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'Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's role in uniting different religious groups is unforgettable': JIH president



Jamaat-e-Islami Hind President Syed Sadatullah Husaini has expressed condolences over the passing away of noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. In a condolence message,

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United Arab Emirates names its first female Astronaut



The United Arab Emirates has named the next two astronauts in its space programme, including the country's first female astronaut.

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Waqf Boards are often berated by people. Take the name of the Waqf Boards and you will hear complaints of inaction, mismanagement, corruption, lethargy and allegations that it has sold off waqf properties. Even people who have no knowledge about the functioning of the Waqf Boards and the Rules governing them will vilify them and will also give plenty of suggestions. While it cannot be denied that some of the criticism is indeed true, not everything that is told is correct. People who are misusing Waqf properties are often the loudest in maligning the Waqf Boards.

Can Waqf Properties Wipe Out The Poverty Of Muslims?

One thing which that is commonly expressed is that Waqf Boards own thousands of crores worth properties, which, if properly utilized, would mean that there wouldn't be a single Muslim who is poor. The Sachar Committee Report (November, 2006) estimated the total area under waqf properties all over India at about 6 lakh acres and that its market value could be put at Rs.1.2 lakh crores. The Report stated that if these properties are put to efficient and marketable use, they can generate at least a minimum return of 10 per cent, which is about Rs. 12,000 crores per annum.

Although these statistics cannot be denied, the ground reality is



Syed Tahsin Ahmed, KAS (Retd.)

somewhat complex. Waqf Boards are not the owner of Waqf properties. The Waqf institutions are the owners of the Waqf properties and they manage them. Waqf Boards merely supervise and control the Waqf institutions. The Karnataka State Board of Waqf does not own a single property except to some extent the DarulAwqaf building in Cunningham Road, Bangalore,

where its Head office is located. Even this DarulAwqaf is a registered Waqf institution, whose Muthavalli is the CEO of the Waqf Board.

Common Perceptions About Developing Waqf Properties

It is commonly believed that Waqf Board owns thousands of crores worth of properties and that if properly utilized, the economic conditions of the entire Muslim

community can be vastly improved. These are simplistic statements. In Karnataka, the total number of Waqf institutions is 32,113 having 54,534 immovable properties and 1801 movable properties. The immovable properties are not vacant lands or sites waiting to be developed to generate crores of rupees income as is commonly believed. Take, for example, the Khuddus Sab Khairabastan or the Jamia Masjid in City Market of Bangalore, which are both located in the heart of the

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Pope Francis Warns That People Must Care For Creation or Face Self-Destruction

When it comes to safeguarding creation, there is no time to waste — humanity either must live up to its responsibility or continue on a path of self-destruction, Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, recently said, commemorating Earth Day with a video message. The pope appealed to world leaders to "act with courage, work with justice and always tell people the truth, so that people know how to protect themselves from the destruction of the planet, how to protect the planet from the destruction that many times we trigger." The pope's recorded message was aired as part of "Earth Day Live:

Restore Our Earth," a global livestreamed event April 22 sponsored by EarthDay.org, a your daily news newsletter from. While there has been growing awareness for a long time about the need to protect and care for nature, especially God's gift of biodiversity, humanity must do so with "the utmost attention and respect," he said. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how interdependent everything is, he said, as humanity must share the planet. "Global disasters, Covid and the climate all show that we do not have time to wait," that time is ticking and yet, "we have the means to face the

challenge," he said. But the time to act is now, he added; "we are at the limit."

People have a choice to come out of a crisis "better or worse," he said. "This is the challenge, and if we do not come out of it better, we are taking a path of self-destruction." (Extracted from ucanews.com)

Islamic Development Bank pledges \$200m for education campaign



The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has pledged \$200 million to the 2021-2025 Raise Your Hand

financing campaign of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). GPE is a partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in lower-income countries and increase the number of children in school and learning. The announcement was made at the Middle East launch of GPE's Case for Investment, which calls on global leaders to pledge at least \$5 billion toward education in 90 lower-income countries and territories. IsDB has pledged \$200 million in concessional loans to boost lower-income countries' access to finance for education, representing half the total sought from the Arab Coordination Group of Arab financial development institutions.

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United Arab Emirates names its first female Astronaut

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai who also serves as the country's prime minister and vice president, named the two astronauts on Twitter. He identified Noura al-Matroushi as the UAE's first female astronaut. The announcement gave no biographical information about her or her male counterpart, Mohammed al-Mulla. The two had been selected among more than 4,000 applicants in the UAE. The two will undergo training at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The Emirates has had other recent successes in its space program. This February, the UAE put its Amal, or Hope, satellite in orbit around Mars, the first for the Arab world. In 2024, the country hopes to put an unmanned spacecraft on the moon.

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

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Waqf Boards: The Other Side of the Picture

city and whose property value is extremely high. But can we sell or lease or commercially develop these properties to generate income commensurate with their property value? Similarly, the 54,534 immovable waqf properties in Karnataka comprise of and include 17,710 mosques, 5872 Dargahs, 5565 Khabrastans, 5740 Ashoorkhanas, 1666 Chillas, 1429 Idgahs, 722 Madrasas etc. (Source: WAMSI). Only a portion of a few of these properties can be commercially developed, and many such properties are already utilized for various purposes. Similar is the case in other states in India.

community have to be undertaken by the waqf institutions if they have surplus income, over and above their expenses. Many such institutions are already giving scholarships, medical aid to the poor or are running schools or are carrying out welfare activities which are either not publicized at all or if publicized, the beneficiaries will not be aware that these are waqf institutions. Moreover, the Muthavallis and Managing committees often take the credit for any good work done and often put the blame on the State Waqf Board whenever something goes wrong or some controversy arises.



Identify Properties That Can Be Utilized For Development

The task should be to identify the properties which are still available for commercial exploitation and to motivate the Muthavalli or the Managing committee to take up projects if they are commercially viable. Some properties may be vacant, but they may be located far from the developed area of the city or town and will not fetch good returns on the investment. There are also properties which are under encroachment and unauthorised occupation and are involved in litigation. From my experience, I can say that most of the litigants are Muslims, but the community goes soft on them.

How Rich Is the Waqf Board?

The public perception is that the Waqf Board is a super-rich institution having huge funds at its disposal. The fact is that the entire income from the waqf properties and from the golaks, public contributions etc., belong to the waqf institutions and not to the Waqf Board. The Waqf Board gets only 7% as waqf contribution from the income of these waqf institutions and this income is calculated with many deductions and exemptions. Out of the 7% waqf contribution received by the Waqf Board, it has to pay 1% to the Central Waqf Council and only 6% remains with it. There have been times when the Waqf Board has struggled to pay salaries to its staff. Therefore, whatever welfare activities have to be done for the

Need To Recognise the Achievements

A negativity pervades the entire gamut of waqf matters. But there is a silver lining to the dark clouds. Rather than always dwelling in the past, we must be forward-looking. Speaking about Karnataka, the development of waqf properties by Hazrat Hameed Shah and Muslim Orphanage institutions in Bangalore, Muslim Orphanages and Muslim Hostel in Mysore, Madar Shah Makani Tumkur and the Gulbarga awqaf, to name a few, are considered as models. Major colleges run by Muslim community in Bangalore, like Al Ameen College, Abbas Khan College for Women and Hasanath College for Women, are all housed on waqf lands. Many hospitals, like Shifa Hospital in Bangalore, the Haj house and many schools, colleges, hostels, polytechnics, shadimahals and commercial complexes have been established on Waqf lands.

There is a need to shed negativity, bring in positivity and move forward aiming at fresh goals, rather than harping on a few failed, miserable cases and mistakes of the past. We need to hear about the success stories of waqf institutions from across the country to draw inspiration for undertaking similar projects.

(The author has served as CEO of the Karnataka State Board of Waqfs for three terms and can be contacted at tahsin789@yahoo.com)

Biden sends greetings to Muslims for Ramzan

US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden marked the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in the US. "Jill and I send our warmest greetings and best wishes to Muslim communities in the United States and around the world. Ramadan Kareem," said Biden in a statement. As many of our fellow Americans begin fasting tomorrow, we are reminded of how difficult this year has been. In this pandemic, friends and loved ones cannot yet gather together in celebration and congregation, and far too many families will sit down for iftar with loved ones missing," said the statement, referring to the meal eaten by Muslims after sunset during Ramadan. The president praised the

contributions of Muslim Americans to the country, who he said are creating jobs as entrepreneurs and business owners, risking their lives as first responders, teaching in schools as well as fighting COVID-19. "Muslim Americans have enriched our country since our founding. They are as diverse and vibrant as the America they have helped build," said the president.

"As we remember those who we have lost since last Ramadan, we are hopeful for brighter days ahead. The Holy Qur'an reminds us that 'God is the light of the heavens and earth' who leads us out of darkness to the light."

"We wish your families an inspiring and rewarding month," he concluded.

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'Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's role in uniting different religious groups is unforgettable': JIH president

the JIH President, said, "Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was undoubtedly an outstanding thinker who had a profound impact on our times. Maulana's role in uniting different religious groups in the country and creating an atmosphere of dialogue and discussion between them is unforgettable. The efforts of the late Maulana to present Islam in a modern style and with strong scientific and logical arguments will always remain his abiding legacy. Some of his books like - The Challenge of Modern Science, Religion and Science, The Greatness of the Qur'an, Islam the progenitor of Modern Times, The Prophet, the Revolution and Modern Times, etc. have made Maulana Wahiduddin Khan a legendary figure in the Islamic scholarly traditions of the subcontinent."

Mr. Husaini further said, "Maulana was the founder of a unique and attractive style of Urdu prose. His ability to express complex scholarly subjects with great brevity in a lucid style and simple language was testimony to his remarkable writing skills and it has influenced many generations of writers. The production of Islamic literature in English and various regional languages is also one of his great achievements." The JIH chief continued, "I have personally benefited a lot from Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. I have been reading his books and monthly magazine since my childhood. I have interacted with him during my student days and was impressed by Maulana's compassion, love and his kindness."

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

Report



Sameen Ahmad Khan

The College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates organized a three-day landmark event, "Fourth International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences", during 4-6 April 2021 under the theme "Scientific Legacy and its Contemporary Impacts" (<https://www.sharjah.ac.ae/ichs21>). The event was organized by the College of Science under the umbrella of the Sharjah International Foundation for the History of Arab and Muslim Sciences (SIFHAMS, <https://sifhams.sharjah.ac.ae/>). The conference was held under the patronage of His Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and the President of the University of Sharjah, and Founder of Sharjah International Foundation for the History of Arab and Muslim Sciences. Dr. Sultan has a PhD with distinction in History at Exeter University in 1985, and another in the Political Geography of the Gulf at Durham University in 1999. It is to be recalled that the "First International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences", was held during 24-27 March 2008 with the theme, "Arabs' and Muslims' Scientific Contributions to Humanity". The very first event had over eight hundred delegates from thirty-six countries with over three hundred presentations. The "Second International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences" was held during 8-11 December 2014 with the theme, "The impact of early Arab and Muslim scholars on recent scientific and technological advances". The second event had over four hundred participants from forty-two countries. Both the events had attracted numerous historians of science. The success of the two events led to the creation of the "Sharjah International Foundation for the History of Muslim and Arab Sciences (SIFHAMS, <https://sifhams.sharjah.ac.ae/>)" in January 2015. The third event was organized during 5-7 December 2017 under the theme "The Arabic & Islamic Scientific Heritage: Innovation, Acculturation, and Coexistence". The conference offered valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange, networking and

Fourth International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences



learning about the Arabs and Muslims scientific and scholar heritage and latest findings and discoveries in the field. The conference had the following eight themes:

1. Features and Insights into the Arabic and Islamic Civilization during its Golden Era:

- Identifying the creative environmental specifications in the flourishing eras of Arab and Islamic civilization.
- Identifying the creative and innovative specifications of the early Arab and Muslim scholars.
- Identifying creative means and innovations during the flourishing eras of Arab and Islamic civilization.

- Available opportunities for Arab and Muslim scholars and the challenges they face between the past and today.

2. Modern technologies and their impact on analyzing, understanding, and studying the Arabic and Islamic heritage:

- Reviving the Arab and Islamic scientific heritage using modern technological tools.
- The technique of Islamic architecture and its decorative arts, between yesterday and today.

3. The impact of the Arabic and Islamic Scientific Heritage on the Cultures of Contemporary Societies:

- Stimulating and promoting the translation movement for old publications of early Muslim scholars into multiple languages.
- Stimulating the translation movement for present-day publications and literature related to the Arab and Islamic scientific heritage.
- Reviving and codifying Islamic architecture and its impact on contemporary architecture.
- Emphasizing the role of Islamic heritage in stimulating tourism and cultural exchange.

4. Presenting Pioneering Experiences in Diagnosing Challenges and Opportunities for Reviving and Preserving the Arabic and Islamic Scientific Heritage:

- Promoting and establishing communication opportunities and facilitating agreements between academic and research institutions and schools,

universities as well as local, regional and international scientific research centres with the goal of urging the latter to pay attention to the history of science for Arabs and Muslims and their heritage and to include it in their curricula.

- Establishing a museum for the Arabic and Islamic scientific heritage - opportunities and challenges.

5. Science of Fine Arts from an Islamic Perspective:

- Contemporary representation in Islamic designs.
- Applications of Islamic geometric patterns for the fourth industrial revolution.
- Inspiration for sustainable design.

6. The Islamic Architectural and Artistic Heritage in the Contemporary World:

- Islamic cities and neighbourhoods: between the past and the present.
- The role of the endowment in



The 4th International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences

Scientific Legacy and its Contemporary Impacts • 4-6 April 2021

shaping the Islamic built environments.

- The role of the endowment in protecting the built environments and their contemporary importance.
- Islamic architecture as an inspiration for contemporary architecture.
- Islamic arts as a source of inspiration for contemporary arts.
- Contemporary issues in preserving the Islamic architectural and artistic heritage.

