference Sunni or Shia," Arif Novruzov, a Sunni Muslim who prays at the Heydar Mosque says. Rufar Garayev, a Shia Muslim who also attends the Heydar Mosque agrees. "I am a

Shia Muslim. That's my choice. But we also have Sunni Muslims in Azerbaijan and we see them as our brothers. This is our lifestyle, it's always been and always will be. Unlike other countries, there's stability in our country," he says.

Azerbaijan is an overwhelmingly Muslim country where Shia Muslims make up the majority. Less than 15 percent are Sunnis. Members of both sects have lived together in harmony for centuries in Baku.

World's Highest Birth Rate

Niger's President Blames 'Misreading of Islam'

The President of Niger, in Africa, says a misreading of Islam is to blame for his country's explosive birth rate. Mahamadou Issoufou has been trying to drive down his country's birth rate of more than seven children per woman. He has advocated family planning and contraception in the 98% Muslim country, but says a simple misreading is the cause of the population problems. He told *The Guardian*: 'If an educated person reads the Qur'an, it talks about responsible parenthood. Islam says you should only have children if you can take good care of them and properly educate them.'

Issoufou has faced resistance from some religious leaders for his views on contraception, but he fears the huge population growth combined with climate change could represent a real geopolitical problem. In 1990,



Niger's population stood at 8million, but by 2018, it had soared to 22.4million. Issoufou warned the population of Niger, one of the poorest countries in the world, will double in 17 years and by 2050 it will have the second biggest population in Africa behind Nigeria. This population growth will be mirrored across Africa, creating a huge wave of migration into Europe, exacerbated by the changing climate which will cause droughts and flooding, he warns.

(Extracted from dailymail.co.uk)

UAE Cabinet Approves Policy to Prevent Woman & Child Abuse

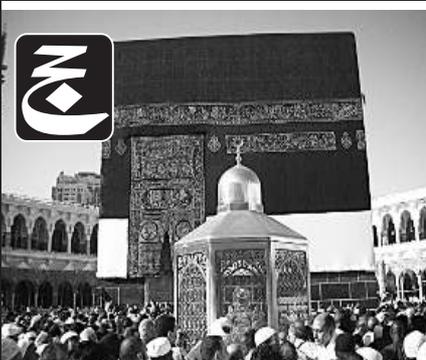
The UAE Cabinet recently approved a Family Protection Policy to protect families and children against any abuse. During a meeting chaired by Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai,

the Cabinet also approved protection and intervention mechanisms for all types of domestic violence. "The UAE will have zero-tolerance towards any abuse against children, old people or women," Shaikh Mohammad said on twitter.

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Breshna Musazai says she believes that to achieve peace in Afghanistan, powerful nations such as the US must put pressure on Kabul's neighbours that support and fund terrorism to force them to stop.

Breshna, 29, was nearly killed by the Taliban in 2016 when she was studying for her law degree in Kabul.

In August that year, when she was about to leave a mosque on the university complex after evening prayers, an explosion went off and the Taliban shot their way into the compound. Students were screaming and trying to hide. Breshna tried to escape, but without shoes from prayers, she had to run barefoot over rubble with broken glass everywhere. When walking through the hallway, a man shot her in the leg.

The pain was agonising but she tried to play dead to make sure they didn't shoot her again. But that didn't stop the man, who fired another bullet into her foot

Breshna Musazai Inspiring Student Turned Activist

Breshna, 29, was nearly killed by the Taliban in 2016 when she was studying for her law degree in Kabul.

on that same leg. The pain was excruciating, but Breshna continued to play dead, lying there motionless for five hours.

After getting treatment for a few weeks at a hospital in Kabul, her university sponsored her to get her remaining treatment at a hospital in Texas, US. Following a recovery after several months of treatment, Breshna's fiancé, who travelled with her to the US, moved to Canada. But she refused to, because she felt she had a duty to come back to Afghanistan to educate people and spread her message.

Breshna defied all odds last year, when she graduated with a bachelor's degree from the American University of Afghanistan. Paralyzed by polio



Breshna Musazai

in one leg and shot by militants in the other, she had triumphed over the extremists. She has often been compared to Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban aged 15 and went on to receive the Nobel peace prize. Like Malala, Breshna will not be silenced and looks to educate

people about their human rights.

Her mission now is to educate Afghans and allow more young people in the country to go to school and become educated about the country's complicated political picture. Afghanistan has high numbers of children without access to basic education. Unicef has estimated 3.7 million children are out-of-school in Afghanistan 60 per cent of them are girls. Also, many children are traumatised after an 18-year war between coalition forces and the Taliban.

And the war has closed many schools, with at least 700 shutting last year as a result of the conflict and 3.8 million children needing humanitarian assistance.

Breshna has been working with several NGOs, most recently the Women's Initiative to Strengthen and Empower, and delivering speeches to help educate young people about the dangers of the Taliban. Looking back, the young activist says she does not regret returning to Afghanistan, despite being advised against it. "I've always felt I had a responsibility as an Afghan citizen to do something for the people [in my country] who are in need. I really wanted to do something even before I got injured so when I came back, I realised that I made the right decision because many people were inspired."

Mariam Abdul Rahman Al Shehi

Emirati Woman Finds Her Mother After 36 Years

After 36 years of separation, an Emirati woman finally found her mother. The breakthrough came after a search of a lifetime done by Mariam Abdul Rahman Al Shehi, 36. She described her experience as the "Journey of Hope", which started when Mariam's parents were separated after divorcing in the 80's following a short marriage. Mariam's mother left her for India, never to be seen by her again.

Mariam, from RasKhaimah, was raised by her father. Day after day, hope and nostalgia gripped Mariam while growing up. When her father passed away, she was determined to



Mariam (centre), with her mother and sister

find her long-lost mother. Determined to find the woman who brought her to the world, an idea popped up in Mariam's mind: publish an advertisement in several Indian newspapers, with the hope of helping her case. The public appeal went out, with the message to let her mother know she's looking for

her mother in India. She posted: "Whoever knows my mother, please tell her to reach out to me".

Then she got some good leads. Some women matched her mother's profile. Finally, Mariam found a perfect match, after comparing passport details of the women she thought is her mother. Soon, she realised she had found the one who bore her for nine months in her belly. Mariam didn't only find her mother. She also found her sister, who she never knew. It turned out her mother was pregnant when she left the UAE.

(Taken from <https://gulfnews.com/>)

Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit

'Drivers of Change', the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit (WEEGS) will take forward important conversations on women advancement and empowerment in both economic and professional domains, in its upcoming second edition to be held in December in Sharjah, UAE. More than 1,000 participants are expected. They will discuss issues related to

women's empowerment and gender equity with advocates, governmental, non-governmental and private sector representatives, and academics, who can influence global policies, inform grassroots actions, boost women's career prospects and advocate the formation of inclusive work ecosystems.

The theme, 'Drivers of Change',

reflects the summit's dedication to bolstering discussions with international decision-makers, developing current strategies, potential opportunities and case studies that enhance equitable opportunities for women. The summit will highlight the importance of reviewing legislation, internal regulations and policies of government and private entities.

Dr. Fatmah Baothman

First Middle East Woman PhD in Artificial Intelligence

Jeddah - born Dr. Fatmah Baothman is the first woman in the Middle East with a Ph.D. in modern artificial intelligence (AI). Her AI journey started when she was a student at the University of Arizona studying English. She was introduced to computer systems that help non-native English speakers. The level of machine communication and interaction fascinated her. In 2003, she graduated from the School of Computing and Engineering at the University of Huddersfield in the UK, where she obtained a Ph.D. in phonology-based automatic speech recognition for Arabic. Her work primarily focused on AI, and she was exposed to forecasting, pattern recognition, phonology and phonetics, acoustics, machine learning and mathematics. She is the first Middle Eastern woman to have won two international awards in AI from the US and the UK. Baothman has also translated a book on modern AI to help Arabic



speakers gain a better understanding of the subject. Baothman has held several positions, among them Apple center manager, director of the education sector at King Abdullah Economic City, director of the E-learning Researcher Program in Dubai, deputy director of the information technology (IT) center at King Abdul Aziz University (KAU), and president of the Women Engineers Committee at the Saudi Council of Engineering. She has worked at KAU for more than 25 years as an assistant professor in computing and IT.

Thesis on Muslim Women in West Bengal Wins Prize

The Royal Asiatic Society's Bayly Prize has been won by a student of London School of Economics (LSE) for her anthropological thesis on the lives of Muslim women in rural West Bengal. Judges of the 2019 Bayly Prize selected the doctoral thesis titled 'Weaving lives from violence: Possibility and change for Muslim women

in West Bengal' by Alexandra Stadlen, out of 26 submissions from 11 universities. The winning thesis explored the changing lives of Muslim women in Tarakhali village in West Bengal, drawing together the lives of a diverse group of women to ask what it is to be a Muslim woman at this juncture in contemporary India.

By K. Baig

Education like democracy, free markets, freedom of the press, and "universal human rights" is one of those subjects whose virtue is considered self-evident. So is the superiority of the industrially advanced countries in attaining them. Consequently, any package that arrives with one of these magic labels on it, automatically qualifies for the "green channel" at the entry ports of developing countries. No questions asked. This uncritical acceptance has severely crippled their discussion of all these vital topics. For example in education the discussion remains centered around literacy rates and graduation statistics. The central issue of curriculum, and even more fundamental issue of the purpose of education normally do not attract attention; they have already been decided by the "advanced" countries and the job of the rest of the world is only to follow in their footsteps to achieve their level of progress.

Capitalist System

In the "first" world, education has become an extension of the capitalist system. Its purpose is to provide qualified workforce for its machinery of production and eager consumers for its products. This linking of education to financial goals is extremely unfortunate. It degrades education and through it the society.

The Real Purpose of Education

Education in Muslim societies was always the means of nurturing the human being



To bring home the forgotten role of education we need to recall that there is a fundamental difference between human beings and animals. Instincts and physical needs alone can bring ants, bees, or herds of beasts together to live in a perfectly functioning animal society. Human beings do not function that way. If they are to form a viable, thriving society, they must choose to do so. What drives that choice is the sharing of common goals, beliefs, values and outlook on life. The education system of a society produces the citizens and leaders needed for the smooth operation of that society, now and into the future. Its state of health or sickness translates directly into the health or sickness of the society that it is meant to serve.

Muslim Societies are Sick

Today we find many internal problems corruption, injustice, oppression, crippling poverty everywhere we turn in the Muslim world. These problems are largely traceable, directly or indirectly, to the education system that produced the people who perpetuate the problems. The rulers who sell out to foreign powers and subjugate their people; the bureaucrats who enforce laws based on injustice; the generals who wage war against their own people; the businessmen who exploit and cheat; the journalists who lie, sensationalize, and promote indecencies, they are all educated people, in many cases "highly" educated people. The problem plagues all layers of society. Muslim societies are sick because their education

Moral training, tarbiya, was always an inalienable part of it. The ustaz, (teacher), was not just a lecturer or mere professional, but a mentor and moral guide.

system is sick.