7. The Emergence and Development of Medical and Health Sciences among Arabs and Muslims:

- Artificial intelligence in medicine and health sciences.
- The impact of the achievements of Arab and Muslim scholars on the progress of human civilization.
- Promoting collaborative research by identifying multiple and specialized research.
- Robotics and their uses in medicine.

8. Applied Sciences:

- New fields in natural sciences, theoretical and applied mathematics.
- Artificial intelligence in astronomy and physics.
- Renewable energies in future

energy.

- Modern uses of nanotechnology and its practical applications to solve intractable problems.

The objectives of the conference were:

- Conveying a clear and aspiring vision for future studies related to the history of Arab and Muslim sciences.
- Establishing the status of the Sharjah International Foundation for the History of Arab and Muslim Sciences as an attractive destination for scholars and those interested in the history of Arab and Muslim sciences from all over the world.
- Directing the world's attention to the importance of the role the Foundation in spreading the culture of dialogue, tolerance, and coexistence through the themes of the scientific heritage, which represent a common denominator in human history.
- Designing strategies to revitalize research groups contributing to the history of Arab and Muslim sciences.
- Working with our partners to

accomplish major research projects that serve the Foundation's goals.

- Offering opportunities to attract researchers at local, regional and global levels.
- Exchanging experiences with other institutions that share the same goals as the Foundation.

The three-day event had 21 scientific sessions and discussed more than 150 scientific papers, delivered by notable experts from over forty countries. There were over 900 registered participants from forty countries in the online event. All the objectives of the conference were fulfilled. The University of Sharjah was established as a non-profit institution for higher education in October 1997. The University is comprised of fourteen colleges catering to over fourteen thousand students with a faculty of over six hundred. The University currently offers a total of eighty-five academic degree programs including fifty-four bachelor degrees, twenty-three master's degrees, eleven PhD degrees and fifteen diploma degrees.

(Department of Mathematics and Sciences, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman., rohela.khan@yahoo.com)

Ramzan Fast Different This Time

Javid Hassan

With the advent of Ramzan heralding month-long fasting, governments in many Muslim-majority countries have announced new measures against Covid-19 as the virus goes through mutations harmful to human beings. These measures are intended to check social contacts in public places. Even so, the Covid-19 virus continues to plague public health officials in many Muslim-majority countries, from Morocco to Indonesia, where governments realize its negative impact. In the Maghreb region, for instance, Tunisia has been the worst affected country with 1,833 new cases detected followed by Libya (869), Morocco (635) and Algeria (112). The Middle East is caught in a similar tangle, while Iran, with a tally of 2.1 million infections before, is in the midst of a fourth wave of infections, with 22,586 more cases reported recently. It accounts for 29.4 % of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, says the Middle

East Economic Digest (MEED) in its April issue. More than 7.1 million Covid-19 cases have been confirmed to date in the MENA region. Since 5 April, 329,977 new Covid-19 cases have been detected in 17 MENA countries tracked by MEED.

Elsewhere, Turkey has recorded 55,941 additional cases, while Saudi Arabia faces 902 new patients. The Saudi government has announced new restrictions on the Umrah pilgrimage as well as visits to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The pandemic will impact pilgrims in Saudi Arabia for the second consecutive year. However, pilgrims and worshippers who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 or have recovered from coronavirus will be allowed into the Grand Mosque in Mecca. According to Saudi Arabia's Hajj and Umrah Ministry, permits will be granted to those who have received two vaccination jabs, the first dose at least two weeks before their visit to Medina and Mecca, and those who have recovered from the viral infection.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind President calls upon cadre to serve people amidst second wave of pandemic

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) President Syed Sadatullah Husaini has called upon its cadre to serve people during the second wave of the pandemic. In an online speech, primarily addressing to JIH members and sympathizers, Mr. Husaini said: "As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic hits us with all its ferocity, I call upon the cadre of the Jamaat to dedicate themselves for the cause of helping and serving the people of our country. Our work shall mainly be on the three fronts: Creating awareness, serving people, and reminding them of the spiritual and moral dimension of the pandemic. He said, "At this juncture, everybody must wear masks in mosques and follow social distancing norms during congregational prayers. Life and death are in the hand of God, our responsibility lies in following all the necessary precautions and then having trust in God. We must not delay medications and medical advice after the onset of

symptoms as it leads to complications and adding to the burden on our healthcare system. Our members and associates should be role models for this scientific and rational approach. We must also create awareness in society about it." The other aspect of the pandemic towards which the JIH President pointed out was its spiritual and moral dimension. He said: "We must demonstrate our Islamic character by serving humanity in its hour of crisis by having complete faith in divine providence. We must also discharge our duty to remind people of their Creator and Sustainer. Society must be told to introspect regarding their sins and inequities both as a nation and as well as a personal level. Trials and tribulations present an opportunity towards gaining spiritual insight, seeking pardon and turning towards God. Let us pray in this holy month of Ramadan and ask our Lord to pardon us and grant relief from

this pandemic and bring about an early end to this ordeal and suffering."

(Extracted from muslimmirror.com)

Muslim group distributes free oxygen

Amid reports of shortage of oxygen at several hospitals in parts of India, free oxygen cylinders are being distributed to those in need by some groups. In Mumbai, Muslim volunteers associated with Olive Trust are working round the clock to provide free oxygen to those in need. People are approaching Olive Trust where volunteers are available 24 hours to provide free oxygen cylinders despite the month of Ramadan.

"Serving [...] people as also akin to worshipping Allah", one of the volunteers said. This is the month of Ramadan, when we have to pray taraweeh and other prayers besides daily compulsory prayers, he said. But, along with all the Ramadan prayers, "we consider it our duty to serve the people at this time of tragedy and distress", he added.

Olive Trust had arranged Medical Oxygen for the needy last year too. But this time it is difficult as even hospitals are complaining of oxygen shortage, they said.

"We currently have a total of 50 cylinders, and trying for at least 50 more. When people in need, mostly Covid patients, approach us, our volunteers go along with them, connect the oxygen cylinder, mask and also train how to use the kit", he said.

(Extracted from ummid.com)

Transport Giant Pyare Khan of Nagpur Donates Oxygen Worth Rs1 Crore

Pyare Khan of Nagpur is winning accolades on social media for donating two tankers of medical oxygen. In the last few days Khan has donated 32 tonnes of oxygen worth Rs 10 million or one crore for free to hospitals for covid-19 patients who are gasping for oxygen.



"The number of patients in Nagpur has increased and there is shortage of oxygen, ventilators and medicines. In such a situation, we could do something to save the lives of people," Khan said, according to a report appeared in local newspaper Lokmat. Social media users have written posts in appreciation of Khan and thanked him for his generosity amidst the unprecedented crises that the country is facing.

Pyare Khan drove an autorickshaw on the roads of Nagpur till 2004 when his fate took turn for better. That year one day he approached a bank and sought a loan of Rs 11 lakh. The bank was initially reluctant to give him that amount since he had not much to show by way of collateral. But he pursued and got it. He bought a truck and paid the loan back in two years. Right now he owns a fleet of more than 100 trucks and runs about 3000 vehicles on hire. Ashmi transport, which he incorporated in 2013, is now a Rs 400-cr-turnover company. It has nearly a dozen branches in the country transporting power and steel equipment across the country and even abroad.

(Extracted from clarionindia.net)

Muslims offer Eidgah to set up Covid Care Centre in Raisen district

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): The Muslims from Mandideep area in Raisen district have offered Eidgah premises to set up a Covid Care Centre. "Besides Eidgah, we have offered one more place near graveyard to the district administration to combat corona," said Haji Sohail Khan. The 5-acre Eidgah can be used for 100-bed Covid Care Centre. Another place adjacent to graveyard is covered and can accommodate 60 beds. He said a team of more than three dozen volunteers are ready to



serve at centres set up by district administration. "It is up to district administration to use the space as Covid Care Centre, a vaccination centre or for anything to combat pandemic," he added.

Appreciating the initiative, Raisen district collector Umashankar Bhargava said he has included the place in his list and will inform them when needed.

(Taken from freepressjournal.in)

Mumbai man sells SUV to help Covid patients with oxygen cylinders

A young man in Mumbai sold his prized SUV worth Rs 22 lakh last year to buy oxygen cylinders for the people in his locality. Shah Nawaz Sheikh, a resident of Malad, sold his Ford Endeavour SUV to donate oxygen cylinders to hospitals and several corona-infected patients who have been crippled by the oxygen crisis in recent days. Sheikh has also set up a control room where a team is working day and night in order to coordinate and communicate effectively over phone call with those in need of help. The team is currently receiving around 500 phone calls every day.



After he sold his Ford Endeavour, Sheikh managed to procure as many as 160 oxygen cylinders for the needy. He has helped over 4,000 people so far with free oxygen cylinders. His story has gone viral on the internet and people are appreciating his efforts to help the needy in times of crisis.

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Jalees Ahmed Khan Tareen

Indian Muslims At A Crossroads: Some Thoughts For Change

The Muslims of India are today at a crossroads. The community has continued to be socially, educationally and economically backward, with increasing vacuum in its political leadership and confusing division in the form of sectarian groups and *jamaats*. The Babri Masjid controversy brought no good to the larger Muslim masses, and only produced more hate, bias and polarization and consequential sufferings. Those community leaders who refused to listen to the moderate voices to gift the structure as a goodwill gesture to Hindus are now faceless and have no answer with regard to the assistance, they rendered through this controversy to right-wing forces in polarizing the secular fabric of this beautiful country of ours.

I consider the Indian Muslim community to be at a crossroads because it now must decide which way it shall go now to recover from the damage it has suffered through polarization, isolation and discrimination, partly owing to the agenda of certain right-wing forces and partly because of the shortsightedness of its own leaders who are without any longer-term strategies for the younger generation of the community.

Here are some facts that need to be pondered on:

- Our community does not strategize its policies for the coming few decades foreseeing what is in the offing, but, instead, stays entangled in current distractions that are deliberately thrown on our face by those who want to keep us backward and disgraced.
- Our community has political leaders who are not only shortsighted and selfish and often ignorant but have also effectively worked hard to keep the culture of sycophancy alive for their own survival and material gains.
- The community is incorrigibly divided into *jamaats*, *fiqras*, schools of thought and groups based on political party affiliation, with internal squabbles and strong cleavages that have given an easy

advantage to those who want to keep Muslims a backward community.

• Many of our *imams* and *ulema* who are supposed to give sermons that address the contemporary issues of the community so as to help them become socially, educationally and economically competitive hardly go beyond the traditional lectures they have been trained to memorize, on topics such as Domsday, the punishment in the grave, the supposed irrelevance of the world and worldly attainments, the external appearance and attire of Muslims more than on their character, disputing science and scientific discoveries, and speaking in a manner that secludes the Muslim community more and more every day from the other communities. The sermons seclude Muslims more than encouraging them to cultivate cordial relations with others.

The biggest challenge before the community and its coming generations is their seclusion from other communities, as well as isolation, bias and prejudices in day-to-day life. The community has failed to recognize the consequences of hate and poison spread by a section of the society against Muslims and Islam. Actually, Muslims themselves have been helping such forces in their organized mission by increasing their own isolation from the mainstream. The only way to dilute the poison and counter the hate is by increasing our cordiality and cordially interacting with all communities. It is seen that even in schools and colleges, Muslim students tend to make their own groups and remain cut off from others. In any multi-community gathering, you can easily spot Muslims as they will isolate themselves and coagulate into a cluster, away from the other communities. How can you make non-Muslims recognize and realize the good teachings of Islam unless you befriend them and interact with them? How can an average non-Muslim recognize that you are a good person unless

you interact with him, wish him and share with him your views? The simplest movement that the community can start is to wish every non-Muslim in the neighborhood when they meet them, saying "Namaskar", "Good morning", "Salaam" or "Aadab". It costs you nothing but the return is goodwill, which is bountiful. Muslims should stop segregating themselves. Rather, they should mix with all and share conversations. Muslims should work hard to win the goodwill of the people from the other communities. Muslims need to help them gain a positive opinion about Islam, which is now influenced by propaganda and media narratives. Our mission should be to build up good relations; cordiality and connectivity through interaction with our non-Muslim brothers.

A Muslim should be first recognized with his or her good character, conduct and good behavior rather than from his or her attire. That comes next.

Another challenge before the community is educational backwardness. The school dropout rate is highest among Muslims. Muslim girls are given the minimum priority in education. Many of them discontinue their education for want of financial support, with parental bias against sending them for higher education. Restriction on women's education in higher degrees, professional programmes, women's entry into work places, scientific research Institutes, companies, hospitals, banks, administrative jobs etc. is still largely driven by conservative ideas propagated by *imams* and *ulema* in Friday *khutbas*. Needless to say, if a woman is educated and economically independent, the entire community will be educated and richer by 50%.

Another challenge before the community is the education that is imparted at the regular *madrasas*. We all recognize and acknowledge the great contribution of many of the scholars that *madrasas* have produced in safeguarding the teachings of Islam, but what we fail to understand is the following: Should a *madrasa*, besides providing Quranic teaching, not prepare the students to also study subjects like Science, Math's, Social Science, English and regional languages and make them appear for the matriculation exam, which would open up to them a parallel

avenue to enter higher education and even professional education? We need to prepare scholars in *madrasas* who can communicate in the regional language and English so as to enable them to interact with people of other faiths and backgrounds with ease and full confidence, rather than conglomerating into clusters of their own co-religionists wherever they go, unable to communicate with people of other communities because of language barriers and inability to converse on subjects of contemporary interest.

We need *imams* who are economically sound and financially independent, who understand science and technology and the intricacies of today's society, who lead the community on the moderate path of Islam and encourage members of the community to be good citizens, earning the goodwill of people of other faiths and being connected with all communities.