Before they began blindly importing from the Colonial powers what was current and popular, education in Muslim societies was always the means of nurturing the human being. Moral training, tarbiya, was always an inalienable part of it. The ustaz, (teacher), was not just a lecturer or mere professional, but a mentor and moral guide. We remembered the hadith then, "No father has given a greater gift to his children than good moral training." [Tirmidhi]. Our education system was informed by this hadith. Our darul-ulooms (Centers of Learning) still maintain that tradition but the number of students who pass through their gates is minuscule compared to the secular schools.

In the U.S. and Europe, the schools were started by the church. Later as forces of

capitalism overtook them, they molded them into their image. Moral training was a casualty of that takeover. But capitalism and their political economy did need people trained to work under these systems. So citizenship training was retained as an important, though diminishing, component of the curriculum a religion-free subset of the moral training it displaced. Whatever civility we see here is largely a result of that leftover component. The imported versions in the Muslim countries, though, had even that component filtered out. And the results are visible.

Moral Training

We can solve our problem once we realize our mistakes. The first purpose of our education system must be to produce qualified citizens and leaders for the Islamic society. Tarbiya, real Islamic moral training, must be an integral part of it. This must be the soul of our education, not a ceremonial husk. All plans for improving our education will be totally useless unless they are based on a full understanding of this key fact. This requires revamping our curricula, rewriting our textbooks, retraining our teachers, and realizing that we must do all this ourselves. We do have a rich history of doing it. Are we finally willing to turn to our own in-house treasures to redo education the way it should always have been?

(Taken from islamicity.org)

Economy lacking ethics leads to 'throwaway' culture, Pope Francis says

An economic system lacking any ethics leads to a "throwaway" culture of consumption and waste, Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, has said. "An economic system that is fair, trustworthy and capable of addressing the most profound challenges facing humanity and our planet is urgently needed," he said in a speech addressed to members of the Council for Inclusive Capitalism during an audience at the Vatican recently. "A glance at recent history, in particular the

financial crisis of 2008, shows us that a healthy economic system cannot be based on short-term profit at the expense of long-term productive, sustainable and socially responsible development and investment," the pope said. Business is a noble vocation as it creates jobs and prosperity and can improve the world, he said. However, "authentic development cannot be restricted to economic growth alone but must foster the growth of each person and of the whole person."

"This means more than balancing budgets, improving infrastructures or offering a wider variety of consumer goods," he said. It also includes "a renewal, purification and strengthening of solid economic models based on our own personal conversion and generosity to those in need." An economic system that is completely detached from ethical concerns does not create "a more just social order but leads instead to a 'throwaway' culture of consumption and waste," the pope

said. "On the other hand," the pope explained, "when we recognize the moral dimension of economic life [...] we are able to act with fraternal charity, desiring, seeking and protecting the good of others and their integral development." "In the end, it is not simply a matter of 'having more,' but 'being more,'" which demands "a fundamental renewal of hearts and minds so that the human person may always be placed at the center of social, cultural and economic life."

LETTER

Where is Your E-Paper?

The other day, I had a look at the Islamic Voice website and discovered that the e-paper version of the magazine hasn't been updated for several months (perhaps the latest issue is May 2019!). If you really care about the welfare of your magazine, will you please look into the matter and do the needful?

I appreciate the many positive articles etc. that are now regularly published in Islamic Voice, which deserve to have a wide reach. If your website is designed well and the e-paper version is regularly updated every month, many more people might be able to benefit from these positive messages.

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Najwa Hafiz

Many people are discouraged to seek therapy because of the social stigma around it. People are afraid to be perceived as mentally ill, and do not think of therapy as a normal or healthy option. Saudi psychology student Najwa Hafiz works to remove therapy stigma.

Saudi 19-year-old psychology student Najwa Hafiz, who is also an International Coach Federation accredited life coach, has set out to challenge that misconception.

"I often hear people say: 'How would a stranger solve my problems.' There's such a huge misconception about what a therapist does in our society. A therapist is not there to solve your problems. They help you understand your problems and where they stem from," Hafiz told *Arab News*.

"They offer you healthier coping mechanisms that will guide you to understand yourself better, as well as those around you. People think a person has to be 'disturbed' in order to go to therapy, which is absolutely not the case. People can go to therapy for very normal life stressors, like adjusting after college graduation, becoming a new mom, or just for improving their stress management skills."

She said people do not realize that talking can be powerful, and even life changing.

"I try to end the shame that is associated with mental health and therapy by simply speaking up. The more we talk about it, the more 'normal' it gets. For example, I'm working on an Instagram campaign that features stories of people who went through depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and more. This way people can connect with others through storytelling. Hopefully, people can view mental health in a more



In an effort to normalize therapy in Saudi society, Hafiz created an exercise book, Kalakee'a

compassionate way through this campaign."

In an effort to normalize therapy in Saudi society, Hafiz created an exercise book, Kalakee'a.

"It consists of exercises that help us deal with our thoughts in a healthier manner in order to improve our quality of life. One of the chapters is based on cognitive behavioral therapy, which is a method that aims to correct harmful patterns of thinking that cause people difficulties. This can drastically change the way they feel about a certain obstacle. Also, Kalakee'a contains exercises about mindfulness, the inner child, happiness and more.

"I knew I wasn't the only one who was going through this struggle. We are such complex beings. Our brain is the most complex structure in the universe. Sometimes, we need extra help to

rationalize and effectively deal with our emotions."

She added: "I hope Kalakee'a serves as a tool to help people do that. Through Kalakee'a, I wanted to make people realize that life is not all happiness but, it's also not all sadness. Life is simply a balance a balance of our thoughts, a balance of the happy and the sad, a balance of our strengths and weaknesses."

She explained that in Arabic, the word "kalakee'a" means a collection of knots that have been intertwined together, and she chose the name to decrease the stigma around mental health. Hafiz is also working on creating community groups with the Adult and Child Therapy Center (ACT).

"The group strives to provide an environment where people can overcome hardships as one interconnected society in order to reach renewed meaning. It gathers people and allows them to talk freely about their struggles. I host the community group alongside one of ACT's therapists, Alya Nassief. Each month we offer a different theme for the group. For example, in April we did 'grief' and the following month we did 'body image.' This gives everyone a chance to attend whichever group they relate to."

She is currently working on a project with the founder of Jeddah's Kids Lounge, Amal Abdul wahid, to teach children about emotional wellbeing.

(By Deema al-Khudair, Arab News)

BOOKSHELF

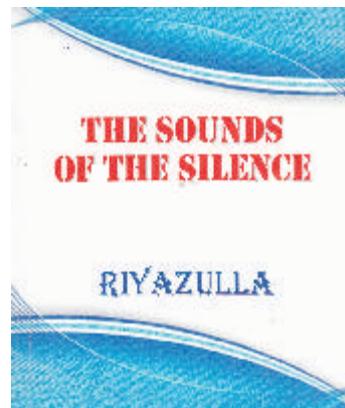
The Sounds of the Silence

Author: Riyazulla
Published by Sharfun Publications, Bangalore
 (irriyaz12@rediffmail.com)
Pages: 196
Price: Rs. 250

This is a novel that is based on religio-political developments in West Asia, stretching back centuries ago, and their ongoing implications. In his Preface, the author says, "The Middle East is one of those sacrosanct regions on the earth, which more than thousand years ago was bestowed with three monotheistic religions that are

the epitome of love and peace. But unfortunately since then this region is mired in various conflicts and embroiled in internal wrangling, particularly the Muslims and Jews bickering has become a festering wound."

In this book, Riyazulla says that he has "emphasized [...] the compatibility of the three religions in the distant past and particularly the symbiotic relationships between Muslims and Jews". He explains that the purpose of this book is "to remind the sane and sagacious people of both the communities



about their past peaceful coexistence".

Dr. Anisa Ibrahim

Dr. Anisa Ibrahim who came to the United States as a young refugee in the 1990s now leads the Seattle clinic where she was cared for as a patient. She was recently promoted to medical director of Harborview Medical Center's Pediatrics Clinic.

Dr. Anisa Ibrahim was brought to the U.S. in 1993 from Somalia when she was six years old. She said her family fled unrest from the Somali Civil War that began in 1992.

"We got to Kenya in 1992, and by 1993 we were resettled to Seattle," said Dr. Ibrahim. "That is a very short amount of time. The average amount of time a person spends in a refugee camp right now is 17 years."

She said she remembers a tuberculosis outbreak at her refugee camp, and her sibling getting the measles. When she arrived in Seattle, she and her sibling were treated at Harborview Medical Center's Pediatrics Clinic. It was those experiences that made her want to become a doctor. "I can say I know life is tough in a refugee camp," she said. "I know life is tough settling into a new country and not speaking English and not knowing where the grocery store is and being isolated from the rest of your family."

Dr. Ibrahim attended the University of Washington's School of Medicine and graduated in 2013. From there, she continued to do internships and her residency at the UW Department of Pediatrics. Now, in her new position at Harborview Medical Center's Pediatrics Clinic, she gets to care for and do outreach for immigrant and refugee populations, with a focus on those from East Africa. "It's amazing seeing children who I saw at three days of life now telling me about their first day of kindergarten," said Dr. Ibrahim.



"There are probably millions of little girls in refugee camps right now that are not being offered the opportunity to get an education that could probably be the next neurosurgeon," said Dr. Ibrahim.

Dr. Ibrahim emphasized that representation is extremely important. She said one thing she wished she had when she was younger, as a Somali refugee wearing a hijab, was someone who resembled herself. "There are probably millions of little girls in refugee camps right now that are not being offered the opportunity to get an education that could probably be the next neurosurgeon," said Dr. Ibrahim. "It's the support that we're not giving them that makes them different from me, and it's not anything inherent to one particular person."

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Religion and Science

Two Realms of Knowledge:
Theological and Scientific

The major purpose of religion is to not to make technological advances, but to carry out 'inner engineering', and transformations, and make people virtuous.



By Jan-e-Alam Khaki

The debate about religion and science dates back centuries. The debate is not about a technical matter, but about two realms of knowledge theological and scientific. There seems to be an epistemological clash of validity between the two, apparently with each claiming sway over human life.

Faith leaders or ulema, in general, boast of having a godly system, which is eternally true, free from error and change. They underplay the hand of man in the understanding, interpretation and application of religious dogmas. Religious leaders are known to oppose scientific developments that they interpret as opposing the key notions of religion due largely to the fear that these would undermine the faith of believers. They may do it with sincerity to religion, and presumably, to save believers from error.

Empirical Evidence

Their tools to deny science are theological and based largely on discursive reason, and not necessarily empirical evidence. They do not always have at their disposal the modern tools of understanding religion, such as scientific history of religions, sociology, psychology, anthropology etc. Reza Aslan's work *God: a Human History* is illuminating; it explores how the evolution of religious impulses has taken place in the history of humankind.