We need *imams* who can connect up with the Muslim youth of the 21st century and children who will be growing up in a different world, of social connectivity and exposure to all sorts of challenges.

These are some issues that the Muslim community leadership, including religious leaders, need to seriously focus on.

Yet another challenge is about reaching out to the Muslim masses. The largest channel to reach and communicate with the Muslim masses is through mosques, including through Friday *khutbas*. The *imam* is a prime channel of communication with the masses. We recognize that not all *imams* have the knowledge to give *khutbas* on topics such as the importance of modern education (particularly higher education and women's education), modernization of *madrasa* education, connectivity, cordiality and positive interaction with people of other faiths, the adverse effects of seclusion and isolation, etc.. In this situation, the knowledgeable class of the community should immediately prepare suitable *khutbas* for this purpose, print them and make them available to mosques and *imams* throughout the country.

My last concern is about how the community is falling an easy prey to distractions and controversies thrown on our face and how some of our shortsighted leaders not only get indulged into these but also drag the entire community into these

squabbles of Mandir-Masjid disputes. In doing so, they help in the success of the schemes of detractors, whose intention is to keep us engaged in unproductive emotional issues. Such issues keep us away from our issues of education, health and economic needs at the same time as they help them to polarize the society against the community. One such recent example is the Babri mosque issue, which was the most unproductive communal quarrel, fought by a group of shortsighted leaders who only helped certain forces to polarize the entire country to breed anti-Islamic sentiments and gain power. I consistently spoke against this dispute, and I was always in favor of just gifting the structure away as a goodwill gesture to our Hindu brothers. That would have saved us from massive polarization, bias and suffering in every walk of life for the past 30 years.

This should be a lesson to the community not to get distracted and trapped into deliberate controversies thrown at them. The community should stay firm with its strategy to be moderate, educated, friendly and good Muslims who preach goodness and kindness and oppose and condemn any kind of extremism and terrorism.

To sum up, the Indian Muslims should focus on developing good relations with people of other faiths and on encouraging Muslims to prosper in the world (but as good, God-conscious people), educating the community (including Muslim women), and modernizing *madrasas*. They must not fall prey to schemes of any extremist force. They must be a truly God-conscious people, this being exhibited through their behavior and character and their dealings with others. They should remember that isolation from the main society will cause irreparable loss to Muslims themselves, particularly to the entire future generations.

I am firm in my view that every Indian Muslim should be a part of India's growth and fully benefit from its progress by participation, education and cordiality and by contributing to the welfare of the country as a whole.

(The author is former Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University, Pondicherry Central University and Abdur Rahman Crescent University, and is a former member of the UGC. Email: tareenj@yahoo.co.in)

Enormous Opportunities, Enormous Rewards



Kazi Mohammed Riyazuddin

Presently we are passing through such times that offer great opportunities to us to earn great rewards. Truly, opportunities are immense, and so are rewards. Success touches the feet of those who make use of the opportunities. Now, one might wonder how this could be possible when we are passing through Coronatimes.

While there are people who do good without the desire to get a reward, many people undertake an act of charity not merely to help another person, but also to earn a reward for themselves. There is a famous quotation which states: In giving, we receive. The more you give, the more you receive. Charity does not reduce wealth. If the act of giving is restrained, the flow of income also goes down. Essentially, generosity leads to overall good, not only for charity-receiver but also for the charity-giver. It is noteworthy that the charity-givers are benefitted two-fold: not only do they receive the heart-felt *duas* or prayers of the charity-receiver, but they also receive Divine mercy and rewards from the Almighty. As a result, charity-givers always remain on the giving side. It is said that the upper hand is always better than the lower hand. It remains always on the higher side.

Let us see how the Corona times have become opportune time for enhanced level of charity or generosity. It has opened up opportunities on the receiving side as well on the giving side.

Opportunities for the Receiving Side

As everyone knows, we are passing through the toughest times of our life due to the corona pandemic. In this situation, vast numbers of people have been severely affected, deprived of their livelihood. Many able-bodied persons are not able to find employment, and many businesses have shutdown. All these economic woes have contributed to enormous hardship. In view of this, many people are waiting for support from the well-off sections of the society. This provides an ample opportunity to the wealthy sections of the society to provide succor to those who are poor and needy.

There are thousands of cases, where Corona has seriously impacted the health of people. In some homes, all the family

members contracted the virus. This drained their savings as medical expenditures took a huge toll. The sufferings of these people serve as an opportunity to help them and provide relief.

Opportunities for the Giving Side

Giving to the needy who have been badly affected because of the pandemic is a big opportunity available to the wealthy people to earn rewards in the Hereafter. Truly, Allah will reward such people manifold for providing relief to the suffering mankind.

Another opportunity which Corona lockdown has provided is drastic reduction in the amount of expenditure on lavish weddings. In recent years, Muslim weddings had become extremely lavish, with an array of delicious dishes, fancy decorations, flashy lightings, hi-fi music, sparkles and crackers, full night celebrations for over 3-4 days, with a big number of guests attending. Thanks to the regulations imposed on large gatherings in the wake of the current pandemic, many people have understood the importance of simple marriage with attendance of just a few people, in a simple ceremony at home or mini hall without any pomp or showoff. We hope it will continue even after the disappearance of Corona. This reduction in lavish expenses provides a great opportunity to the wealthy to look at the poor and needy with open arms to help them in this time of distress. Naturally, the entire savings on account of curtailment of marriage expenses may not be given to the poor. But still, a part of it, if given out in charity, can bring about substantial relief. It is a great opportunity for the wealthy people to gain this benefit for the life of the Hereafter.

In this regard, people need to have an orientation to the virtue of generosity. It comes from imbibing the spirit of spending in the way of Allah with a high degree of sincerity and regularity. "O you who believe! Spend on others out of the good things which you may have acquired," says the Quran (2:267). The Quran is replete with commands to the faithful to spend in God's way.

"Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is

Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned." (Quran: 2:245)

This is the best time to offer a goodly 'loan' to Allah – *Qarz-e-Hasana*. It means spending in charity in the name of Allah, supporting orphans and widows, the poor and needy, taking care of handicapped and destitute people. To imbibe the spirit of generosity, it is important that a sustained campaign is launched by religious leaders. They can emphasize the importance and virtue of charity in the present times.

The economic condition of our community is extremely bad. Some of our people live in shanties and slums, deprived of education. Many children and

youth have adopted bad habits. In each field, our community lags. We have a concern, but we do nothing except showing concern. Why do not we open up our hearts, help an orphan child, do something practical to improve the hygiene in the localities where we live and help improve the conditions of our fellow brethren. In all our day-to-day dealings we are over-occupied in spending on ourselves or on our families, with lavish weddings, expensive clothing, branded luxuries, eating out, and so on. All these things should be drastically curtailed, and the funds so saved should be used for a greater cause, such as the cause of bringing about socio-economic transformation in the lives of our fellow human beings. It could be invested in education, in improving livelihood support, establishing hospitals, building social infrastructure, taking care of widows, and physically

challenged people, etc. All these projects will certainly bring significant improvement in the life of our less fortunate brethren. In this process, the charity-givers too stand to gain. Quran states: "The parable of those who spend their possessions for the sake of Allah is that of a grain out of which grow seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains: for Allah wunts - manifold - increase - unto whom He wills. And Allah is Infinite, All-knowing." (2: 261)

The present times, therefore, provide a great opportunity to multiply our reward 700 times. The reward of spending a rupee in charity would bring forth a reward which is up to seven hundred times the original act of charity. When the rewards are enormous, why do we not make use of this opportunity?

(The author, who is a professional and based in Navi Mumbai, can be contacted on riyazuddinm@gmail.com)



Moin Qazi

The Art of Living

Do for this world as if thou were to live a thousand years, and for the next as if thou were to die tomorrow

-Prophet Muhammad

The great mystic Jalaluddin Rumi gives an interesting analogy of village women: In the early dawn, when nature lifts up the veil of darkness, bands of women trudge down the hills carrying water in pitchers on their head. On their way, the women gaily engage themselves in an endless chatter, talking about their homes, the village, and the weather. But while all this talking goes on, the pitchers are balanced with perfect poise. The mind is engaged in the talk, but it never mundane chores, but should not become unmindful of the Creator who governs the universe. There is a well-known Sufi saying: "A man should be in the marketplace while still working with true reality".

In another analogy, Rumi likens the world to a river and the individual to a boat. To float in the river, the boat needs the support of water, but that very water can penetrate the boat and sink it if there is a chink in it. Similarly, we need the basic wherewithal for our sustenance, but once we amass them in overabundance, they devour our spiritual self.

The Greek ideal of "the golden mean" and "nothing in excess" is founded on this wisdom. Over-indulgence in worldly pleasures leads to a state of weariness of heart. We need to temper our worldly lives with the demands of the soul. Similarly, asceticism to the point of harshness deprives us of experiencing the sublime beauty of life. What we need is harmony and balance. To use the words of Socrates, "Remember

that there is nothing stable in human affairs; therefore, avoid undue elation in prosperity, or undue depression in adversity."

The Chinese philosopher Huang Po said: "Do not permit the events of your daily lives to bind you, but never withdraw yourselves from them. Only by acting thus you can earn the title of 'Liberated One'." Humans have struggled across centuries to achieve in their lives the "golden mean" or the "middle path", which represents the elusive point of perfect harmony that everyone pursues. Following the middle path aids us in all of these things. It negotiates the extremes of harsh asceticism and sensual pleasure-seeking, between attachment and aversion, between being and non-being, between form and emptiness, between free will and determinism, between hedonism and asceticism.

For Michel de Montaigne, the great French essayist, life is an art. It's a process of intuition, of discovery, of contemplation and finding pleasure in the journey. Most of us do not live our lives as we are meant to live, as opposed to simply 'existing'.

The Prophet believed that an ideal life was one which had the right combination of both the essential elements of life: one which could provide dignified life on earth; the

other which could provide salvation in the hereafter. The Prophet repeatedly emphasized that one should be in this world as a stranger or passerby.

Spiritual teachers repeatedly emphasize the need for seeking equilibrium between the material and spiritual scales of life. There are those who strive toward fulfilling the physical needs of the body, but often let the soul starve. Conversely, there are others who satisfy the soul but keep the body starved. Sufis like Rumi consider the spirit and body to be one whole. They believe in integration, not dichotomies. This integration extends beyond the individual as well, but we humans often forget that everything is part of a total, interdependent network in which each element is vitally important and interrelated to every other element, thus failing to appreciate the fact that our very existence depends on the existence of all other things in the universe.

Life is not about endurance, nor is it about apathy—it's about balance. Michael Singer puts it pithily in *The Untethered Soul*: "The more you work with balance, the more you can just sail through life. All forces are in harmony."

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On 25th November, 1949, in his last speech to Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar said, "We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. Those principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy."

While, adopting the Constitution we resolved to secure every Indian citizen Justice, Liberty and Equality and to promote amongst them all Fraternity that assures dignity of individual. To take it further we made Right to Equality, Prohibition of Discrimination on grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, etc., Abolition of Untouchability and Protection of Life as Fundamental Rights. In Directive Principles it is provided that State shall strive to promote welfare of the people by securing and protecting the social order, the State needs to secure equal justice by suitable Legislation. It is fundamental duty of every citizen to promote harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst fellow Indians.

Dr. Ambedkar in his speech of 25th November had warned us in following words, "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril."

Recent incident of a young boy



"Asif" being beaten mercilessly for entering a religious place to drink water has disturbed the conscious of nation, what the more disturbing was shameless attitude of the perpetrators of this assault of video recording of their heinous crime with sense of pride. This reminds me incident of brutal murder of Bengali Muslim labourer in Rajasthan, cold blooded murder of Techie Mohsin Shaikh at Pune, murder of a 15 years old boy Junaid Khan in Train, the list is long and unending with the cases of Tabrez Ansari, Hafiz Haldar and many more Muslims who have been victimised for being Muslims and no other reason.

A report recently published has shown that in India's Cosmopolitan Cities the Muslims and Dalits are refused houses either on ownership or rent and despite of having means they are forced to stay in the localities where their counterparts of other religion would not like to stay. Resultantly, there is rise of Muslim Ghettos throughout the country. During the initial days of Corona Pandemic a well planned narrative was build around Muslims alleging that they are spreading the disease and various videos were in circulation on social media wherein the Muslims vendors were not permitted to sell vegetables and fruits in other localities.

The above facts are sufficient to prove that we are trying to create a new class of untouchables in the name of religion. The Muslims are being targeted only because of their religion, they are not considered as equals and they are discriminated socially. Publicly

they are abused and their religion insulted, even, their religious figures are not spared.

If, in a constitutional democracy someone is being targeted and victimised on the basis of religion, he needs to be protected on the basis of religion alone. Acting on this principle, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was brought into force in order to protect the vulnerable part of society from indignities, humiliations and harassments for being member of SC and ST.

The Atrocities Act made

punishable the action of institution of false cases, giving of false information against SC and ST, intentional insults and intimidations with intent to humiliate, abusing by caste name, insult to their sacred symbols, promotion of feelings of enmity, hatred or ill will against them, disrespect to any late person held in high esteem by them, forcing them to leave their houses, obstructing them from using common resources, public places or practising any profession, imposing social or economic boycott.

In this decade, the nation has witnessed rise of all the above atrocities against the Muslims for the only reason of them being Muslims, therefore, to maintain the constitutional values and to extend protection of Constitution, now it has become necessary to include 'Muslims' alongwith the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the protective fold of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 before its too late.

Though, we hold the colonial rule responsible for our many problems but surprisingly the Queen had issued a Proclamation in 1858, "None in India should be any way favoured, nor molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of law".

The present Government has entered by taking oath of Constitution, it can't be equated with the colonial rulers but it is expected from it to perform better. It is expected from the constitutional and democratic Government to protect rights of each citizen.

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Mosques offer free Oxygen cylinders in Mumbai Metropolitan Region

MUMBAI: Several mosques in the city and the suburbs have begun to provide oxygen cylinders to Covid-19 patients and, in turn, take some pressure off the hospitals. The free oxygen comes with kits that can be fitted at home for Covid-19 patients whose oxygen saturation level is low.

Initiated by NGO Red Crescent Society of India, oxygen cylinders are being provided by several mosques in the Mumbai

Metropolitan Region, including the city, Mumbai, Mira Road, Kalyan and Bhiwandi.

Dr. Azimuddin added more mosques would be roped in, provided the factory does not stop the supply. Hospitals are being preferred as far as the supply of oxygen is concerned. But it is also important oxygen is made available to NGOs trying to ameliorate people's misery, he said.

(Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>)

Free Oxygen Cylinders for the Needy

The United Vision Welfare and Charitable Trust, Mysuru, and MESCO has announced that it has initiated free supply of oxygen cylinders to needy COVID-19 patients. It has urged people in need of oxygen cylinders to call on 7975989229 or mobile numbers 9535831973 and 9845319775. Oxygen cylinders along with technical support will be provided to patients at a refundable deposit of ₹5,000 per cylinder. The facility was inaugurated by Secretary of MESCO Shabbir Mustafa at MESCO in Mysuru recently.

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Building Life's Foundations

When we lay our foundations in our faith, we become more aware of the facts and we learn how to balance our emotions because our faith relies on Allah.



Arshi Dokadia

Life is dynamic. It keeps on changing...and change can be scary. Change is intimidating to many, and perhaps only a few accept the oft-transforming nature of life. It is a very human tendency to hold onto familiarity. We have keepsakes, memories, and nostalgia we like to hold onto. Holding onto or relying on things is not the problem. The problem starts when we begin to rely on shaky foundations. When we do not have firm roots to rely on, even the smallest of changes or unexpected situations can shake us and make us crumble. This is because we have built our entire lives based on unreliable foundations. In general, a person may base their foundations of life on three things: feelings, facts or faith.

Feelings

Feelings indicate what we are going through emotionally. It can outright seem like a very weak foundation to base our lives upon. If you have ever met someone who would be classified as "emotional", this statement might ring true. Emotions are fleeting and fickle. A very emotional person is as fickle as emotions are. They may seem like the best person to be around one moment, and a short while later you feel you can barely stand them. A person becomes unreliable if they are too emotional, and if their work, behavior, and productivity are all dependent on whether they feel good or not. This inconsistency drives people away from them because it becomes a constant guessing game if they are up for things or not, or which version of them is going to show up today.

Facts

Facts define who we are and what we have the capability of

becoming, the traits we choose to define ourselves with: a good brother, a loving father, a caring mother, a dedicated sister, and so on—the roles we play in this world. If we look at facts, then we know that this can be a good foundation to build our life on.

As Muslims, it is also very important to us that we have a good character. These good characteristics should be our aspiration.

"Who we are" helps us identify where we stand in life right now—with all our competencies and weaknesses, our good and bad (including our imperfections, for it is important to accept that we, as humans, are all imperfect). "What we can be" gives us a vision, a destination to reach, our definition of success and the role we wish to see ourselves in, in this life.

On the surface, facts seem a good place to lay a foundation of our life. We have a sturdy support with the knowledge of who we are and a place to be and to develop into what we wish to become. But facts have something basic lacking—the right direction.

Faith

Faith is what we believe in. It is the push with which we wake up every morning and step out of our homes, hoping things will be okay. Faith becomes like a place to check whether we are going in the right direction. Are we doing the things that will bring us success in this *dunya* and in the Hereafter? Or have we lost ourselves to the greed and the golden hue of blinding lights that promise pleasure?

Our faith does not just give us hope but also a place to check our intentions. It does not just give us a direction of what we wish to become but a purpose, a mission, and the motivation to stick to our

goals. This is because our goals are very action oriented.

What should we aspire to be as Muslims?

As Muslims, our goal is to worship Allah.

I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me. (the Holy Qur'an, 51:56)

BOOK REVIEW

RIZQ & LAWFUL EARNINGS



This book, which contains three chapters, packs a lot of content and explanation of *hadiths* and Quranic verses with regards to seeking a *halal* income and keeping away from *haram* transactions. The book lays emphasis on placing reliance on Allah for our sustenance and not fearing poverty. It is Allah who provides for us, and it is our duty to strive for what has been decreed for us. We can never get what Allah has not decreed for us. On the Day of Judgment, the son of Adam will be questioned about five things, amongst them is from where he earned and where he spent. The *Ibadah* of a person living on *haram* earnings will not be accepted by Allah. The book explains in great detail the forbidden methods of earning money and encourages buying and selling as the best permissible channels of generating *halal*

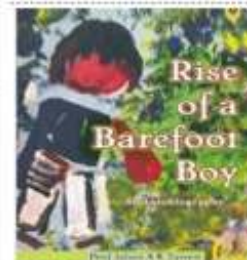
Title: Rizq & Lawful Earnings
Author: Darussalam Research Division, Golden Advice Series
Publisher: Darussalam Publications
Year: 2014
Number of pages: 74
Price: Rs. 220
Reviewed: by Haris Farazuddin Farooqui
Available on Amazon

wealth. The book further explains that Muslims should shun laziness and consider work as a form of worship to Allah by taking up different professions. Wealth is regarded as an important essential of support for both religious and worldly affairs. Wealth earned through lawful earnings is a goal that serves to encourage people to do righteous deeds. The book explains in great detail how one can increase one's lawful earnings. Some of them are repentance, having faith in Allah, avoiding sins, striving for *halal* provisions, giving charity to those in need and being kind to the poor, prayer, God-consciousness, supplications, being grateful to Allah, making the hereafter one's main concern, and so on. The book motivates one to work for a *halal* income and avoid disobedience to Allah.

NEW ARRIVALS



Book: Slums of Patna
Authors: Furqan, Surfaraz & Zubeeb
Publisher: Nidhi Books, Patna
Pages: 112
Price: Rs. 225/-
This study focuses on demographic features, socio-economic background, educational status, welfare programs and conditions of the slum-dwellers of Patna, the capital of Bihar. Urban poverty is 31% in Bihar. The study shows the social and economic marginalization of certain social groups among Muslims as well as Hindus. Among the factors for their marginalization are caste background as well as poverty.



Rise Of A Barefoot Boy
by Jalees A K Tareen (Author)
• Padma Shri Prof. Jalees Ahmed Khan Tareen, who was born in Mysuru, has served as the VC of B. S. Abdur Rahman University, Pondicherry University and University of Kashmir.
• **Publisher:** Emerald Publishers
• **Language:** English
• **Paperback:** 308 pages
• **Paperback Rs 375/-**

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Ms. Arshi Parvez Dokadia, the founder of Phoenix Counselling Services, is a psychologist and educator by profession. An avid-reader and inherently curious, she loves to explore the questions the universe may possess. She has experience as a clinical counselor, a college lecturer as well as an online content creator and editor. Currently she works on providing psychological services for youth and women.

Keys To Understanding the Quran And Its Relevance In Modern Times



Sameer Ahmed Siddiqui

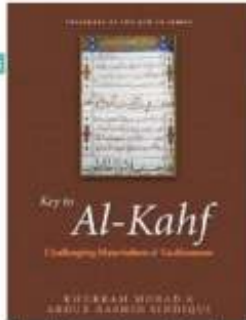
As any convent graduate, I was introduced to depths of Quran extremely late but by that time I had already cleared India's most prestigious exam of UPSC which involved subject expertise, a very in-depth assessment and analysis of various streams and disciplines such as Economics, History of India and world, Geography, International Politics, Current affairs etc.

By Allah's grace and blessings, I have worked extremely hard on these subject and had achieved quite mastery so while I reached into my late 30s when I started reading Quran it used to speak with so much depth that *Alhamdulillah* many Ayahs use to reflect the present context.

Also being a history and Geography professor, every word and every sentence use to convey a very deep meaning sometimes more glorious than its original understanding. But I was also fearful and extremely sensitive to the fact that while drawing the analogy and anecdotes Allah forbids, I shall not change its original meaning or fear down the Ayahs from their original context.

Because of my extreme cautioning I never use to publish paper or give references of Quran in my speeches and writings. Although I use to make large number of notes. But slowly all that old phenomenon started changing when I started answering present day burning questions from Quran and Hadeeth. Interrelating modern noble prize winning research on autophagy with Ahsaan of Roza some of these researches had more than 65 million downloads on Facebook and YouTube. I was still extremely apprehensive and was not ready to quote my understandings and analysis because of fear of changing some of its original meaning. Before giving a single verse I used to read its Tafseer at least 200 times from Tafseers of more than 6 scholars but recently I came across a beautiful book called as keys to Al Kahf written by **Abdur Rashid Siddiqui** in Leicester in which he improvises and talks about 1980s when Brother Khurram Murad (may Allah rest his soul in peace) presented a seminar paper entitled 'A Study of *al-Kahf* in Relation to Our Times' at the Islamic Foundation, then based at 223 London Road, Leicester.

In this he attempted to present the Quran as a living reality, which even after fourteen hundred years is still relevant. It is indeed one of the beautiful researches which have now been converted into a book by the same name following are the summary and highlights of that paper which would enlightened you further as to how Quran is still key and the most comprehensive answer to many of modern problems



The scholars need to explain at length that although the Quran was revealed at a certain point in time and naturally reflects its own historical setting and the then state of man's social and technological progression, nonetheless we have, by now, traversed a long distance and considerable technological and social changes have taken place in human society.

Many of these Rules they resonate with what I believe is the best way of reading the Quran and I want to be followed by my coming generations and myself

I hereby present some excerpts from that beautiful book which you should ponder, think, reflect, and teach your generations.

Quran must be read in context of modern-day problems. The key to many of our Financial and social problems must be searched in this glorious book. As Allah himself says "Quran is guidance for all mankind" (2:185)

We need to understand that new modes in human understanding, expression and action have emerged. Moreover, many people cannot be expected to absorb the idioms and metaphors of the Arabic language, so essential to exploring the depths of the Quran.

Yet its guidance, by its own claim, has an eternal relevance for all people, being the Word of Eternal God.

Scholars have maintained that to uphold the truth of this claim, it must be possible for us to receive, understand and experience the Quran, as its first recipients did, at least in some measure and to some degree.

We are all granted the inherent capacity to receive God's Grace in all its fullness, richness, and joy. In other words, despite the historicity of its revelation, because of the eternity of its message, the Quran should be capable of being as much a part of our lives now as it was to its first recipients. In this respect, it still has the same urgent bearing upon our age and radiates the same deep relevance to our concerns and experiences.

Yet how is this possible? To put it very forthrightly, only if we approach the Quran as if it were being revealed, now and today, translating each word of it in terms of our



Quran must be read in context of modern-day problems. The key to many of our Financial and social problems must be searched in this glorious book. As Allah himself says "Quran is guidance for all mankind" (2:185)

contemporary setting and bringing it to bear upon our own realities by breaking through the barriers of time, culture, and change.

What has changed is not the essence of man, which is permanent, but only his externalities – the forms, the modes, the degrees, and the technologies.

Even man's physical form has remained the same for more than two million years, whereas his history of only 2000 years ago is hard to separate from mythology.

The pagans of Makkah may be no more, nor the Jews of Yathrib; nor the Christians of Najran; nor even the 'faithfuls' and 'hypocrites' of the community at Madinah, but the same characters breathe all around us.

We are human beings exactly as the first recipients were, though we may find it extremely difficult to grapple with the very deep implications of this remarkably simple truth, but it is only because of our own inner psychic inhibitions.

Once we realize these truths, the Quran may reveal to us, as it did to them; make partners of us, just as it did them. And only then, instead of being a mere revered fossil or a source of magic-like blessing, will the Quran become a living force, impinging, stirring, moving, and guiding us to deeper and higher achievements, just as it did before.

To be able to do so, we need a suitable methodology. The goal may seem formidable, but the results will be rewarding.

And it need not prove so difficult a task in view of Allah's assurance, at least to the extent of that part of the Quran that relates to *tadhkir* (reminder):

"We have made the Quran easy for 'dhikr' (as a reminder). Is there, then, any who will take heed?" (al-Qamar 54:17)

On this basis, Scholar Khurram suggested some general principles for the purpose of studying the Quran:

1. There is an overall framework of Islam pertaining to its spirit, temper, concepts, codes, and systems as determined by the Quran and the Prophet (pbuh) that we should always stay within.

2. Those Quranic verses and sayings

of the Prophet (pbuh) which pertain to any particular part of the Quran should be brought to bear to the maximum possible extent on the understanding of that part.

For this purpose, guidance from the Quran can be divided into two broad categories:

- *Tadhkir* (reminder), which includes the imparting of understanding and generating responsiveness to truth; purifying inwardly and outwardly, intellectually, and spiritually, rationally, and emotionally. This has reference to *silawah* (recitation) and *tazkiyah* (self-purification).
- *Ta'lim* (teaching), which includes seeking codes and laws, systems, and institutions. This has reference to the *ta'lim* (teaching) of *kitab* (scripture). In his view, one can take more liberty with the first category by translating it into new contexts without any grave risks to the overall framework of Islam.

3. Interpretation should not be stretched to include innovation and no meanings should be attributed that cannot be construed to have originally been intended.

4. No part or word should be torn away from its textual or historical context in translating and understanding it.

5. Language is mostly symbolic of human experiences and situations, which also shapes the mould and form of ideas and expressions. As situations and experiences change, it should be possible to translate the same language into a new context, without losing any of the narration's original purpose.

6. Before any contextual or symbolic translation, the particular part should first be placed and understood in its original setting. Only then can the relationship with contemporary ideas, systems and other cultural, social, and technological phenomena be established.