Scientists on the other hand, see science as a realm of knowledge strongly reliable, based on human reason and demonstrable empirical evidence. For them, it is a self-corrective and evolving project, modifying itself, and following new evidence through inductive experimentation. It is an approach to generating and judging knowledge.

The debate between religion and science leaves us with no common ground.

A religious mindset on the other hand, sees this changing nature of scientific discoveries as a weakness, boasting of perennial and unchanging 'truths'. It



prefers stability over change; it is dogma-based. In almost all religions, historically, opposition to science and scientists has been proverbial, leading to prejudices against, and torture of, scientists, as they are seen as 'perverted' souls, hell-bent on defying religious dogmas. This happens often because they use theological criteria to judge science; it is exactly like scientists judging religion or spirituality based on their experimental approach.

Different Methodologies

The debate between religion and science, put simply, leaves us with no common ground. I, for one argue that the epistemological approaches (forms of knowing and their validity criteria) to both religion and science need to be treated differently as they require different ways of establishing (methodology) and judging (criteria of truth) knowledge and truth claims. We need to be sophisticated enough to see these differences so that we understand each through its own perspective, avoiding one criterion for judging both.

Each branch of science requires different methodologies to study it. Similarly, within religion each branch requires different methodologies of study such as law or spirituality, language or ritual.

Thus, when the ulema judge science using theology, they inevitably make the same mistake as those scientists who judge religion using the scientific method. So, it is necessary that we treat both of them differently, which means we do not downgrade either of them, but acknowledge the unique contribution of each to

“ In sum, let us avoid rejecting a scientific approach to solving human problems at the altar of religion; nor should we reject religion because it does not work like science. Let us celebrate both as they address different dimensions of human yearning equally. ”

human welfare.

In my lectures and visits to international audiences, I am always asked by young people the fashionable question: 'What contribution has religion made to human progress in the last 500 years?' This is obviously done keeping the magnificent scientific contributions at the back of their mind. I argue, 'What contributions could one expect from religion to make?' Did we expect religion to make a technological revolution?

By nature, what science does can be seen and observed; but the transformation brought about by religion in the inner core of people is invisible. However, though exceptional civilisational achievements might have been possible thanks to scientists, it is impossible to ignore the religious 'faith' impulse within, and the spiritual inspiration behind for example, civilisational art and architectural marvels, and literary jewels. It is unfair to expect religion to bring, say, a super technological revolution. The major purpose of religion is to not to make technological advances, but to carry out 'inner engineering', and transformations, and make people virtuous.

In sum, let us avoid rejecting a scientific approach to solving

human problems at the altar of religion; nor should we reject religion because it does not work like science. Let us celebrate

both as they address different dimensions of human yearning equally. As the Quran (2:201), says, "...Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter. ...". So we seek the best of both religion and science. Let the ulema become a bridge between the two.

(Jan-e-Alam Khaki is an educationist with an interest in the study of religion and philosophy).

(Extracted from newageislam.com)

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Man who helped Bhopal gas victims dies



Bhopal: Abdul Jabbar, who fought to get justice for the victims of the world's worst industrial disasters, died after prolonged illness on November 14. He was 61. The death occurred just 18 days before the 35th anniversary of the Bhopal gas tragedy. Jabbar survived the tragedy that occurred on the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, that killed between 25,000 to 50,000 people. He later became an activist for hundreds of thousands of survivors. He suffered from multiple health issues related to the gas tragedy, including blood pressure, and diabetes and for the last six months gangrene. Jabbar was an honest and

unassuming activist. He worked for livelihood of thousands of survivors but had little resources and struggled to fund his treatment. Known to residents of Old city as 'Jabbar Bhai,' he was a household name in the gas tragedy affected areas for more than three decades. He was 27 and working as digger of bore wells when the catastrophe struck the Madhya Pradesh capital. As other residents of the city, Jabbar was asleep, when Methyl IsoCyante gas leaked from the Union Carbide plant. After sensing the red chilli-like odor of the gas, Jabbar swung into action taking his mother to safety and rode around 40 km to Obaidullaganj. After leaving his

mother at Rajendra Nagar area, he returned to his colony — just 1.5 km away from the plant — to fulfill his duty towards local residents. Jabbar, however, lost his mother and elder brother on the fateful night. He lost almost 50 percent vision and had serious lung ailments due to the gas leak. He, however, took up the fight against Union Carbide in the courts for adequate compensation for around 500,000 survivors and 25,000 who died (as per official records).

In 1987, he had set up Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangthan, a survivors' organization demanding sustenance allowance and compensation for the victims, especially widows of the gas tragedy victims. In his lifetime, he imparted vocational training to around 5,000 survivor women so that they could earn a livelihood for their families.

After the compensation was doled out in 1989, Jabbar started focusing on skill development of those who were left with physical ailments after the tragedy. In all these years, Jabbar helped more than 5,000 women get jobs through training imparted at his Swabhiman Kendra (an economic rehabilitation centre).

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

Beautiful Gesture of Communal Harmony

Kozhikode (Kerala): The Idivetty Juma Masjid *mahal* committee near Perambra was large-hearted enough to postpone their celebrations on Milad un-Nabi as the marriage of a Hindu girl, staying next door to the mosque, was fixed for the same day. Not only did it put off the celebrations, but also actively took part in the marriage, playing the perfect host. Soon after tying the knot and before leaving to the groom's house, the bride, Prathyusha A P, 22, called on the *mahal* committee members and wholeheartedly thanked them for the wonderful gesture. Prathyusha's house, Chemmamkuzhi in Changaroth *grama panchayat* is separated by only a four-meter-wide road from the mosque on the opposite side, which also houses a *madrassa* in the compound.

"When we came to know that the marriage falls on the birthday of Prophet Mohammad, the *mahal* committee members sat together a week before and unanimously decided to put off the religious celebrations to next Sunday, November 17," says *mahal* committee secretary N C Abdurahman.

Usually, there would have been *oppana*, *duffmuttu*, songs and other competitions held for students on Milad un-Nabi day which would make the ambience a festive one. "Obviously, the festivities can be organised on another day. But marriage is a special occasion and that too of a girl staying nearby," says *mahal* committee member OT Basheer.

Prathyusha's brother Praseon AP says, "While fixing the marriage,

the Milad-Un-Nabi date did not come into our notice. I would not have allowed it if we had learnt that the *mahal* is postponing their celebrations. Instead, we could have conducted both on the same day," he said.

Medical students and engineering graduates, belonging to the families of *mahal* committee members, served food at his sister's marriage, Praseon gushed. In return of the nice gesture, Praseon, who is working abroad, has invited all 11 *mahal* committee members, led by president Idivetty Moidu Haji, to his house on November 13 for a reception during his sister's first homecoming after marriage.

(For more details, see newindianexpress.com)

Bearys Chamber of Commerce and Industry Investment Platform for Start-Ups



Dubai: Bearys Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI) UAE Chapter, in a bid to support and encourage young entrepreneurs has decided to provide investment platform for start-ups and Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) initiated by youngsters, according to S.M Basheer, President of BCCI UAE Chapter. "In today's competitive

world, some of the business ideas, start-ups and SMEs initiated by young minds have gone up to become renowned brands in international market. Some of the youngsters lack initial investments to fund their ideas. The BCCI will provide platform for the young entrepreneurs to present their ideas in front of the potential investors" Basheer said.

Islamic College Donates Land for Medical College



The eight-member delegation

Mayiladuthurai (Tamil Nadu): An Islamic college from Mayiladuthurai has come forward to donate 20 acres of its land for the construction of the medical college in Mayiladuthurai. An eight-member delegation, which included members from Jamia Misbahul Hudha Arabic College in Nidur near Mayiladuthurai, met Nagapattinam district collector Praveen P Nair and gave its consent to donate land for the medical college. "We wholeheartedly wish to donate our land of 21 acres for the welfare of the public without any expectations for a return of a favour. We took this decision

days ago after we realized Mayiladuthurai could get a medical college if it there is enough land available to the government. The government should now fulfil the wish of Mayiladuthurai residents to have a medical college here," said SA Mohamed Sadeeq, general secretary of Jamia Misbahul Hudha Trust in Needur. Jamia Misbahul Hudha Arabic College in Needur and its Trust has been functioning since 1912. The barren land they are donating is near a hamlet called Erumbukadu in Mayiladuthurai taluk.

(For more details, see newindianexpress.com)

Muslims Join Sikhs in Gurdwara Celebration

best example of communal harmony was set by the Muslims of Pune where a joint celebration was organised to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The great Leader's birth anniversary is the biggest festival for the Sikhs and Punjabi community and is also commonly called as Guru Nanak Gurpurab

A great example of communal harmony was set by the Muslims of Pune where a joint celebration was organised to celebrate the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Sahib. To celebrate the Guru's 550th birth anniversary, for the very first time in Pune, Muslim community has portrayed the best example of communal harmony by not only coming forward but also by joining the celebrations by



holding the event at Gurdwara named Guru Nanak Darbar, located in Camp, Pune.

Muslims were seen distributing sweets at the event and joining the Sikh community in their celebrations. More than 100 people attended the event, where

many religious scholars too were seen present, informed Nisar Sagar, president of Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI). MCCI took the lead in organising the event at the Gurdwara.

(More details on sikhnet.com)

Muslim Groups Educate Community on Talaq Issue

Bareilly (UP): Concerned with the number of triple talaq cases in Sambhal district, several Muslim outfits have joined hands to educate the community on Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019. The outfits involved in the awareness effort are Muslim

Welfare Society, Ulema Mashaikh Board, Muslim Ekta Sangh, Tafule Sunnat and Jamiatul Quresh. Of seven cases of triple talaq reported in Sambhal, five are registered at Baniyather police station within a month. In the latest incident, one Qamil, a resident of Asmauli,

allegedly threw his wife with five daughters out of his home giving her instant talaq after she gave birth to a fifth girl. Earlier, Chandausi resident Tanveer gave triple talaq to his wife as she was not able to bring Rs. 50,000 and a motorbike. The couple had got married two years ago.

← Page 3

Bangladesh Interfaith Forum Inaugurated

The message of religion is to know one's self said Jinabodhi Bhikku, former general secretary of Bangladesh Bouddha Bhikku Mahasangha. "There is no alternative to harmony if we are to save Bangladesh," he added.

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad, said a vested quarter was involved in misinterpreting religion and creating divisions among people. The countrymen have to stand against those who want to demean religions, he said, adding that only then the country's development would be sustainable and meaningful. He demanded that the governing party, as per its election pledge, formulate a law to protect the country's religious minorities and form a separate commission to this end.

Five Muslim Women Crack Rajasthan Judicial Services

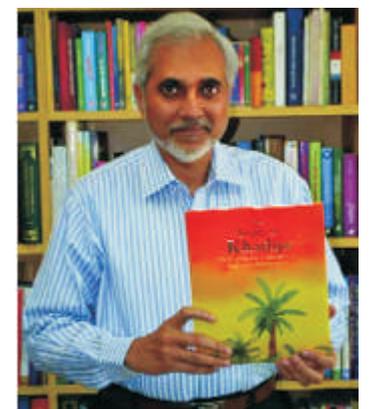
Five Muslim women from Rajasthan have created history by cracking Rajasthan Judicial Services: Sania Manihar, Sajida, Sana, Huma Khohri and Shehnaz Khan. Sajida, who belongs to Jodhpur, secured 37th, Sana

Hakim Khan 130th, Huma Khohri 136 and Shehnaz Khan 143rd rank in the respective examination. Apart from these five women, a Muslim man, Faisal has been also selected for RJS with 107th rank.

Saniyasnain Khan Listed Among the World's '500 Most Influential Muslims'

New Delhi-based Saniyasnain Khan has been listed in the 2019 edition of the book The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, published by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Jordan. The book has been published annually since 2009 and ranks what it considers as some of the most influential Muslims across the world.

Son of the noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Saniyasnain Khan founded Goodword Books, a publishing house, in 1999, which has published a huge number of books on Islamic themes so far (for details, see goodwordbooks.com).



Saniyasnain Khan is himself a widely-published author on Islamic subjects. He is a trustee of the New Delhi-based Centre for Peace and Spirituality (for details, see cpsglobal.org) and hosts a weekly TV programme.

'Langar-e-Adam'

Lucknow Eidgah to feed 200 people daily irrespective of caste, religion or class

Lucknow: The Aishbagh Eidgah in Lucknow has set up a community kitchen on the lines of the "langar" at gurdwaras. Called "Langar-e-Adam" or Adam's Kitchen, this is an initiative by the Islamic Centre of India of Darul Uloom. The Imam of the Eidgah, Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahali, said that the kitchen would be serving pure vegetarian food to around 200 people daily from 7.30.p.m to 9.30.p.m. He plans to expand the kitchen if the number of guests increases.

Feed the poor and hungry

"The aim is to feed the poor and hungry every evening throughout the week. This is in line with the message of Islam which talks of service to the poor. Religious places are not only for worship, but also centres of social service, according to Islam. This is why we started the initiative,"

Maulana Khalid said.

Open for all

The Imam said that he had been toying with the idea for the past several months and launched the service after Muslims from different walks of life showed interest in the cause. The kitchen, however, is open for all, irrespective of their caste, religion or class. "The kitchen will run all seven days of the week but the food will be only vegetarian though the menu will change on a daily basis," the Maulana said. The langar has been started as a pilot project and will soon expand it to other religious places of the city.

Explaining the significance of the name which means "Adam's Kitchen", Maulana Khalid said: "According to the teachings of Islam, every human on this planet is an offspring of Prophet Adam (a.s.), and this is how we finalized the name."

FREE COPIES OF QURAN TRANSLATION

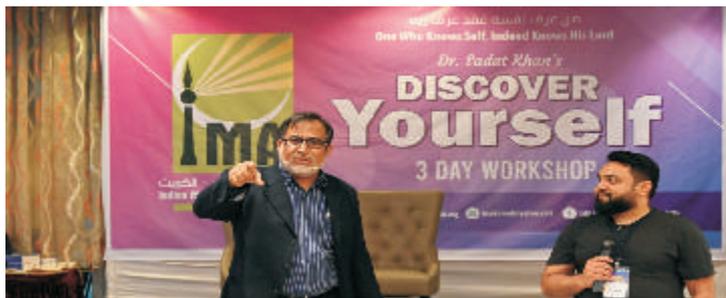
Based in New Delhi, Centre for Peace and Spirituality (CPS), founded by Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, has been involved in disseminating the message of the Quran to people around the world in their own language. So far, translations are available in about 30 national and international languages. CPS generally engages in free distribution of the Quran in seminars, conferences, literary fests, book fairs, tourist attractions, schools, colleges, libraries, hospitals and prisons.



Quran translations are available for free distribution in English, Urdu, Hindi, Dogri, Punjabi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, German, French, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Chichewa, Afrikaans, Rwandan, Swahili, Filipino, Thai and Vietnamese.

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Some of the Participants Share their Experiences about the Workshop.

HARISH: At first, my life was miserable, lots of questions and confusion. Attending the workshop was worthwhile, it changed my life. I learned how to use the heart instead of my mind. After attending the workshop my life has become peaceful, calm and I have no confusion. I have understood the reality and the ultimate truth. I had a lot of fun in the workshop. I thought it would be boring at first, but sir went on to teach how to live life the right way and it got interesting. The workshop has changed my life a lot in just three days.

NAYANA RUDRA: It helped to discover the real 'ME'. It made me realize between the internal and external world. It also helped me in living a peaceful life. Before the workshop, I couldn't differentiate between Haq and Batil (true & false). I was treating people unequally. Now I see them as human beings. I am giving up

making other people wrong. I am committing to creating a new future for my life. I had a good time in the workshop. I learned new things that I would never be able to learn by myself.

DR BALASUBRAMANIAN:

This workshop is much needed for the present circumstances. I can accept reality and come out of the world of perception / deception. I got the distinction to make a choice willingly or unwillingly. I got the difference between the language of denial and acceptance.

HAJIRA: My life before was really sad and unhappy. I would have peace for a while but then it would go away. I feel that my peace will be eternal as I have learned how to leave my past, and not dwell upon it. If I would not have attended this workshop, I would have regretted the whole of my life. It helped me clear my mind and build stronger relationships between people and love them.

SHAKIRA: I used to get stressed about so many things, but now I know how to remain calm,

Living Life, the Right Way! In Kuwait

The Discover Yourself Workshop was organised by the Indian Muslim Association (IMA), Kuwait, between October 24 to 26th 2019, and in Perth, Australia from 15- 17th November 2019 at Al Hidayah Centre, organised by Discover Yourself Australia in co-ordination with Al Hidayah Centre.



understand reality and find solutions for the problems. I wanted to do something useful for human beings, now I got the idea about what to do for humanity and I will do it even if it is helping one human being. I can see others now without any judgment and I could let go off hatred. It helped me to live life peacefully.

ANSIYA: I realized which aspects, I should look at the world to find peace for myself. Life before was confusing, full of regrets and compromises, but after gaining the understanding, still, it is not magical unless I implement it. Yes, it was worth attending and life-

changing.

SAMI: Before attending the workshop, I had a couple of regrets about my life. Having said that, I have realized that my regrets were holding me back from being happy in my life. I let go off them from my life. I can feel the reality of my life and existence. I am feeling lighter and more blessed. The workshop had a holistic approach, useful in day to day life and teaches a transformational way of life.

RIYAZ: Very interesting topics covered. I learned that not everything is right or wrong, but it is the perspective that each one sees. Forgiving people lifts the

weight off your shoulders. I got the distinction and choice to make it willingly or unwillingly.

SHABIR: It is life-changing. Removed all the baggage, grudges, impatience and anger. Now, I am peaceful after letting go.

SABIHA: It was awesome. It was worth attending. Yes, it did make a difference to change the way I saw things and reacted to it. I could find my faults and focus on how to change my inner self.

HAMID: I was not forgiving my relatives who deceived me, now I am ready to let go. Yes, it was worth attending. It made a difference in my life. I have come out of the box.

Learning to Make a Choice! In Perth, Australia!



Some of the Participants share their experiences:

- I enjoyed the experience and the coach interacted with the audience well. The content brought me back to reality.
- Very insightful, content that allows you to reflect on yourself and improve, by being conscious of your opinions, judgments, and interpretations. It encourages to use your heart, thereafter, you may find peace.
- Learned a lot more than ordinary lectures. I always forgive people, but I know a much better technique. The workshop was fantastic, and the presentation was excellent.
- This workshop is for all ages, backgrounds, and religions. Overall it was excellent.
- It made me aware of my

shortcomings. I found it exceptionally interesting and informative.

• I found it inspiring. It made me feel better about myself and others.

• I learned to live in the present. Helped me to identify our traps. Ability to see true and falsehood. Forgive people.

• The workshop was thought-provoking.

• It is insightful and aids with introspection. Yes, if I would not have attended it, I would have missed something valuable.

YUSRA: Prior to the workshop, I was only centered on myself, what I was doing and all that I knew. I benefitted from this workshop as it allowed me to see that a self-centered approach isn't good for me and the people

around me. I have been taught to accept the situations as they are and respond (not react) using the heart (Triple test). With practice, I believe this is achievable and can bring me peace.

ATASHA: I am grateful that Allah has made this course possible. Thank you for sharing your insights, experience and advice. Inshallah, I have benefitted, and I shall practise what you have imparted when confronted with situations I do not agree. I feel fulfilled and free. I thoroughly enjoyed it as it taught me how to respond to different situations. Benefits are that I, now am equipped to handle situations better and not to react in an attacking manner. My family member's feelings overall were very positive and as for the negative feedback I will



try to address them in a positive manner.

SELWA: Life before the workshop was very analytical, complicated. Attending this workshop helped me to release that my opinion is nothing, but it is my opinion and that it is not the actual reality. It allowed me to see that a decision should only be made, once the reality of the situation has been accepted. This in turn helped me to be more easy-going. I am going to live in the present so that I can have peace and spread love.

WASIELLA: Before, I was worried about what others thought about me and now after the workshop, I do not bother what they think of me. I really enjoyed the workshop. The benefit is to forgive and not hold on to the past extra baggage. I learned not to blame others.

SHUAIB: It raises awareness of the realm of assumptions that most of us live in and

experience. It increased our awareness of how to deal with our inner and external life. Letting go of my past and live in the present. Forgive for the sake of Allah and Love for the sake of Allah. Be a player, not a spectator. It increased my awareness of using my language, tone, and choice of words to avoid conflict and learned to listen, connect to the heart and be in the state of submission.

KOEBRAH: My life before the workshop was to accommodate my sick husband and be there for my children. I have now learned to not make decisions, but to make choices to have peace in my life. I need to practice, making choices consciously, as well as not reacting like an anaconda. I am committed to make a difference to uplift the Muslim community/ humanity that will leave me fulfilled and satisfied.

There Is No Holy War In Islam Says Christchurch Mosque Imam

Survivor of massacre calls for peace education at World Tolerance Summit

There is no holy war in Islam, and the word 'jihad' in some religious books has misinterpreted the religion, the imam of a New Zealand mosque who escaped the massacre in March, said in Dubai recently. Gamal Fouda, the imam of Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, where 42 people were shot by an unnamed white supremacist, said the use of the word 'jihad' in some religious books has contributed to people, especially Westerners, thinking that Islam is a religion of extremism. He was speaking at a session on "Instilling Communal Peace and Harmony Within Societies" at the World Tolerance Summit. Fouda's remarks about "jihad or holy war" came when he was asked by the moderator to explain why some people in the Western world think that Islam is the religion of violence.

Fouda said: "I would like to acknowledge that sometimes [it is due to] the barrier of language. Sometimes those who introduce Islam don't have the correct terms to explain what Islam is." There is no holy war in Islam. He said the Quran, instead, talks about tolerance, peace and understanding. He cited portions in Quran where prophets have been referred to as talking to "their brothers" from non-Muslim communities.