7. It may be possible to employ alternate terminology to elucidate the real intent and import of the Quran, but only so long as the bearings with the original are clearly maintained and understood.

8. Specifics may be transformed into generalities to facilitate their transposition and application to new perspectives, and, in a similar manner, generalities may be rendered into specifics.

In brief, the methodology would imply that we stay within the established framework yet discover new dimensions of meaning and experience by looking at our times through the Quran and translating its meaning into contemporary contexts of man's socio-technological progression and his cultural milieu.

The reason why the scholar chose *al-Kahf* was simply because he felt that this *surah* has a more obvious and easily comprehensible bearing on us, especially in view of some *a'adith* of the Prophet.

They devoted a considerable part of their paper to the phenomenon of Dajjal (the Antichrist) as described in many *a'adith* that show the similarities and characteristics of our age with that of Dajjal.

Both these works contend that the present materialistic and secular civilization is remarkably like that of the age of Dajjal as described in many *a'adith*.

As the Prophet (pbuh) advised us to recite *Surah al-Kahf* to counteract and neutralize the deceptions perpetrated by Dajjal and, thus, save us from his *fitnah* (trial), we should, therefore, devote our special efforts to understand this *surah* and implement the antidote provided therein; to save us from the onslaught of our present materialistic and secular civilization.

All these rules are more elaborately given in 1980s paper entitled 'A Study of *al-Kahf* in Relation to Our Times' at the Islamic Foundation, by Brother Khurram Murad (may Allah rest his soul in peace) presented a seminar paper entitled and it has beautifully improvised by Abdul Rashid Siddiqui's Book 'Key to *Al-Kahf*'.

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Nigar

Spiritual Stamina Through God-Consciousness

I pray that each one of us gets gifted with such high spiritual energy and stamina as my late parents had so that we can all overcome the pandemic and its after effects in a calm, peaceful, God-conscious way!

By Nigar Ataulla

Spiritual masters stress the importance of leading a God-conscious life. While scriptures and other spiritual literature have much to say about God-consciousness, I was lucky to have been in the company of two God-conscious individuals. These two individuals were my late parents.

My mother was a practical person and spiritually oriented, but she did not wear religion on her sleeves. Honesty was her virtue, and politeness combined with firmness made her a 'go-to' person for many people, including myself when faced with a challenging situation. Even after all the hard work she did, she had the energy to pray the five times prayer with focus.

When you have firm faith in God, you do not despair when difficult situations arise. My mother's positive outlook towards life and her unflinching trust in Almighty God helped her face many

challenges, including her bodily aches and pains. Even when she left this world, she left immense sweetness around in the hearts of people. After her passing away, I discovered a little box of apple jam in the fridge that she had made probably just a day or two before. This was like a precious gift for me, the jam symbolising her attitude towards life: Stay sweet at all times and hold on to God!

My father was very particular about his five times prayers. Also, I observed him remembering God at other times too. He had laminated *dua* cards for various occasions and kept them with him. When challenging situations came, he would say, *only that will happen as God wills*. Whenever he was ill and in hospital, if his condition was good, he would sit and pray on the bed. The last time that he was in hospital, he was very weak, yet he kept up his prayers. Just a day before he passed away, he was extremely drowsy, and so I played one of his favourite Quranic chapters, Surah Ar-Rahman, on the phone. A few hours later, he told me to play Surah Yasin. His condition then was very feeble. What amazed me was that despite the fact that his organs were shutting down

slowly, his God-consciousness was so fit and fine that he was able to remember the name of the Surah!

During his last stay at the hospital, he had to take a potassium injection, which was very painful for him. His frail body could take this pain with immense difficulty, yet he was very patient in enduring it. This patience I feel he gained from his God-consciousness. When he was shifted to the ICU, a few hours before his end, the doctor told me to be next to him and recite prayers. I consider myself lucky and blessed to have been able to do that.

Amidst the current pandemic and the anxiety and uncertainty that each one of us is going through, I often think about, and take comfort from, the God-conscious lives that my parents led. Their bodies may have become weak and frail, yet they were so spiritually strong that when their end arrived, they went peacefully back to God!

I pray that each one of us gets gifted with such high spiritual energy and stamina as my late parents had so that we can all overcome the pandemic and its after effects in a calm, peaceful, God-conscious way!

READERS' SPACE

After one year and three months, *Islamic Voice* has come out in a grand manner, covering the Islamic world in an elaborate way. Alhamdulillah. Insha Allah, in future it will come out with flying colours, covering the news as usual.

Wassalam.....

Islamic Voice's team deserve sincere appreciation for their hard efforts to launch the magazine. I will be more than happy to be closely associated with *Islamic Voice* just as to fulfill my responsibilities as a Muslim and a responsible citizen.

Thanks once again. Kindly keep me on your mailing list.

Rehan Khan

Thoughts on Hijab

Often, a true struggle starts if and when a Muslim girl decides to start wearing a *hijab*, because of which she has sometimes to face taunts. The question arises that does her wearing a simple cloth make her different as a human being? Does she not drink the same water as everyone else? Does she not like going for shopping and eating the same food as others? Does she not breathe in the same air and get shade under the same trees? People may choose to dress differently, but do remember, as human beings, we all have an immense lot of things in common.

(Hiba Jafri, Agra)

JuzakAllah, Sadatullah Sahab for this amazing April issue of *Islamic Voice*. It was a pleasure to read this morning. It was easy to understand because of simple words used by the authors. Shabana aapa's article was also nice.

Ayesha

Some Reflections on Ramzan

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "The prayer of the fasting person will not be refused." So, fasting Muslims should make special prayers to Almighty God to make the world free of pandemic diseases, cure patients suffering from coronavirus and bring life to normal.

Farheena Sayed, Goa



IV is Back!

After one year and three months, *Islamic Voice* has come out in a grand manner. Alhamdulillah! Insha Allah, in future it will come out with flying colours. (A. Kaja Nazimudeen, Eruvadi, Tamil Nadu).



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لِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَيزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

Indeed those who read the Book of Allah, and keep the prayer established, and spend from what We have bestowed upon them in secret and publicly, are hopeful of a trade in which there is never a loss. In order that He may reward them with goodness in full, and further increase it with His munificence; indeed He is Oft Forgiving, Most Appreciative. (35:29-30)

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J&K: Conference in Anantnag Calls for Adhering to the Legacy of Rishis and Sufis



A day-long conference on the contributions and role of Rishis and Sufis in the cultural transformation of Kashmir was held in the southern district of Anantnag by J&K Youth Development Forum.

The conference was attended by people from all walks of life, including those from far flung areas of Anantnag. Speaking on the occasion, the vice President J&K Youth Development Forum Aasif Abdullah observed that this was the most appropriate time for propagating and adhering to the legacy of Rishis and Sufis in the prevailing chaotic global and regional scenario. He stressed upon the need to revive the role of Rishis and Sufis in the cultural

transformation of Kashmir at an important juncture of history. Aasif repeated the words of prominent saint Lalleshwari in which she asked the people to 'seek God within and not create a religious divide among the masses'. He also highlighted the unique nature of Kashmiri spiritual thought which seeks to combine elements of Shaivism with Sufism. Remembering Nund Rishi, also known as Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (RA), he said that he was an enlightened being and equally revered by Hindus as well as Muslims.

Maulana Riyaz Ahmad Chishti, in his concluding remarks, said that Sufism ignites the passion in the heart that connects us to each other. He said that love lies at the core of the Sufi tradition and practices of the Sufis have great relevance for seekers today and can help us to deepen spiritual practice or elevate it to a new level. (Extracted from wordforpeace.com)

Indian Catholic Priest's Harmony Institute Wins UN Award

Fr. M.D. Thomas

A New Delhi-based institute headed by a Catholic priest to promote studies in harmony and peace has won a UN award. The Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies (IHPS) has been selected for the third prize in the King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week 2021. The first has gone to Wellington Interfaith Council of New Zealand and the second to The Religion and Politics Forum, Tokyo, Japan.

The prizes are set up by the United Nations and are sponsored by

King Abdullah II of Jordan. The third prize comprises a certificate, a medal and US\$1,000.

"We are pleased to announce that your event, Celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week 2021, has been selected as Third Prize for the King Abdullah II UN WIHW 2021 Prize. Many congratulations! It is a wonderful effort," says a message from the organizers that IHPS director Father M D Thomas received on March 28.

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

Insights From An Online Meeting

Syed Itham Jafri

Some days ago, I attended an online session organised by Indian Pluralism Foundation and had the chance to hear the author of *The Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View*, Dr. Craig Considine, speak. I was wondering how a practicing Roman Catholic Christian could be someone to write on topics concerned with Islam. But on hearing him I really appreciated his ability and commitment. It should be noted that Dr. Considine is a faculty member at Rice University, Houston (USA) and has written a lot on Islam and is actively engaged in developing interfaith dialogue internationally. He also has an active presence on YouTube.

In his talk, Dr. Considine reflected on the pluralism of religions. Pluralism refers to energetic engagement with diversity. Interfaith pluralism entails engaging with each other, not merely tolerating each other. Dr. Considine explained the procedure required to accelerate pluralism among adherents of different faiths. It should start with dialogue—not on theological, but on social, humanitarian aspects. At first, each other's trust should be won. Then one can quote religious texts and find those points on which communities could agree. This is a gradual process, that proceeds by working on individuals.

Explaining the reason behind his intention to write on the humanity of Prophet Muhammad, Dr. Considine mentioned the Prophet's love for the stigmatized, his compassion for those on the periphery of society, his quality of reaching out and making connections with the people as some things that inspired him to write in the Prophet's praise. The

Prophet's actions for the right to freedom and the rights of women need to be appreciated unanimously, worldwide, he noted. The Prophet created a 'civic nation' in Medina, he said, like that found in the founding documents of the USA. In a civic nation, people are united not by blood or ancestry but by a common set of values that is protected by law.

There are many incidents through which we can observe that Prophet Muhammad contributed to interfaith pluralism, said Dr. Considine. For instance, some Christians, around 70-80 in number, from Najran, were invited to Madinah. The Prophet allowed the Christians to pray inside the mosque. This was a historic moment.

Dr. Considine pointed out that knowledge must be supplemented with human interaction, not every time physically, but spiritually. Our role in life as humans, he stressed, is to make the world a better place to live.

Muslims and Christians come together to repair mosque in Denton (Texas, USA)

Muslims and Christians came together in a big way, to help fund repairs at the Denton Islamic Society. The mosque suffered tens of thousands of dollars in damages by the winter storm. "It makes you feel good about the community you live in," said Faraz Qureshi, president of the board of the Denton Islamic Society. The First United Methodist Church of Denton started a GoFundMe, which raised close to \$50,000 in six days. "People really from all over the world are sending in donations," Qureshi said. "Honestly it restores faith."

Man breaks his *roza* to donate plasma for two COVID-19 patients, says service is true duty during Ramzan



Aqueel Mansoori broke his fast to donate his plasma for two women who had tested positive for COVID-19. Mansoori, a 32-year-old civil contractor in Udaipur, recovered from COVID-19 in September last year. Mansoori, through social media and blood donation groups, learned that two COVID-19 patients – 36-year-old Nimmla and 30-year-old Alka – needed blood group A+ plasma. "Immediately after seeing these messages, I rushed to the hospital and volunteered for my plasma donation. Since I had done it in past after getting recovered from Covid-19 in September, I knew the plasma donation procedure," Mansoori was quoted by TOI as saying.

It was at the hospital that Mansoori had to break his fast. "While the doctors asked me to get ready, they had also asked me to have something. That's why I had to break my *roza* and had something from the hospital itself and donated my blood," he said. While Mansoori received praise, he believes he did nothing extraordinary. "Maine apna insaani farz nibhaya, mujhe koi geela nahin (It was my responsibility as a human and I have no regrets)," Mansoori said. According to Mansoori, he has donated blood for more than 17 times in his life. Since his recovery from COVID-19, he has donated his plasma thrice.

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Self- Management Before Study Management

It is a good idea to involve children in goal setting exercises and for this to be reinforced periodically. Discuss instances from the Seerah about how the Holy Prophet worked towards one goal for which he was appointed by God.



Shabana Anwar

Building self-awareness in children leads to knowing distinction that their identity is separate from their emotions. The adult may use techniques to help the child in dealing with emotions like sorrow, anger, anxiety or similar unpleasant feelings. Self-management starts with identifying the emotions and feelings. If teachers have been successful in helping children become aware of their emotions, they now need to provide strategies to deal with those emotions to exercise self-management.

Research identifies six components of self-management:

- Impulse control
 - Stress management
 - Self-discipline
 - Self-motivation
 - Goal-setting
 - Organizational Skills
- These components of self-management are interrelated in many ways. For example, impulse control affects self-discipline, and goal-setting requires self-motivation and organizational skills. For students, the ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, and



actions is the core of self-management.

Impulse Control

Narrated By Abu Dharr: The Apostle of Allah (Pbuh) has said: "When one of you becomes angry while standing, he should sit down. If the anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise he should lie down or should perform *Wudu* as anger is from devil and devil is made from fire and water extinguishes fire".

Stress Management

One way to manage stress is to prepare the children for their daily routine by making routines, procedures and rules and consequences. Teachers must have routines for daily tasks and follow consistent rules and consequences for establishing discipline. The Prophet taught us routines and procedures for daily tasks such as sitting, drinking, eating, greeting and sleeping. When we know what to expect, stress is minimal.

Another good strategy to manage stress is the Discover Yourself Workshop principle of the choice

between responding and reacting. It is worthwhile to mention the 90 second rule here. When we experience stress, we need 90 seconds for the brain and body to cleanse themselves. What happens in a minute and half is critical. Teach children to identify the emotion and acknowledge and choose the appropriate response

“The Prophet has taught us routines and procedures for daily tasks such as sitting, drinking, eating, greeting and sleeping.”

in accordance with the Sunnah. If children experience stress regarding passing away of a beloved family member or see their parents separated or face a financial crisis, counsel them and teach them to believe in God and His Qadr. Talk to them about *Acceptance and Surrender*.

respect. With these reassuring words, she successfully calmed him down, employing all her natural gifts of gentleness, sympathy, understanding, and, above all, selfless love. After the Prophet of Islam left this world, great differences arose among Muslims in many matters. During his lifetime, all such issues had been referred to him for a solution. But after the demise of the Prophet, it was now left to his wife Aisha, who had been under his training for many years, to play the very positive role of guide and mentor. Having become fully imbued with the spirit of the religion of Islam, she used to give guidance to both male and female Companions of the Prophet. In this way, she successfully resolved such differences.

The most prominent name of a woman within the Sufi tradition is that of Rabia Basri (713-801). She was born in 713 C.E. into a poor family in Basra, Iraq. She devoted her life to worshipping God and



Mindfulness

Mindfulness enables students to be fully present and aware of their emotions and behaviour. Awareness of the connection among emotions, thoughts and bodily changes enables students to better regulate their emotions. All students can benefit from a calming station where they can calm their emotions. It can be named as a 'Peace Palace'.

Self-Discipline

If the brain focuses for too long, it gets tired, which leads to wandering of the mind. If students don't get up and move around, they will not pay attention to the teacher. The Holy prophet played and joked with children. Teachers should try to become energizers for a few minutes in between long lessons.

Self-Motivation

Student motivation is the drive to stay on task regardless of the challenges encountered. Some students feel nervous to stand in front of the class to give a presentation. Will I do a good job? Will my message be heard and understood? Situations like these are when a success circle can help students to be motivated.

“Women have been specially gifted by nature with such qualities as fit them for the role of bringing about peace and harmony in society in times of conflict.”

serving others. She lived a life of extreme asceticism, and a large number of disciples gathered around her. Her mystical sayings have become proverbial.

» Page 20

The Spiritual Role of Women

Biological and historical studies show that women have been specially gifted with qualities required for the establishment of social harmony

Realizing the Potential of Women

Studies show that women have been specially gifted by nature with such qualities as fit them for the role of bringing about peace and harmony in society in times of conflict. These qualities are gentleness, selflessness, compassion, mildness and, above all, a spiritual approach to life. A study of history tells us that women have always played this role, albeit mostly on the home front.

It is a matter of common knowledge that women have always contributed greatly to normalizing conditions at home by relieving tensions and resolving conflicts. The softness of their approach to problems and their marked capacity for

pacifying are clearly attributes which will eliminate stress.

When we look at Islamic history, the first instance we find of such positive feminine influence is that of Khadija, the wife of the Prophet. When the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation from the angel in the cave of Hira, it was a totally new experience for him, and he trembled in fear of what he had seen and heard. He immediately set off for his home after the disappearance of the angel. When he had regained his composure, he related the incident to Khadija. She did her best to assure him that no harm would come to him as he always spoke the truth, helped the poor and those in distress, and invariably treated others with

Naureen Hassan

An Indian-origin veteran of the financial services industry has been appointed as the first vice president and chief



operating officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Naureen Hassan has been appointed by the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as the first vice president and chief operating officer. Hassan, whose parents had immigrated from India, is a 25-year veteran of the financial services industry with expertise in strategy, digital transformation, cyber security, and regulatory/risk management. She was the Chief Digital Officer for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management. Before that, she was at Charles Schwab Corporation beginning as a vice president of corporate strategy and ending her tenure as executive vice president of investor services, segments and platforms. She has a BA from Princeton University and a Master of Business Administration from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

MOTHER'S DAY

My Mother, My Best Childhood Friend



K. Rahman Khan

One special thing about my mother was that her every child felt the same attachment, and my mother gave same attention to all her ten kids.

Truly unlucky are those who have not felt the warmth of a mother's affection. And the world is filled with many such fools who forget and neglect their mother when they grow up, for they take her love for granted. Even after that, a mother never holds grudges against her child, for she holds an immeasurable amount of forgiveness and love in her heart, which only shows how great mothers are and can be. Mother's Day (May 9) is an occasion to greet one's mother, and for those whose mothers have left this world, to reminisce about them and their contribution in one's life.

Though there is no tradition in Islam of celebrating such days, such type of celebrations on human relations are of recent origin and an initiative of the United Nations and other international organisations. I feel such initiatives should be taken in a positive way.

My mother died around 30 years ago, and now I have only memories of her, which I cherish every day of my life. The roles of a mother and a father are different in every person's life. A mother's role is, in a sense, more demanding than a father's because not only does she conceive a child for nine months in her womb, but she also takes complete care of the child right from the time of its birth. The father's role in a child's development in the initial years is often very negligible, except supporting the wife. In Islam and in all other religions, a mother's role is on a higher pedestal.

As a child, I was more attached to my mother. My mother gave birth to 12 children, out of which two died in infancy. She brought up all her ten children without showing any signs of stress. She was a simple woman. She and her elder sister became orphans at a very young age and were brought up by their uncle. She was not educated, yet she was an extraordinary woman, full of love and compassion. She doted on me and taught me kindness and empathy. She did not go to school, but she could sign her name in Urdu. Though she did not have any school or college degree, she was truly empowered, as a mother and wife. Her generosity and warmth taught me to respond to people without the barrier of an academic qualification.

My father was a strict disciplinarian and wanted his children to adhere to his



Rahman Khan's parents greeting him on becoming Chairman of Karnataka Legislative Council

discipline. All of us were afraid of getting close to him. We missed our father's intimacy, and that made us close to my mother. She would get scolded by my father for spoiling us due to her excessive affection. She never lost her temper, and I do not remember even a single instance of her being harsh to me or beating me for any mistake.

Even while I was in high school I was under my father's eagle eye. He wanted me to excel in studies. But with the help of my mother, I often skipped out to play badminton and football amidst the busy schedules of studies and tuitions.

One difference between my father and mother was that my father never used to show his affection openly though he was very affectionate. He felt that by openly showing affection the children would be spoiled. My mother had abundant affection not only towards her children but to everyone else who was close to her.

At the age of 9 I had to stay in a

strange atmosphere in a village, leaving the company of my mother for my studies for middle school. I am unable to express my agony of remaining away from my mother. I used to come home every week, and I cannot explain the joy I experienced then I used to stay with my mother for only two days. This went on for four years.

I returned from the village to stay at our home for high school. But after my high school, I had to go to college and again faced the same separation from my mother. Remaining away from my mother for a long time created in me stronger bonding and love for her. One special thing about my mother was that her every child felt the same attachment, and my mother gave same attention to all her ten kids. Whenever my mother visited Bangalore, she would bring snacks prepared by her for me, which I eagerly awaited to munch!

My mother's kindness and compassion influenced me greatly. When we talk about

women's empowerment, some people think this is only about women being in 'good' jobs or 'powerful' positions in society. But I think that women who work at home, taking care of their house and children, can also be highly empowered because of their organisational skills, their ability to keep everyone together and their role in bringing affection, kindness and joy into the home. My mother was the best example of this. She would pamper all of us.

It would have been quite a task for my mother, I realize as I look back now, to take care of so many children and do a wonderful job of

It would have been quite a task for my mother to take care of so many children and do a wonderful job of it. But my mother did this without any frustration or anger and with a great deal of love and understanding.

it. But my mother did this without any frustration or anger and with a great deal of love and understanding. I have inherited her patience and positivity in the face of challenges, and this has been an invaluable asset in my sometimes-turbulent life.

It is simply impossible to describe in words my mother's contribution in my life. Some major qualities of my mother that influenced me are her humility and her care and concern for relatives and the poor. She was very innocent, and that was always visible on her face. Sometimes, mothers-in-law may not be on good terms with their daughters-in-law, but in my

mother's case, she treated all her six daughters-in-law as her own daughters.

Mothers have always made a difference and will continue to do so and this I see in my extraordinary and supportive partner, my wife Ayesha, with her quiet and reassuring presence and unwavering moral support through the many twists and turns in my life's journey. As a young mother she did a super job of parenting and educating all our children with love. In the beginning of my career, I was struggling to establish myself, and my initial years of CA practice were exceedingly difficult. I had no time to take care of the schooling of our children. My wife managed all of that herself. She never lapsed in her responsibilities as mother and wife.

A strong and caring woman is the very foundation of a family, and I am really blessed that Ayesha plays that role to perfection in our extended family. She is thoughtful about involving everyone in family gatherings and

celebrations. These gestures really weave together the family fabric and make for a beautiful and blissful family life.

Present-day parents have lot to learn from mothers like my mother for a happy family. Our very existence is because of our parents. The truth is, our parents are a most indispensable part of our life. We must respect them and love them for their invaluable light of love and wisdom in our life. Serving them is a most pious act as per our culture and tradition. So, today let's take a pledge that we will always listen to them and will never hurt them, through actions or words. We should always love and respect our parents and help them when they need it.

I take this occasion to wish 'Happy Mother's Day' to all mothers! 🌸

Roti Charity Trust: Support A Noble Cause!

For around five years now, Bengaluru-based Syed Gulab and his associates at an NGO called the Roti Charity Trust have been rendering yeoman service by providing free nutritious food to mainly attenders of patients from economically poor families who are undergoing treatment at Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health, NIMHANS, Kidwai hospital, etc., all located in the same area in Bengaluru. Patients and their attenders come from different parts of

India. The length of the patients' stays in hospital varies and can extend up to several months. During this period, attenders of the patients from poor families often find it exceedingly difficult to manage with expenses for their food. For many of them, it is an excessively big expense.

Even during this critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, the Roti Charity Trust is continuing with its service of providing nutritious food free of cost to patients' attenders. This food is served at lunchtime every

day parcels of rice, sambar, and vegetables. According to Syed Gulab, more than 250 people are now receiving this food every day. The Roti Charity Trust continues to engage in this service even in the challenging context of today, with God's help and the support of well-wishers. The daily expense on the food varies it is around Rs. 3000. If you would like to support this noble venture, you can contact Syed Gulab on 9741906021. You can learn more about the Roti Charity Trust on Youtube.com. 🌸

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Clio and Tracy, Super Mother Cats



Nigar

Animals and birds, as well as other sentient beings, share this planet that human beings also inhabit. As among humans, there are great mothers among animals and birds too. I've been lucky to meet two super mother cats Clio and Tracy and I would like to commemorate them on the occasion of Mother's Day (May 9) for being great mothers.

Clio is a very beautiful cat. She has emerald green eyes and a very bushy tail. She's a neat, tidy and very well disciplined girl.

Clio became a mother during a

very difficult time. This was last year, when much of the world was under lockdown on account of COVID-19. She arrived at the house I was then staying at one morning. Carrying a newly-delivered baby in her mouth, she crashed against the mesh of the bedroom window, desperately wanting to enter. We were confused as to what to do. Allowing her inside might mean that she would give birth to a litter of kittens there, and that would make things very difficult for us.

God decided that Clio should come inside. We opened the door

and let her in. She rushed behind the refrigerator, and, without any fuss, gave birth to four more babies right there! I had never seen anything like that before!

Clio licked every kitten super clean as they emerged into the world. She stayed calm and quiet, and so did her brand new babies, who turned out to be really 'cool kids', born behind the refrigerator! The world outside was full of dangers for them street dogs, vehicles and maybe not-so-friendly or cat-loving neighbours. So, Clio and her babies were shifted to our home-help Mary's house. Mary welcomed them without even a murmur or a question, even though she has a very modestly-sized home.

Clio seemed surrendered to God as she sat with her babies in the big cage that had been procured to transport them to Mary's place. As the world of human beings lay under the grip of fear and uncertainty during the lockdown, here was Clio, the brave and loving new mother with her

children, the cool mummy cat and her cool kids, calmly accepting what God had decided for them. Clio's fortitude has a great lesson for us humans for how to live with hope and in surrender to the Divine Will even when faced with great challenges.

Not only did Clio turn out to be a very good and caring mother to her children, she graciously (and very spontaneously) adopted Jerry, a jolly, happy-go-lucky kitten who turned up one day some time later. Jerry seemed like a lost child, and maybe all she wanted was a cozy corner to curl up in. And so, Jerry was shifted to Mary's house, where Clio became something like a foster mother to her.

Tracy is a cat who pops in quite regularly at the backyard of my

late parents' house. Recently, she became a mother. Tracy seems to dote on her children Tinkle, Tommy and Tickle who look like miniature tiger cubs! She allows them to have great fun in the backyard, playing games like 'Tumble the Bucket', 'Drop the Stick' and 'Drag and Hide the Slipper'.

Tracy is a very protective mother. Recently, I heard, she gave a smack to Tabby, a tom cat who tried to get friendly with her children. She's very careful that the babies get their food, and waits patiently for them to join her when the supper kibbles are laid out for them.

Clio and Tracy, super cat mothers, thank you for your inspiring presence in my life! There's so much we can learn from you both!

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NOTE: See the documentary film NAZR-E-ENAYAT on the Internet "YOUTUBE" in which there is a brief history of Girls and Boys orphanages



Waris Mazhari

In large parts of the world today, many people have extremely negative views about Muslims. There are various reasons for this. Muslims must reflect on what needs to be done to address this issue.

The fact of the matter is that Muslims can unilaterally end anti-Muslim prejudices, by reforming their own attitudes towards, and behaviour with others. Wherever they live, Muslims need to try to establish cordial relations with people of other faiths. Unfortunately, not enough attention has been given to this issue by Muslim leaders, *ulema*, intellectuals and others, because of which the gulf between Muslims and others has kept widening.

The most significant way for Muslims to cultivate good relations with others at the societal level is to share in the joys and sorrows of others, to be of service to others, to be concerned about other peoples' wellbeing and to have good interpersonal interaction and relations with them.