The Egyptian imam said those who introduce Islam to others

need to understand their culture and speak their language. They also need to know the good books and quotes to use while introducing Islam. Fouda called on religious leaders to stand up and act for peace. "In fact, religions can bring peace if we find the correct representatives of religions." He also called for the need to start peace education in schools to bridge gaps between communities. "We need to start talking about peace education. I would like to see primary schools having peace education subject and books." "We need to start teaching this to our children right from their very young age so that they can accept other people... We need to foster the education for tolerance from childhood." He urged the Muslims and non-Muslims to interact and understand each other better and do community service together.

Recalling the horror of the massacre briefly, he described the gunman who attacked the mosques as a person "brainwashed by irresponsible media who cause problems and political leaders inciting



Gamal Fouda, imam of Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, who escaped the massacre.

hatred." Speaking to *Gulf News* after the session, he said the Muslim community stood together along with the leadership and people of New Zealand because of the way the latter had fostered the relationships, the values of justice and equality and welfare of the community. "What New Zealand has set is a role model of tolerance and understanding for the world. The Muslim leaders there also share the same role model. We are together against terrorism that is the reason we came together and we didn't create hatred or divide us." He hailed the new laws to control the use of guns and other measures to improve security after the Christchurch mosque shootings that claimed 51 lives.

(For more details, see gulfnews.com)

US: 26 Muslims Elected

About a third of the 81 Muslim-Americans who ran for office in the off-year elections in the U.S. scored electoral victories, according to Muslim-American advocacy groups.

A total of 26 Muslim candidates emerged winners, and so far, this year, 34 Muslim candidates won state and local elections, said a joint press release by Muslim advocacy groups, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Jetpac, and MPower Change. Among the 34 winners in 2019, 16 are women, said the groups.

"These electoral victories clearly indicate that American Muslims are stepping up and showing their commitment to public service," said Nihad Awad, the Council's national executive director.

"American Muslims are running for office in large numbers because more of us are realizing that we have a unique perspective that will help fix massive inequities in healthcare, education, and the criminal legal system," said Mohammed Missouri, Jetpac's executive director.

"What do Muslim Americans do during a time of heightened Islamophobia under a xenophobic administration? We run for office and win," said Linda Sarsour, executive director of MPower Change. Of the 26 Muslim candidates who won, 13 were first-time winners, and the rest were incumbents who were re-elected.

Somali immigrant Safiya Khalid, a 23-year-old Democrat who ran for Lewiston City Council in the state of Maine, won her race by a huge margin despite vicious racist attacks on her campaign. "Community organizers beat Internet trolls," she told supporters after the victory.

In Virginia, Ghazala Hashmi became the first Muslim woman elected to the state senate, while Abrar Omeish became the first Muslim woman to sit on the school board in Fairfax, an affluent Northern Virginia suburb south of Washington, D.C. Nadia Mohamad, also 23, became the first Muslim woman and first Somali elected to the city council in St. Louis Park, Minn. Chol Majok, a 34-year-old from South Sudan, became the first refugee elected to public office in Syracuse, New York.

Bushra Arshad Appointed as Deputy Collector



Bushra Arshad is being lavished with praise for achieving 6th rank in the UPPCS, after the results were recently announced, and for being selected as SDM. This girl from Saurikh village is the only Muslim participant to become SDM in UPPSC-2017. She is the same Bushra Arshad who scored 277th rank in UPSC, results of which were announced in July, and subsequently was selected for the IRS, but she was not satisfied with her achievement. She is not satisfied even with her latest achievement. This shows her grit and passion to achieve her dream of being in top 20 in IAS. The reality, however, seems that Bushra is fond of breaking the myths and proving the stereotypes wrong. Her family, relatives, and husband all believe that she will not settle for anything less. They have a good reason for their belief: If a village girl, married with kids, after four surgeries and overcoming the pain of those surgeries, could score such a high rank in one of the prestigious exams and stamp her presence, then everything is possible for her.

Bushra's father is a farmer and her mother is a housewife. Both parents are graduates. Bushra graduated at the age of 17 and a half. She had an MBA degree before she turned 20. She completed her studies up to class XII from Kannaunj and went to Kanpur for graduation.

Bushra says that she wanted to give the UPSC exam right away, but couldn't since she didn't meet the minimum age requirement. Her mother says that Bushra was admitted directly into the second class at the age of four and a half years.

She adds "She already had learned so much at home itself that she never came even second (in her class)." She says Bushra is habituated to be a topper. My multi-talented daughter topped in everything".

"Make this girl a collector" was the constant advice of anyone and everyone who visited us, to my Abbu and Ammi," says Bushra. "It got me fixated. (Again). Since I did not meet the minimum age requirement of UPSC, I prepared and appeared for JRF test." She cleared JRF in her first attempt and achieved a Ph.D. in Distress Management from AMU and that's how the title "Doctor" got associated with her name. Right after that, she married Asmar Hussain. A little while later, Engineer Asmar Hussain and Bushra moved to Saudi Arabia. Asmar started his studies at Jazan University, while Bushra obtained a high-ranking position. Leaving a well-placed position and an excellent package that came along with it, Bushra returned to India along with her husband. Her husband, Asmar Hussain, says that after this, he took up a job at Coal India, they had two children. His wife underwent four major surgeries. It has been ten years since, but her desire to become a collector from within egged her constantly. Bushra adds: "I did my job honestly. I did my duty as a mother. I also performed the responsibilities of a wife without neglecting my husband. I did not use the excuse of constant pain after surgeries to set me back and now I am appointed a deputy collector."

(Extracted from an article on twocircles.net)

View From West Africa

Sister Anne-Marie

In Burkina Faso, a Catholic Sister's efforts to promote Christian-Muslim harmony.

Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa, is in turmoil. For many years, the country was known for the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims, who have been practising a tolerant form of Islam. In recent years, however, jihadist extremism, exported by neighboring Mali and encouraged by radicalized local preachers, has changed the situation dramatically. It is against this backdrop of terror and hatred that Sister Anne-Marie Kabore of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a Catholic order, practices her music ministry. For her, song is a powerful tool to bring about peace and reconciliation. A pharmacist by training, Sister Anne-Marie, based in the capital of Ouagadougou, regularly travels throughout the country to bring a musical message of hope, particularly to young people. She is accompanied by six nuns who are back-up singers and a number of musicians, including both Christians and Muslims. Sister

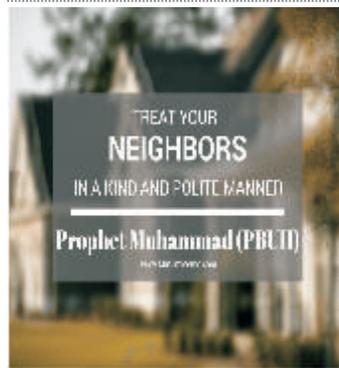


Sister Anne-Marie

Anne-Marie who is pursuing a specialization in biopharmacology at the University of Ouagadougou has three albums to her name. Her albums are available on YouTube and have had hundreds of thousands of views. One recent composition *Ra le yab ye* carries a message of encouragement for women who have become outcasts in society, for example because they are childless or because they have been accused of witchcraft.

Sister Anne-Marie whose order teaches in schools and is active in healthcare is outspoken in addressing the terrorist attacks and the people's feeling of insecurity. "The Church is called

to accompany the people," she says, and "to work for the reconciliation of the sons of the country," even in the face of growing danger. In a forthcoming song, says the Sister, "I cry out to God, that He may grant us peace, stability and reconciliation of hearts." She adds that the new song stresses "the need to remain united," while the lyrics also emphasize the "necessity of training priests and nuns, so that they can be the leaders of a population capable of creating a climate of peace and so ensure that Burkina Faso can reconnect with its history of peace and tolerance."



Ghazala Hashmi & Abrar Omeish

First Muslim Women Elected to Virginia's State Senate

Hyderabad-born Ghazala Hashmi and Libya-origin Abrar Omeish are the two first Muslim women to win elections in the United States' southeastern State Virginia, making history in America. Hashmi, who migrated to America at a younger age, 50 years ago, is also the first Indian-American to win elections in the State, defeating incumbent Republican senator Glen Sturtevant. In her campaign, Hashmi also received support from former US President Barack Obama. She announced Obama's endorsement on her Twitter. Hashmi, who left her job as the director of Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Reynolds Community College to campaign full time, raised three prominent issues in her campaign Education, Health and Gun Violence. Hashmi was raised in a small town in Georgia and earned a BA in English from Georgia Southern University and a Ph.D. from Emory



University. She and her husband Azhar moved to the Richmond area in 1991, and she has spent the past 25 years as a leading educator in Virginia's college and university system. The second Muslim woman who won the elections in Virginia is of Libyan-origin. Omeish, who is the daughter of Esam and Badria Omeish, emigrated from Libya to the United States. She attended a Muslim academy and a public school in Fairfax County. She later studied at Yale University. Omeish is the co-founder of the non-profit youth-led organization GIVE: Growth and Inspiration through Volunteering and Education that provides youth with resources to excel in education and leadership.

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The Major Task

In this booklet, Maulana Sahib explains various terms associated with this mission, such as *shahadah* (or 'witnessing'), *dawah* (calling people towards God) and *tabligh* (to preach).

Dawah: The Mission of Muslim Ummah

Author: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Year: 2018

Goodword Books, Noida

email: info@goodwordbooks.com

Reviewed by
Rohail Khan

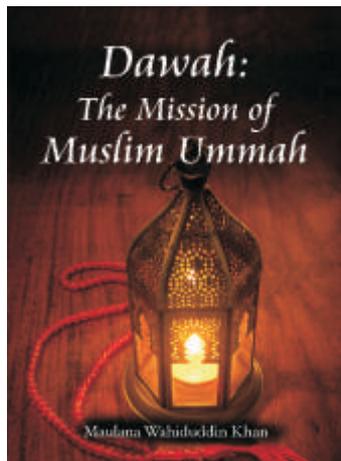
Right through history God has sent prophets to the world to call human beings to remember Him and walk on the right path. This task of inviting people to God, we learn from this slim but eye-opening booklet by noted New Delhi-based Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, is what the mission of Muslims ought to be. After the Prophet Muhammad, the Maulana says, God's message must continue to be conveyed to humanity in every age and generation, till the Day of Judgment. This task is for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad to undertake. This witnessing is a continuation of the Prophet's mission after his leaving this world. This responsibility of the *ummah* of the Prophet Muhammad is explained in the Quran (2:143) as follows: *Thus We have made you a middle nation, so that you may act as witnesses for mankind, and the Messenger may be a witness for you.*

In this booklet, Maulana Sahib explains various terms associated with this mission, such as *shahadah* (or 'witnessing'), *dawah* (calling people towards God) and *tabligh* (to preach). This mission is about conveying, in a peaceful manner, God's message to humankind, explaining the reality of life to people in a mode that is intelligible to them. It aims, the Maulana says, to enable seekers of Truth to learn about God's Creation Plan.