But, lamentably, about this issue

A Positive Response to Prejudice

The solution to all complaints and hatreds is for people to interact with each other at the interpersonal level, motivated by a genuine concern for each other's wellbeing.

there are several mental obstacles among a significant section of Muslims. That is why while a lot of discussion happens about the need for efforts to promote good relations between Muslims and others, in practical terms, little has happened in this direction. This clearly suggests that as far as harmonious interfaith relations are

political to do. Rather, every individual, from every social class, can play a major role in this regard in their own sphere, in their interaction with others in their everyday life. Unfortunately, for many Muslims, their everyday life is very narrow and restricted. Undoubtedly, there are reasons for this, but until Muslims come

Nothing can take the place of everyone doing what they can in their own daily life, through acts of goodness, in helping people from different community backgrounds to come closer and to develop a more appreciative understanding of each other. It is a task in which every person can play a role.

Hours of lectures on interfaith dialogue and books running into hundreds of pages on the subject cannot have the same impact as an act of genuine kindness and goodness for another in transforming their notions and impressions. On this score, Sufis, in every age, were always far more successful than the *ulema*. Rising above and beyond ideological discussions and debates, Sufis extended their goodwill to all human beings and did not allow anything to be an obstacle in this regard. We need to bring into action this spirit of the great Sufis.

In this regard, an especially

important step is for Muslim spiritual leaders to establish good relations with spiritual leaders from other religious traditions. They can organise meetings to promote harmony and peace. They should completely avoid discussing politics. These meetings should focus on various social issues that are of common social concern.

I am greatly confident that if religious leaders from different religious backgrounds are given the opportunity to live together under the same roof for a week, avoiding all talk of politics and focussing only on social and spiritual issues and issues about life in general, they will definitely experience a great appreciation for each other and each other's spiritual traditions.

The solution to all complaints and hatreds is for people to interact with each other at the interpersonal level, motivated by a genuine concern for each other's wellbeing.

(Waris Mazhari did a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

Presently, he teaches at the Department of Islamic Studies at Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. He can be contacted on

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Nothing can take the place of each individual doing what they can in their own daily life, through acts of goodness.

concerned, the most important thing is practical efforts, not just talk and theory.

Working for cordial relations with others is not something only for some leaders religious or

out of their own narrow circles and make efforts to develop cordial relations with others, how can they do anything to improve the image that others have of Islam and Muslims?

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The High Status of a Mother!

While the world celebrates Mother's Day on May 9, let us reflect on the status of mothers in Islam, according to the Quran and Hadith.

Mothers are held in very high esteem in Islam. The word 'mother' is not only a word; it is a blessing and a gift from Almighty Allah. Islam gives mothers the highest position and commands children to be grateful, respectful, kind and obedient to their mothers.

The Quran says:

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say, 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'" (The Quran, 17:23-24)

"And We have commanded people to honour their parents. Their mothers bore them through hardship upon hardship, and their weaning takes two years: So be



grateful to Me and your parents. To Me is the final return."

(The Quran, 31:14)

"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth".

(The Quran, 46:15)

The exalted status of a mother can be gauged from the following incident: Once a man came to the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! Who from amongst mankind warrants the best companionship from me?" He replied: "Your mother." The man asked: "Then who?" So he replied: "Your mother." The man then asked: "Then who?" So

the Prophet replied again: "Your mother." The man then asked: "Then who?" So He replied: "Then your father."

It is narrated by Asma bint Abu Bakr that during the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, her mother, who was then a pagan, came to see her from Makkah. Asma informed the Messenger of Allah (Pbuh) of her arrival and also that she needed help. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Be good to your mother." (Bukhari, Muslim).

How to Behave With Your Mother

- Always show gratitude towards her.
 - Always be kind and speak softly to her.
 - Be at her service whenever she needs you.
 - Never express annoyance even if she is doing something annoying. Do not repel her.
 - Always obey her if it is not against the Deen.
 - Pray for her.
- O God, have mercy upon my mother and keep her happy in this world as well as in the Hereafter. Ameen! ■

Madinah-A Cohesive Society Built By The Prophet

"Act together in your daily efforts and then share the fruits of your labour among yourselves."



Ghulam Rasool Dehlvi

Madinah Munawwarah - the holiest city after Makkah al-Mukarrama in Islam - is the abode of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh - peace be upon him). Highly venerated by Muslims, it earns greater attention especially during the sacred days of Ramadan.

The city of Madinah is revered by Muslims across the world because the holy Prophet's mosque - Masjid al-Nabawi - is located in it. It is the second holiest site in Islam after the Ka'abah. Another sacred site, Masjid-e-Quba, the first mosque in Islamic history, is also situated in Madinah. Notably, the first seminary of Islamic mysticism, Dar ul-Suffa, is also located in Madinah, attached with the Masjid ul-Nabi. The mystically inclined companions of the Prophet began to engage in the formal spiritual learning in Dar ul-Suffa. In Madinah, Muslims from across the world visit and venerate the shrine of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) to seek his blessings and find spiritual solace. The Prophet was born in Makkah but he chose to migrate to Madinah after he faced religious

persecution at the hands of the Makkah pagans. Madinah has great significance and sanctity in cultural Islamic heritage. After the completion of the *manasik-e-hajj* (rituals of Hajj), it is highly recommended to perform *ziyarat* (visitation) of the magnificent Islamic heritage in Madinah, most notably the shrine of the holy Prophet, the mosque of the Prophet (Al-Masjid an-Nabawi) and Jannat ul-Baqee - the graveyard of the Prophet's companions and many other spiritual masters.

The story of the construction of Al-Masjid an-Nabawi is truly moving. As the Prophet (Pbuh) and his companions were migrants from Makkah, they were called "muhajirin". And the local inhabitants of Madinah who welcomed the *muhajirin* and greatly helped them were known as *ansar* (the helpers). The *ansar* belonged to the two main tribes of Madinah, the Banu Khazraj and the Banu Aus, who had an age-old rivalry. But the Prophet established brotherhood (*muwakhhar*) and mutual sympathy (*muwasalat*)

between the two adversary tribes. These were the prophetic ideals which ushered in an era of spiritual bond between the two different tribes in Madinah - both helping each other, in every way possible. The *Ansar* of Madinah assisted the *Muhajirin* by hosting them in their homes and providing for their financial and materials necessities. Remarkably, both the *Ansar* and *Muhajirin* took active part in the construction of Al-Masjid an-Nabawi in particular and the entire city of Madinah. This bond of brotherhood among the two different tribes was inspired by the Prophet's spiritual training and instructions like: "Act together in your daily efforts and then share the fruits of your labour among yourselves."

While the *Ansar* and *Muhajirin* were labouring hard in the construction of the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the Prophet (Pbuh) invoked Allah: "O Allah! Help the *Ansar* and the *Muhajirin* in strengthening a strong relationship between them." The Prophet built the brotherly ties not only between the *Ansar* and

Overcoming Whisperings

Nayala Ambreen

Today, I woke up early. The lights were turned off except for the bed light. I tucked myself in the soft comforter while I hoped to get up and pray Tahajjud. But then I felt a suggestion: 'Let me sleep some more and then get up. Anyways, if I don't pray Tahajjud, it won't cause me any sin.' The voice inside me encouraged me to go ahead with my plan, to sleep! So, I slept again, and woke up for Fajr. This is a very common affair, that happens with many people. The voice that guided me to go back to sleep is the *waswas*, which stops us from doing good or makes us do something that is wrong. We can fall prey to the *waswas* very easily, as in the above case.

I missed out the blessings that the Tahajjud prayer would have brought me.

At Tahajjudtime, our Lord, the Almighty, says: 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer Him? Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness that I may forgive him?' (Bukhari, Muslim).

Suggestion

Whenever we face a situation when we are confronted with whisperings as above, take refuge in God. Then, go ahead with what

your conscience tells you to do, that is, go and pray Tahajjud as in the above case.

Some other things that can help you in praying Tahajjud:

- Make the intention to do so, before you go to sleep
- Set an alarm to wake up
- Go to bed early
- Recite the *duas* before you sleep.

Benefits of Tahajjud Prayer

Here are some benefits of offering Tahajjud prayer:

- It gives inner strength and mental toughness.
- If someone wishes that their *dua* be accepted, this is the best time to ask.
- It strengthens religious understanding.
- It brings fresh inspiration.
- It can remove wickedness and prevent acts of sin.
- It can strengthen the memory.

Reminder

Dear Readers, let us overcome the *waswas* that we may encounter, by changing our perspectives and our mindset. Let us make a habit to practice good and stop evil.

(The author is a postgraduate and is currently pursuing a B.Ed in Karimnagar, Telangana. She is interested in writing articles, poems and stories.) ■



Muhajirin but also among the different religious tribes of Madinah. Consequently, the *Ansar* and *Muhajirin* were strengthened by a third group - the Jews of Madinah. The Prophet thus built a cohesive society in Madinah where Muslims and Jews peacefully coexisted and shared their joys and grief. They professed and practised different faiths and there was such an amicable relationship between

Muslims and Jews that if anyone harmed a Jew, the first aid came from the Muslims - both *Ansar* and *Muhajirin*. This is how a harmonious, affectionate and cohesive society was built in the city of the Prophet - Madinah.

(The writer is an *alim* and a doctoral scholar with Centre for Media, Culture & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He can be contacted on grdehlavi@gmail.com) ■

The Quran: An Eternal Wonder



Javed Jamil

The Quran is not an ordinary work of an ordinary mortal, but a Singular, Supreme and Majestic Work of a Singular, Supreme and Majestic Author, God, the Creator, and the Lord of the Multi-World. The Quran itself categorically declares that it is for all times to come, for all parts of the world and for all future human generations. The Quran is a comprehensive work, with a unique and unparalleled prescription for a holistic system. It includes the articles of faith, law, history, and morality, with the twin aims of success in this life and the Hereafter. The Quran points towards the Laws of Nature that govern the universe and its various constituents, both physical as well as biological. The Quran points to the functioning of the universe, every component of which, even if unconsciously due to its inherent nature, instead of free will, precisely follows the Laws of Nature, created, and enforced by God. It tells humans, endowed with free will, to consciously

commit themselves to God, individually and collectively, for ensuring peace and harmony in the world. The Quran guarantees a phenomenally successful life in the Hereafter for those who follow it with total commitment.

The world today, despite its apparently advanced and sophisticated ways of living, is overpowered with chaos at every level. The current international system, which many proudly call New World Order, appears to be highly advanced in method but is a colossal failure in the results. At the individual level, notwithstanding huge advancement of the healthcare system, physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses are ever on the rise. At the family level, the disintegration of family is fast becoming the norm rather than an exception. At the social level, the ever-rising crime rate, social and economic exploitation, commercialisation of all forms of dangerous substances and practices, including sexual deviations, addictions and crimes, and various kinds of extremist movements working in the interest of certain forces have almost completely destroyed the

peace of life. It is in the background of this asphyxiating disruption of harmony that the Quran needs to be understood and applied in all spheres of life.

The contest today is not between different religions. The real contest is between religion and irreligion; between the scientific (or healthy) morality preached by Divine Messengers and the commercial morality propagated by the tyrannical monarchs of the business world; and between the 'comprehensive peace' propagated by the Scriptures and the 'materialistic peace' imposed by the forces and powers that rule the roost. It is incumbent on the followers of the Quran to campaign for the eradication of all forms of evils. They must strive for the ultimate purpose of the unity of the whole mankind, founded on the principles of universal peace and brotherhood through total commitment to God. (Based on excerpts from the author's recently released book, *A Systematic Study of the Holy Quran*)

(The author is currently Chair in Islamic Studies & Research, Yenepoya University, Mangalore) doctorfona123@yahoo.com

Ibn Sina: The Man Who Proposed Quarantine, Social Distancing, Sanitization 1000 Years Ago



Arshad Sayyed

Covid-19 represents one of the greatest challenges mankind has faced in the 21st century. Since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, quarantine has been the number one recommendation as the most effective way of curbing the infection rate of corona virus (COVID-19). Over 10 centuries ago, Ibn Sina, one of the fathers of modern medicine and polymath, unlocked the nature of epidemics and proposed quarantine, Social distancing, sanitization etc..

Ibn Sina, also known as Abu Ali Sina was born in 980 CE in Afshona, (present-day Uzbekistan). He was a Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant physician, astronomer, thinker and writer of the 'Muslim Golden Age'. It is believed that he wrote around 450 books, from which around 240 have survived, including 150 on philosophy and 40 on medicine. His most famous works are 'The Book of Healing', a philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, and 'The Canon of Medicine', a medical encyclopedia which became a



standard medical text at many medieval universities and remained in use for more than 600 years.

Ibn Sina suspected that some diseases were spread by micro-organisms. He came up with the method of 40-days isolation called 'al-arba'inaya' ('The Forty'). Later, traders from Venice heard of his successful method and took this knowledge to Italy. They called it 'Quarantena' ('The Forty' in Italian). This is where the word 'Quarantine' comes from, which refers to a till now widely practiced to fight against epidemics.

Besides philosophy and medicine, Avicenna's corpus includes writings on astronomy, alchemy, geography and geology, psychology, Islamic theology, logic, mathematics, physics and works of poetry.

(The author is a software engineer and motivational speaker. He can be contacted on sarshad716@gmail.com)

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My Heart Speaks



Hafeez-ur-Rahman

Assalamualaikum

Warahmatullahi Wabarakaah!
May God bless you with peace, happiness and patience. *Ameen!*
I went through many evil things, being arrogant and proud, not respecting parents and my brothers, having many bad habits and showing off. But then Allah, Most Incredibly Merciful, bestowed *iman* in my heart and guided me to the straight path, and He is still guiding me, *Alhamdulillah!*

Many things have changed after I got the most incredible and beautiful gift of faith from my Sustainer. It changed me totally. And I never regretted anything after I received faith.