Besides underlining the centrality of *dawah* or inviting people to God as the task of God's devotees, a major concern of this booklet is to correct certain wrong interpretations of *shahadah* among a sizeable section of Muslims. The Maulana says that in the Quran, the word *shahadah* appears, in different forms, 160 times, and in every place it appears in the sense of witness, and not in any other sense. But, despite this, many Muslims hold wrong understandings of *shahadah*. One such misinterpretation is considering *shahadah* to be

The Maulana writes, "Muslims must not regard anybody as their enemies. Instead, without discriminating against anyone, they should try to make everyone their friend. It is this that is the dawah spirit."

synonymous with martyrdom. In the early period of Islam, the Maulana says, the word *shahadah* was used in the sense of witnessing to Truth. But later, a change gradually emerged in the use of the term *shahadah*, so much so that Muslims almost forgot that the term *shahadah* meant *dawah* and instead began to use the word as synonymous with martyrdom. This, the Maulana believes, is not Islamic and reflects the phenomenon of Muslims abandoning their mission of *dawah* and instead, wrongly considering others as their foes. The Maulana calls upon Muslims to abandon this un-Islamic attitude and appeals to them to look at people of other faiths with genuine well-wishing, seeing them not as their foes but as their *madus*, or those whom their task is to invite to God. The Maulana writes, "Muslims must not regard anybody as their enemies. Instead, without discriminating against anyone, they should try to make everyone their friend. It is this that is the dawah spirit, and it is this that is called dawah, or calling people towards God." He further stresses, "Today, it has become a duty binding on Muslims to develop positive thinking. They must completely stop thinking of other communities as their enemies. They must be reminded of the fact that their status is not that of a community, but, rather, that of an ideological group, one that has just one mission and that is, peaceful dawah, or calling people towards God. This task they must engage in with unilateral well-wishing for others. Even if, according to their thinking, others are oppressing or mistreating them, they must ignore it and remain their well-wishers and convey to them God's message, which is preserved in the form of the Quran and the Sunnah or the practice of the Prophet. Other



than this, no action is going to save them from punishment in the Hereafter [...] They must completely renounce violence, and, instead, get engaged in peaceful dawah work. This is the only way that can make them deserving of God's blessings."

The world, the Maulana says, is Dar ud-Dawah, an abode or domain of *dawah*, and nothing else. Accordingly, he explains, the relationship between the *ummah* of the Prophet Muhammad and others is that between *dai* (those who engage in *dawah*) and *madu*. In the divine task of inviting people to God, he says, it is not at all permissible to include any political, communal or materialistic aims and objectives.

The task of inviting people to God *dawah*, we learn, has to be engaged in continuously and in every age and generation. The essential message of this mission will always remain the same, but, the Maulana says, in line with changes in the times there could be changes in the manner in which it is carried out. To make this task of witnessing effective, it must be done in a manner that successfully addresses the minds of people in every age. The 21st century is considered to be the Age of Reason, and the Maulana says it is now essential to present the message of God with adequate rational proofs and logic in order to address the modern mind. That is precisely the major task that devotees of God should be focussing on, we learn from this valuable booklet.

Like many other writings of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, this booklet can be freely downloaded from the Internet. To do so, click on <https://cpsglobal.org/content/dawah-mission-muslim-ummah>

OPEN SPACE

My Sister's Marriage

I have watched many movies and TV serials where I've seen daughters and sisters being married off, but never have I felt the same sort of pain as I felt that day.

By Shaban Ali

It was 18th October when I reached my home. My parents were stressed about my sister's impending marriage. I met my father and talked to him. His eyes welled up with tears of helplessness.

I'm the last son of my father. I was studying and could not help the family financially, while my two brothers support the family from their modest salary. For two years we had been struggling to arrange my sister's marriage because it needed much money as people have made marriage unnecessarily complex and costly.

My father is a wood-cutter. That's the job he has been doing for years. He was very sincere in his work and is now considered as senior and experienced. In our village, other people have earned money and encourage their sons to do the same but they have ignored their children's education. In contrast, my father didn't earn much money but he gave great attention to our education. He educated his three daughters and four sons. That is why our family is respected even though we aren't economically very well-off.

When I got home I observed how things were. I found out about what was to be given to the groom as dowry. I met my mother and asked whether they had arranged all the necessary things for the marriage. She said: 'We couldn't. Many things are missing. How we will manage with such a small amount?'

My father's face turned pale. He was upset about how to arrange such a costly function. I consoled him many times, but I knew he was sad.

The day of my sister's marriage arrived. The lunch was ready. The beds were decorated. The marriage party came. They were served snacks and juice and then



lunch.

At 05:00 pm the marriage party was to depart. My sister was leaving the house. She was crying. My mother and other sisters were in tears. They hugged her to console her that is the customs of the world. I couldn't help myself weeping. Tears glittered in my eyes.

My elder brother held my sister's right shoulder, while I held her left. We lifted her and placed her in a waiting vehicle. I put my head on her shoulder and started sobbing. Some of the moments we shared all these years started flashing on the screen of my mind..

The next day, my elder sister and I went to the groom's house for the *walima* function. There, we met our sister. Thirty minutes later, I received a call from my home that my mother had a pain in her stomach. I got ready to leave.

My mother was admitted to hospital, and a report revealed that she had a stone in her gall bladder. The hospital was a private one and they would charge a hefty amount for the operation. So, we shifted to another hospital. The doctors said that my mother had blood pressure and sugar and that they could operate her only when the pain, sugar and blood pressure decreased.

I have watched many movies and TV serials where I've seen daughters and sisters being married off, but never have I felt the same sort of pain as I felt that day.

Blurb; My father's face turned pale. He was upset about how to arrange such a costly function. I consoled him many times, but I knew he was sad.

Some people think that being old is a terrible burden because, they believe, elderly people don't have much energy to do things. They think that after they reach a certain age and no longer work for a living, there may be nothing left for them to look forward to. Such people, when they become old, may simply sit at home and brood, be glued to the TV, idle away time and become a burden on others. But the fact of the matter is that retirement from active, paid work is not the end of the world. After all, the position or designation that a person once enjoyed is not what he/she actually is.

To me, ageing is not lost youth but, rather, a new stage of opportunity and strength. Elderly people have a reservoir of experience of facing myriad situations that arise in life. This experience is a precious asset for others. Elderly people have lived over many decades, have experienced much and have learnt much. This is a great treasure, which they can share with younger people so that the latter can learn about how to negotiate life, how to make best use of their time and opportunities as well as how to

Spending Old Age Meaningfully

For the elderly, their stage in life can be a great time to sit back and enjoy. There are plenty of reasons to be positive about old age, and there's no reason you can't still live life to the full and have a wonderful time with the time that you still have.

handle inevitable challenges and mistakes. It would be wonderful if elderly people from different walks of life could be invited to forums where they can share some of the life-lessons they have learnt with others.

Ageing is part of the process of life and need not mean retirement from all activity. Though I am 80 years old, I am still very active. In fact, one of the reasons for my good health is that I still try to keep myself usefully occupied. I became an MP at the age of 55, and I remained an MP till the age of 78. Advancing age did not affect my active involvement in political life. I retired from the Rajya Sabha in 2018 at the age of 79. Even now I still go to office and attend meetings of various organisations with which I am associated. I meet people and have also gone back to my profession of chartered accountancy. I believe I am



By K. Rahman Khan

Though I am 80 years old, I am still very active. In fact, one of the reasons for my good health is that I still try to keep myself usefully occupied.

spending my life meaningfully without thinking that I am ageing. You can avoid fatigue of age if you believe and feel that every person has a purpose and

assign ourselves to be active and help society.

Now in my early 80s, by God's grace, I am concerned about the younger generation. It is the scheme of God that youngsters will take over the responsibilities from their elders, and it is the duty of the elders to instil good values in the younger generation values of humility, kindness, gentleness, honesty, hard work, ethics, and so on.

For the elderly, their stage in life can be a great time to sit back and enjoy. There are plenty of reasons to be positive about old age, and there's no reason you can't still live life to the full and have a wonderful time with the time that you still have. As work responsibilities decline, old age can be a time to explore hobbies and activities that there was no time for earlier in life. You can now spend your time trying to learn new things, which you

may not have made time for before. **If you have some sort of passion, like gardening or counselling or reading, your interests can keep you socially-engaged and active in old age, which can have positive effects on your health, too.** At this stage in life you can spend a good portion of your time in reflection, contemplation and reading.

As we move further ahead in time and as our time to depart from this world comes closer, we need to find a sanctuary within, for a deeper engagement with the soul. Have you heard of that beautiful saying by the Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi: *The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep?* It reminds us that we must stay meaningfully engaged with this world, being able to listen to the secrets of the breeze in the early morning that heralds a new day, till at last we are called back to our eternal home in the Hereafter. Till then, live life like a traveller. Carry light baggage, and move on ahead, inspired with faith and trust in God.

(K. Rahman Khan is a former member of the Rajya Sabha and can be reached at krahmankhan@gmail.com)

OPEN SPACE

Prof Dr Syed Jahangir

Hyderabad teacher provides free education, food and shelter to under-privileged children.

Hyderabad: To help less fortunate children, Prof Dr Syed Jahangir, Head of the Department of Arab Studies, EFL (English and Foreign Language) University, provides them free education, three meals a day and accommodation at his small educational institution.



Prof Jahangir teaches languages, social and political science to the poor children. "I believe that weaker sections have a greater need for quality education. If we want our children to get the best education possible then they should get the best teacher rather than a great school." He has started an educational centre where children can learn multiple languages like English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi.

Some former and current students shared their experiences. "I am from Bihar. I have been studying here for the

last three years. Whatever we need is provided by Sir. I am happy to be studying here," said Mohammed Sadiq, a student. Abdul Aleem said: "I studied here eight years ago and I am here now as a science teacher. Today the cost of education is so high that many young people give up their dream of being educated, while many others graduate with debts. But here, we provide quality education and create a passion for learning amongst the students."

(For more details, see newindianexpress.com)

Farha Naaz Parveen

Farha has qualified the Uttar Pradesh Judicial Service Civil Judge [UP PCS (J)] 2018 exam without attending coaching institutes.

The popular myth that it takes a superior, distinctive and an elite school background and perfect coaching institutes with record selection percentage to crack competitive exams was broken by Farha Naaz Parveen. Farha is a law student of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Malappuram Centre. She has qualified the Uttar Pradesh Judicial Service Civil Judge [UP PCS (J)] 2018 exam without attending a coaching institute. "I did not attend a regular coaching for my exam preparation," said Farha adding that she comes from a UP Board schooling background, during an interaction with



students in Malappuram Centre where she was also felicitated. Farha, who made her way to success with dedication determination, commitment and proper guidance from teachers, urged students to have self-study routines for qualifying competitive exams. "One of the

major advantages of self-study is that students can take control over their own learning. It can be hard to get into the self-study right routine, but with the right approach, anyone can set themselves up with an unbreakable study routine," said Farha.

Farha emphasizes hard work, and smart work aimed at achieving goals with quality, to qualify competitions. Giving the credit of her success to the teachers at the Department of Law, Malappuram Centre; Farha also shared tips for successful competitive exams preparation with the students.

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Essence of Worship

"I have only created the invisible beings [jinn] and the human beings so that they may [know and] worship Me. No sustenance do I ever want from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. Surely, God is the Provider of all sustenance, the One with all might, the Ever-invulnerable"

*Al-Dharyyat; (The Scattering Winds)
Surah 51: Verses 56-58*

God has His purpose and plan behind creation, which we may understand as giving all creatures the chance to fulfil their potentials through following the natural laws of the Creator. For human beings, this means following God's guidance and the human mind.

Rational beings accept the existence of God by using their minds, and this is the intentional and voluntary statement made by the "homo sapiens" which represents the essence of worship, *ibada*: the acknowledgement of the true and absolute Divinity and Supreme "Lordship" of the One God, and the true and full "submission" of the human being. This realization and reckoning leads the human being to conform to God's message and plan for the fulfilment of all the human internal and external potential, while the All-mighty Lord Himself is self-sufficient, infinite in His power and free of all needs.

God is the source and centre of all power and all goodness, and



God is the source and centre of all power and all goodness, and human progress depends upon our aligning ourselves with His will in all creation in this world's life.

human progress depends upon our aligning ourselves with His will in all creation in this world's life and His guidance as represented in His messages. This is the meaning and purpose of worshipping Him.

Any power which we seek must be from God, whose power is eternal, universal and beyond any bias. His care and grace are always sure, but they are applied together with His justice. His providence in this life reaches those who believe in Him and those who reject Him, the good-doers and the evil-doers. In the end, every human individual will be accountable for all that he/she has done with what God has granted him/her.

(Compiled From: "Concepts of the Quran" - Fathi Osman, p. 582)

HADITH

Cleaning the Qalb

When the people asked the Prophet about the cure and the method to clean the qalb, he said, "Frequent remembrance of death and recitation of the Quran." [Bayhaqi]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that hearts get rusted in the same way that iron rusts when it is wet. He further stated that when man sins, a dark spot appears on the *qalb*. And when he does not repent or relent and continues to sin, another dark spot covers the *qalb* until finally the entire *qalb* is rusted and turns black. When the people asked the Prophet about the cure and the method to clean the *qalb*, he said, "Frequent remembrance of death and recitation of the



Quran." [Bayhaqi]

Accordingly, one must often remember death and the eventual meeting with Allah on the Day of Judgment; and a person must regularly recite the Quran. It is these things which

cure a defective *qalb*, remove its rust, and cleanse its blackness. That is when it starts to glow. The *nur* (light) of *iman* (faith) is reborn within it and the whole life is rejuvenated. When the link between the *qalb* and Allah is established and the *qalb* starts to

resonate with the remembrance of Allah, then the *qalb* will be set on the right path.

(Compiled From: "A Righteous Heart: The Axis of One's Deeds" - Khurram Murad)

INSIGHTS

The Charity Cover

My father's 'charity cover' as he called it, was opened generously to anyone in need, irrespective of religion, caste or community,



By Sehar

One of the positive things that I remember about my late parents was their habit of budgeting their money in a book, with a record of 'charity money' too. I remember my father writing, on the first of every month, two columns, of income and expenses. It was the usual water bill, electricity bill, groceries etc., but there was also money kept as charity money (*sadaqah*). While I do not remember the amount he allocated each month for charity, this practice of his continued till the end of his life. At 86, when my father passed away, he had taken out some money from the 'charity cover', as he called it, as a contribution to a young girl from a village whom I knew and had given it to me when I mentioned to him about her needs.

My father's 'charity cover' was opened generously to anyone in need, irrespective of religion, caste or community, be it a poor vegetable-seller or a patient for their medical expenses.

Observing my father maintaining his 'charity cover' over the years, I found the practice very spiritually enriching. It taught me that while we spend on ourselves for various things like food, clothes and what not, we also need to

think of those in need and allocate a certain sum out of our earnings for them. I thank my father who used to tell me that every time I received my salary, I should take out a certain sum from it as charity. 'There will be *barkat* (blessings)' in that, he would say.

There were times when I would fall sick and my father would say to me, 'Take out some money even it is 20 rupees as *sadaqah* from your earnings and give it away.' He would also take out *sadaqah* in my name for God's pleasure. His belief was that charity cleanses a person spiritually, and their earnings too.

Despite their humble earnings, my parents made it a point to take out 'charity money' and keep it apart for people whom they encountered who needed it. When I began following this practice, there were times when, to be honest, I would worry that the small amount I had taken out could have fetched me a new pair of earrings! But over the years, as I kept up with the practice, it brought me immense peace. Today, when I take out a small amount for the 'charity cover', I do this in the name of my late parents, from whom I learnt this beautiful practice. May God bless them with peace!

Professor Carl Troll was President of the International Geographical Union from 1960 to 1964. He remarked: "The fruit of my life as a scientist and geographer is to have become more and more deeply grateful to our Creator."



By Valea

If we've been on a long train journey and are now nearing our destination, what do we do? We start getting ready for our arrival. So, we may have a wash, brush our hair and straighten our clothes. We may gather our stuff that's lying around and pack it back in our bags. We may say goodbye to our fellow passengers. And so on. In these ways, we make preparations for the end of our journey and our arrival at our destination.

In just the same way, we need to make the necessary preparations for the end of our journey of life in this world, which comes with death, and our arrival at our destination, which is the Hereafter.

Death, of course, knows no age barrier and can arrive at any moment. But as our bodies grow older and we begin to realise that we aren't going to be in this world forever and that sooner or later we will have to leave this realm, we need to consciously prepare ourselves for this momentous event in our life's journey.

When we depart from this world, only our faith or level of God-consciousness and the stock of our deeds will accompany us. Given this, consciously preparing for this event requires that we focus now more on cultivating our inner life and on expressing it in the form of good deeds.

Here are some of the things we need to do to properly prepare for our death and for what comes beyond:

Giving greater attention to our relationship with our Creator, whom we are going to meet on our departure from this world and to whom we will have to give a complete account for how we have lived while here.

If we have hitherto left God out of our lives, we can begin to cultivate a personal relationship with God right now, before it is too late. No matter how busy we may like to think we are, we need to spend adequate time with God every day.

Seeking to improve ourselves.

We need to spend time reflecting on how we are as persons and make efforts to become better. We need to try to overcome our negative tendencies and strengthen our positive qualities. For instance, if we review our lives, we may recognise that impatience is one of our prominent negative traits and that because of this, we have hurt many people in the past. Based on this

Preparing For Our Departure From This World

Here are some of the things we need to do to properly prepare for our death and for what comes beyond.



realisation, we can make conscious efforts to overcome impatience by cultivating patience.

Trying to make amends for the wrongs we have done and making up with others.

As we go through life we inevitably do things that we ought not to have. For instance, we hurt other people by unwise actions, words and thoughts. If we want to leave this world with a lighter conscience, we need to try to make amends for our wrongs. For instance, if we have been cruel to someone, we can apologise to them. If we have fought with a friend or relative and haven't talked with them for years, we can reach out to them and patch up. If for some reason we aren't able to contact them, we can acknowledge the wrong we have done before God and request God to forgive us and also to bless the person we have wronged.

Forgiving all those who we think have wronged us.

Many of us go through life revelling in hatred of people we think have wronged us. But if we want God to forgive us for our wrongs, we need to forgive people who have done us wrong, even if they themselves do not acknowledge their misdeeds and ask us for forgiveness. Forgiving others for what wrong they might have done to us is for our own good. Relieving us of the burden of resentment, it makes us lighter and happier.

Loosening our attachments to material possessions, none of

which will accompany us when we die.

As long as we are in this world we need certain material things to survive. But often we accumulate things over the years that we do not really require. We can loosen our attachments to them and make our departure from this world easier. For instance, instead of clinging onto furniture or clothes we do not need, we can give them to someone who might. If our homes are littered with expensive artefacts more befitting a museum, we can sell them off and give the money to a

good cause. If our finances are arranged in such a way that we get more than what we might need to lead a decent life, we can set apart a sum of money every month for worthwhile social causes. Or, if our children are economically well-off, we can will our property to a reliable charity instead of to our children. In ways like these we can give up our attachment to material things.

Since our stock of deeds is going to accompany us after we die, we must consciously focus on doing virtuous actions, on a day-to-day, or even moment-to-moment, basis.

Not all of us can do 'social work' on a 'big' scale. But all of us can definitely do little acts of kindness, and every day at that. It could be even something as supposedly small as smiling at someone who's sad, helping a puppy cross a busy road, avoiding stepping on an ant or watering a plant. Why, even sitting in the comfort of our homes we can do a great amount of good by sending out thoughts of loving-kindness to all creatures, including even people we have hitherto thought of as our foes! There are always a great many good things each of us can do every single hour of the day!

Many people die without having consciously prepared for their death at all and for the life that comes after it. They may have never cared to cultivate a relationship with God; they may have revelled in nursing hatred for others; they may have made no effort to make amends for the wrongs they have done or to patch up with people they have fought with; they may not have loosened their attachment to things; they may have done little or no good to others. And so on. Surely, that is a terrible way to die.

Since death is inevitable it being the only thing about our future that we can be absolutely sure of we need to prepare for it consciously and wisely, through our relationship with our Creator, working on our own selves, trying to become better people, making amends for past wrongs, forgiving others and seeking forgiveness and engaging in acts of kindness.

Signs of God Scattered in the Universe

If we reflect on just one amazing phenomenon of desalination, an astounding sign of God, we can be wonderstruck at God's miracles, which are scattered all across the universe!

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a well-known English literary critic, theologian, philosopher and poet. One of his poems is titled 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. In this poem, Coleridge describes a sailor who, on account of some sin, gets stuck in the sea. He has no fresh water to drink. His ship is surrounded on all sides by sea water, but because the water is salty, he cannot drink it. In anguish he cries out, 'Water,

water everywhere. Nor any drop to drink.'

The condition of this fictitious sailor is potentially the same of every human being in this world. Man cannot live without water. But a huge proportion of the world's water is exceedingly salty being contained in the seas and oceans and hence is not potable.

Now, consider how Nature has provided a solution to this issue. Heated by the sun, sea water evaporates. The vapour rises up in the atmosphere, leaving behind in the sea the

salt that the water had contained. It is only the sweet component of the water that evaporates. This water, which is desalinated through this natural process, falls on the earth in the form of water sweet water that human beings can drink and which they cannot live without.

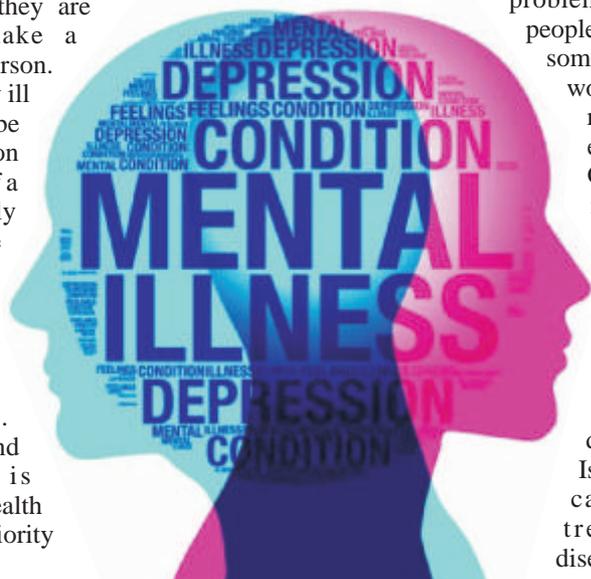
If we reflect on just one amazing phenomenon of desalination, an astounding sign of God, we can be wonderstruck at God's miracles, which are scattered all across the universe!

Islamic View of Mental Health

Islam encourages people to stay hopeful, even if someone has committed the worst sin or faced with most troublesome life event as there is always God's mercy.

By Meraj Ahmad Meraj

Islam takes a holistic approach to health. Physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health cannot be separated; they are three parts that make a completely healthy person. If a person is physically ill or injured, it may be difficult to concentrate on anything but the pain. If a person is emotionally and mentally unwell, he or she may not be able to take care of him or herself properly or find their minds distracted from the realities of life. Although physical and emotional health is important, spiritual health needs to be the first priority in our lives.



The Islamic strategy for the promotion of mental health and well-being is based on the

recognition of the inherent human defects and calls for systematic and constructive enactment to overcome the problems. Islam encourages people to stay hopeful, even if someone has committed the worst sin or faced with most troublesome life event as there is always God's mercy. Modern medical and scientific research has demonstrated that Islamic faith in God in belief in life directly helps in the prevention and treatment of mental disorders. Hence, Using Islamic values and beliefs can be beneficial in treatment of mental disease.

An Indelible Woman

Amma was always creating something useful out of anything she found.

By Salma Mashood

Sometimes in our lives come people we least expect, who leave an indelible mark or help us to see life differently. Amma was one such person, a petite and fresh faced grandmother who taught me to live life to its fullest. She was simple, not highly educated, and yet her simplicity and practical attitude towards life touched not just me, but everyone else she came in contact with.

Amma took on the role of a mother to all who needed her sage advice. A genuine and devoted 'mother' to all who reached out for her support. She was brave and confident and lived life on her own terms, yet did not upset anyone's feelings.

Amma was always creating something useful out of anything she found an unschooled, innate talent she passed on to all her children and

grandchildren, who today pursue careers in commercial art and architecture, encouraged by her support.

Amma's gentle humaneness and her genuine love and concern for all drew us towards her like a magnet. And of course, she made it a point to connect with all her siblings, chatting away with them when all her work was done. The glow of her remarkable personality shone on even after her husband's death and she began to spend more time with each child and grandchild, giving them her undivided attention: a gift few people have, of making you feel extra special.

Amma had a great zest for life and would bounce back to health whenever she fell ill. But when she had a fall and broke her thigh bone, complications set in, that sadly she never recovered from it and she left us with a deep

sense of mourning and loss. We celebrate her life today remembering the poem " If " by Rudyard Kipling:

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

Or walk with kings nor lose the common touch

If neither foes or loving friends can hurt you,

If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,

Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,

And-which is more-you'll be a man, my son!

(The author is retired principal of a nursery school in Bangalore and also a practicing homeopathic doctor)

Reflections on Palestine

By Mureeda Kara



alleyways of Jerusalem, living in the valley of Qira, roaming with eyes of a tourist through Jericho and the Jordan Valley.

There was spiritual enlightenment along the way. This was the crossroads of all who came through the path of our father Abraham (AS). The lineage of the strong and prevalent. Palestine..what have we done? Palestine..while I can smell you, I can feel you, I can no longer see you as you ought to be seen.

Palestine, you will live and survive. Palestine, you have the ability to live, even in isolation.

Ameen.



This was my thoughts as I sat down in the plane to come home. Palestine is a *mubarak* land. It has at its heart the most amazing spirit. The eras and erasers gone by have either left the indelible ring of time or been swallowed up by the earth. Shaken to the core of what humanity is capable of. I stir slowly inside, towards the soul of my being. What was it that touched my being? What made the fireflies inside of me, want to escape and give light? Shepherding through the narrow

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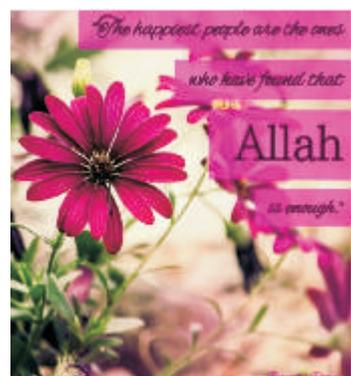
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By Hafiz Shaban Ali Nadvi

I was resting in my room, having been unwell for some days. At around two in the morning, I stepped out and into the streets. I wanted to breathe outside yes, at that seemingly odd hour! Silence engulfed the streets. I came to the main road. I saw some people around. A few hotels and cafes were open.

I was walking on the footpath with an earphone plugged in my ear, engrossed in listening to a song I had already listened to it five times, and this was my sixth! I was thirsty, and so I thought of drinking water at a mosque. I thought I'd enter the mosque through the main gate, but it was closed. Nearby, I spotted two men sleeping on the footpath under a blanket. They were tossing about and adjusting themselves in the blanket due to the cold.

I wanted to interact with the men. I waited for a while. My happiness knew no bounds when one of them got up. I asked him, 'Are you facing any difficulty?' He replied: 'No, it is okay.' He was trying to conceal his problems, of course.

I asked the man about the other man, the person whom he had shared the blanket with. He said that he did not know him well. He had shared that sleeping space

with him just for that night because he had no place to sleep.

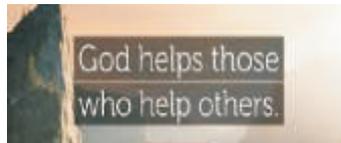
I asked the man where he was based. He kept silent. Then, I asked him what had brought him there. He replied that for a year he had been searching for a job. Gradually, he unfolded some more details of his story. He was from Bihar. Some years ago, when the floods came, he lost most of his things and even his one son, along with the documents of his property. They lived without food for five days. He also lost his job. Since then he had started feeling that he was a burden on this planet. He saw others in happiness and cursed himself.

The thing the man was concerned about most of the time was why all this had happened to him. His only son, who meant so much to him, was now no more. The dreams he had dreamt for his son bothered him day and night. He cursed those economically wealthy people who did not care at all for

Meeting with a Man Who Had Lost Hope to Live

If you look out, you will find many people who have been facing many adversities and going through terrible anguish.

The floods had shattered the man and had washed away his dreams. At around that time, his wife had a problem in her eyes. Each day, he had to go through the pain of seeing her go through pain.



the hapless poor. They didn't bother to ask whether they had food or had slept with an empty stomach.

The man burst into tears and said, 'The biggest tragedy with the moneyed folk is they think that their wealth will be immortal. On the other hand, the poor don't have much money but they generously

wish to sacrifice things for those who suffer.'

The floods had shattered the man and had washed away his dreams. At around that time, his wife had a problem in her eyes. Each day, he had to go through the pain of seeing her go through pain. One day, he consulted with a doctor, who said that she had a big problem and needed to be operated, which apparently required a lot of money which he did not afford. That threw him into the ditch of pessimism. Searching for a job to meet the needs of his family and to earn enough for his wife's operation, he left his town and came to a big city. He roamed

around the city searching for a job but failed to get one. Some said: "You are uneducated and inexperienced." Some talked to him roughly. Many times he had to sleep on an empty stomach on the footpath. And then, driven by his pain, he started drinking alcohol.

Friends! This is a real story. Like this man, if you look out, you will find many people who have been facing many adversities and going through terrible anguish. Fix a time one day and walk along the footpaths and you will probably find at least some people who are going through tough times for whom a single moment seems very heavy, like a big mountain. In many cases, their suffering reflects our inhumanity and heartlessness, in that we completely overlook them. Just think if God were to forget us like we often forget those in trouble, what would happen? Hence it is said that if you help people in need, and even non-human creatures on the earth, the God of all will help you.

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Saintly Socks!

To me, Socks is/was an angelic cat

By Nigar

A plump and happy-go-lucky cat, Socks one day simply walked into the house where Tabby the ginger cat, and Pretty the dainty cat, also lived. I do not like calling the house 'my house' as much of the time Tabby and Pretty were hanging around there, and so it was like me living in their home, rather than the other way round!

The first time I saw Socks, he looked like a cute white pillow! After I spotted his short white paws, I felt that the name 'Socks' really suited him. The most beautiful quality of Socks was his informality. He did not wait for permission or follow the social etiquette of being invited to walk



in.

Socks just needed the doors to open and he would saunter in, happily rubbing his head against the dining table chairs and settling down to munch cat food from the saucer. After that, he would find a

place of comfort in some room, on the table or the bed, and snooze off. His face was heart-touchingly innocent, decorated with beautiful eyes, so that he looked like a stuffed toy! He had a lovely, long tail, which he always would keep up and straight, like an aerial.

Socks loved peace and quiet and did not chase fast-food like mice or squirrels. He was one of the most contented and calm cats I have ever met over the years. He was happy simply munching his cat food and sleeping. He had no great desires about ruling over the Kitty Kingdom like Tabby may have had or doing the cat-walk like Pretty. This was one of the biggest lessons one could learn from Socks: be content and happy with what you have.

Socks had been sleeping peacefully in the same room as me (I don't call it 'my' room) at night. Then, sometime perhaps early

morning he had walked out, as most Tom cats do: they love their freedom. He was not to be seen for about two days, only to return a day later injured. Refusing his favourite cat food and milk, he just folded his paws and sat with bent head. I applied some anti-septic powder on his injury, hoping that it would heal. Yet, Socks did not seem to get better. He looked dull and his eyes did not have the same beady glow.

The last time I saw Socks, he was sitting under a car in the backyard, refusing to eat. Hoping the sunlight would heal him, I prayed that God would take care of him and relieve him of any distress he was undergoing.

Looking at Socks sitting quietly with his head bent was extremely painful for me. How simple, humble and surrendered he was to God's will! He had no expectations

from anyone, no burdens in his heart, no grouses and grudges, no jealousy, no desires for fancy food or bed, no big dreams of changing the world or anything like that. To me, Socks is/was an angelic cat whose life has/had much to teach us.

We complicate our lives with unnecessary thoughts, knowledge, things, desires, wishes and what not. Contentment with ourselves and with God is what we all can learn from Socks, the saintly cat!

I do not know where Socks is now. He hasn't turned up for many days. But I hope and pray that God, who is The Healer of all pain and suffering, is looking after him and patting him to comfort.

Hope lies with God and I have anchored myself to God with the hope that Socks is being well taken care of in God's safe shade.

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