Alhamdulillah! I am doing well in my life now, wasting no time on inappropriate things, offering prayers on time, seeking knowledge every day, improving my skills, being good to family, friends, teachers and all other people I meet, finding ways to make Allah happy and trying my

best to live for the sake of Allah! Allah plans, and He is the best of Planners.

In the poem below I share some of my emotions and the strongest Truth I was witness to.

THE STRONGEST HANDHOLD

This world is temporary,
Nothing is ours, except our deeds.
This is the will of our Creator,
That He wants you to know.

Many are searching for peace,
Many want to become productive.
Offering *namaz* five times a day
helped me fulfil both these.
You will die one day, so why not
lead your life in peace?

Let me share with you what
changed me,
Through the journey what healed
me,
What I got was the strongest hope,
Lots of love, and kindness also.

One day, I saw a man walking
down the street,

Smile on his face, looking happy
and lowering his gaze.
I asked him, "What makes you
lower your gaze, and what makes
you happy?"
He replied, "Fear of Allah and the
love of Allah".

Confused, I asked for an
explanation (for, I didn't
understand),
'Can you say how you do
both—love and fear?'
He replied with a face glowing,
'Love for Him as He is the Most
Merciful, and fear of Him as He is
the Most Loving.'

I was still confused,
But something positive started
running in my mind.
I asked him, 'How much can your
Lord forgive?'
He said, 'You bring your sins the
size of the skies,
Ask forgiveness from your heart,
and He will surely forgive.
And not just forgive, He will
change all the bad into good.'

I said, 'Thanks' and left.
I started walking back on my path,
Feeling something unknown in
my heart,
And with some ultimate clarity in
my mind.

There appeared two paths in front
of me—

Either follow the broken path,
Or change and return to the
Merciful One.

My mind gave up thinking,
But something was illuminating
in my heart.
I gave up control of my legs,
And something straightened me to
the mosque.

It was *maghrib*, and it was dark,
I did *wazu* and stood for *namaz*.
Slowly I began the prayer,
Feeling safe and some fear in my
heart.

Reciting *Fatiha*, I lost control,
Lost control of my eyes and soul.
As tears began to fall from my
eyes,
Something was resetting in my
mind.

Never in my life did I ever feel
The way I felt in front of my Lord.
Going for *ruku* blessed my chest.
Saying *takbir* blessed my mouth
(*Subhana Rabbi'l Azeem*).

My mind was searching for a
reason to cry.
At last, I found, it was something
on which I could rely.
Feeling the love different from
others,
It was fixing the pieces of my
broken trust.

Feelings I expressed and words I
said.
He comforted me, and when I said
Sami Allahu Liman Hamidah,
God listened to one who glorified

Him.
He calmed me down and healed
me.

When I brought my head to the
ground,
My body shook, and it felt like a
storm.
Emotions falling through my
eyes,
A puzzle solved (I found Allah!),
Alhamdulillah!

I got this faith, but not easily,
Sacrificed a lot, through many
hardships.
Give thanks to the Lord for every
breath,
As He is the One, the Giver of
faith.

We have an eternal life after death,
Which fits us and will fulfil us.
Don't have much hope in
yourself—
You can't even quench your own
thirst.

Your Lord wants you to believe in
Him,
Believe in Him and worship Him.
He can forgive your every sin.
Full of mercy and full of
abundance,
He is the All-Seeing and the All-
Hearing,
The First and The Last,
The Present and The Hidden.
He is Allah, and He is Our Lord.
He is One, and Prophet
Muhammad (peace be upon him)
is His Messenger.
(The writer is a student of 2nd PUC
in Bangalore) ■



20 Year-Old Who's Earning Laurels!

Presently, the boy from
Muradnagar is working to get his
e-cart verified by the
government.

"The e-cart is basically solar
powered, but it can also be
charged. It will benefit
the environment immensely. It is
cheaper and more robust. It can be
used as an auto", Azharuddin says.
Azharuddin has received an offer
of 6 solar carts from a society in
Hyderabad. For his first electric
cart, it cost him Rs. 1.5 lakh. He
has improved its cost of making
and his e-cart now has space for
more people to sit. An e-cart made
by him has been sent to Dubai.

Azharuddin says that he has made
his electric bicycle in the same
manner. It can charge up to 100

kilometres at a time. It can run-up
to the speed of 25-30 kilometres
per hour and is pollution-free. He
has started getting orders for his e-
cycle.

Talking about his e-cart,
Azharuddin explains that in the
event of solar energy being
interrupted, its work will be done
by charging and this cart will keep
running. "Two batteries of 12
volts and five batteries of 140-
ampere lead-acid have been used
in the solar panel. This is the
biggest feature of this e-cart that it
operates from both solar and
electricity as well and is cheap,"
he says.

(Based on an article by Aas
Mohammad Kaif that appeared in
www.twocircles.net) ■



Electric cart made by Azharuddin.

His father laboured all his life and
his mother never went to school,
yet the twenty-year-old
Azharuddin from Muradnagar
near Meerut in Uttar Pradesh
battled all odds and went on to
become a mechanical engineer.
Azharuddin studied at a
government school and today he is
a second-year B.Tech. student at
Subharti University, Meerut. The
university management does not
take fees from him. Instead, they
provide all the facilities.

Azharuddin is good with his
hands. He has created an electric
cart from junk and is now
receiving online orders from
abroad. The twenty-year-old has
also made an electric bicycle that
can cover a distance of 100
kilometres on a single charge. In
addition to the electric cart,
Azharuddin has also made a solar
cart, which does not need to be
charged. His feat is remarkable as
he has accomplished it all by
himself.

Zuhaib Qureshi from Muzaffarnagar secures 6th rank in top Engineering services exams

Zuhaib Qureshi of Muzaffarnagar
(UP) has secured the sixth rank in
the recently declared Indian
Engineering Services (IES) exam
results. The IES is a top all India
level engineering services exam.
Zuhaib Qureshi's father is a scrap
trader. Most of the Quraishis in the
area associated with the meat
trade.

Zuhaib has secured the sixth rank
in the IES exam, in which nearly
10 lakh candidates appeared.
Speaking with *TwoCircles.net*,
Zuhaib says he is overjoyed at his
success. "I always thought I have a
scientific temperament and now I
will use it to strengthen and serve
my country," he says.

Zuhaib achieved this success in
the first attempt. Having studied
in a Hindi medium school, Zuhaib
has tried hard to excel at English.

Zuhaib's mother Shaheen wants
Zuhaib to contribute to his
country's progress.

"I have prayed a lot to Allah. He
(Zuhaib) was very anxious on the
day of the result. He was
constantly looking at his phone.



When I tried to snatch a phone,
he announced that 'Ammi I got
All India sixth rank.' I cried on
hearing the news. Our world has
changed since that day. All
people are congratulating us.
Zuhaib has passed many big
exams before but he dreamt of
IES which he has now achieved.
May Allah be kind to him," she
told *TwoCircles.net*.

Zuhaib credits his success to
Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), one of
India's premier higher education
institutes, where he did his
engineering studies. ■

QURAN AND NATURE

Ecosystem Restoration

As custodians of resources, it is binding on us that we should ensure judicious use and check wastage. That means we must avoid extravagance and exhibitionism, willingly, as an act of submission (*Ibadat*) to Allah.



Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), along with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has declared the present decade (2021-2030) as the 'UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration'. It will be officially launched on 5th June 2021, on "World Environment Day". The agency will provide a digital gathering place for everyone who is interested to join hands. We all must join this venture as it is not only our social and ethical responsibility but *addeen* or Islamic duty as well, because taking care of everything on Earth and their surroundings is mandatory on all those who claim to be Muslims. The irony is that this task has not been taken as seriously as other Islamic obligations like *namaz*, fasting and *zakat*.

Our planet is an integrated whole. Each of its components survives and performs best in its very own micro environment called an 'ecosystem'. Take a tree as an example: It is rooted in the soil and derives its minerals and water from it. If the soil composition changes due to chemical discharge from a nearby factory or if someone dumps some waste there, it will affect the tree. Lots of birds, insects, worms and micro organisms derive their sustenance from this tree and depend on it. If any of these organisms disappears from the ecosystem, it will affect the tree. Similarly, if someone cuts the tree, all these organisms will be affected. So, there is an intricate web of dependence and interdependence among all the creatures, living as well as non-living, inhabiting the planet. If we clear a forest for some civil or industrial activity, the entire ecosystem of the area is affected, including the weather, the soil and animals. We must remember that this planet and all its resources are meant for all inhabitants of the Earth. Allah has created the Earth for all creatures.

"And the earth, He has set it for (all) creatures" (Quran: 55:10).

And all the provisions on and in the Earth, we must remember, are meant for all:

"He it is Who has created for (all of) you, all that is in the earth", (Quran 2: 29).

So, it is noticeably clear that the earth has been created for all creatures, and not just for human beings. Besides, all resources which the earth harbours are meant for all the creatures. When Allah created the earth for all the

creatures and its resources are also for all the inhabitants of this planet, there must be some mechanism, some authority, to ensure that the resources are justly distributed to all those who need them. For this purpose, Allah has made us, human beings, as vicegerent or custodians of the earth.

"And He it is Who made you vicegerent of the earth and raised the grades of some of you above others that He may test you through that which He has given you." (Quran: 6: 165)

Surprisingly, Muslims, who are expected to follow Divine orders, are indifferent towards clear instructions about the environment given in Quran.

These three verses mentioned above, are addressed to all of us, all human beings, because Quran is a divine guidance for all. That they are binding on all Muslims, who submit to Allah's guidance, is obvious. But do we really take note of them? The Divine order declares that this planet and all its resources are for all creatures and we have been given the responsibility as vicegerents or custodians of these resources that they should be used judiciously. If someone has more resources than others, it is a test for the person, and Allah watches how His bounties are used.

As custodians of resources, it is binding on us that we should ensure judicious use and check wastage. That means we must avoid extravagance and exhibitionism, willingly, as an act of submission (*Ibadat*) to Allah.

From the point of view of the environment and our well being, another Quranic verse is very instructive:

"There is not a thing whose store houses are not with Us. We send it down only according to a well-defined measure." (Quran: 15: 21)

As the resources are measured, we must ensure that they are properly recycled. Natural cycles operate in Nature on their own, as per the Divine plan. But human interventions often disrupt or reduce them. A very relevant

example is of fresh water. Whenever rain falls, its water is naturally harvested if there is sufficient greenery and natural soil. The roots of plants hold the water and help in its percolation down the soil. However, if due to human activity, greenery is absent and the soil is exposed, water runs over it. It is not much absorbed, and also takes along the precious top soil with the run-off. In many urban areas, natural water bodies and water channels are covered up due to construction. This blocks the flow of water, which results in floods. In most of our urban spaces, soil is covered by concrete or tarmac, which results in total loss of rain water, as nothing is absorbed. This rain water, if not absorbed by natural greenery and soil, brings floods, erodes soil and finds its way into rivers, which become silted because of the soil carried along by this rain water. This silt raises the floor of rivers, reducing their water-carrying capacity, resulting in further and massive floods. This silt also reduces the life of dams by settling down at the bottom of reservoirs.

From this we can see a whole chain of disorder and destruction resulting from our intervention in the natural water cycle. It also disturbs the rain pattern, and the rain frequency and duration, which affects the cropping pattern and crop productivity due to droughts, on the one hand, and floods, on the other. It also causes the emergence of newer diseases.

We have been ignoring the fine balance which exists in nature. It has resulted in all sorts of disorders and chaos, including pollution, water scarcity, global warming and new diseases and pandemics. The majority of human society is still careless and to come out of their slumber.

Surprisingly, Muslims, who are expected to follow Divine orders, are indifferent towards clear instructions about the environment given in Quran. There must be an all-out effort by all concerned sections of society, including religious scholars, teachers, preachers and NGOs, to motivate people to return to the Quran, to understand and practice it, so that the much-needed thrust is provided to human welfare activities, such as protection and preservation of the natural environment, which are part of our *ibadat*, like *namaz*, *roza* and *zakat*.

(The author is a former Vice Chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. He can be contacted on maparvaiz@gmail.com)

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

Earning in an Economic Crisis: Where are the Opportunities?

What does one do when almost everyone is affected, is in a crisis and is in need of help and support?

Musa R. Kaiser

We all know someone who has lost a job or whose business has shut due to the pandemic. Yes, things have picked up and the economic environment is looking better, but don't be lulled into complacency and too much optimism – yet. So, when jobs are being lost in the millions and businesses are being shut, where does one go to "earn money"? After all, the bills don't stop, do they? The rent or EMI, the school

2. Stock Markets: The Sensex (the popular main Index of India), prior to the pandemic was around 42,000 in Jan 2020 (Dow Jones 29,000), fell to 26,000 (Dow Jones 18,500) in Mar 2020 (a fall of 38%) and then rose to over 51,000 (Dow Jones 31,500) in Feb 2021 (a rise of 21% from 42 to 51 thousand and a 96% rise from its Mar 2020 lows). Of the two "opportunities" available to everyone in the public, by far gold is the easier,



fees, other bills and of course food, is still to be paid for, isn't it? *It's one thing to be able to ask for help if you alone or a few are in a difficult situation. What does one do when almost everyone is affected, is in a crisis and is in need of help and support?* To reframe the question, "Was (and is) there any place where the 'common man' could have gone to 'earn money' during the economic downturn?"

There are two places that the 'common man' could have significantly benefited from. And I would like to emphasise that it will be well worth one's time and energy to learn and absorb the lessons therein, for surely hard times will come again.

The two places are:

1. Gold: The price of gold in the second half of 2019 was around 38,000 / 10 gms (\$1,350 / oz). As the pandemic broke out, the price jumped to 43-44 thousand levels (\$1,600 / oz). As the pandemic got worse and jobs and business were being lost by the millions, the price of gold reached 55,000 / 10 gms (\$2,050 / oz). An increase of 45% in about 6-10 months.

more accessible and tangible option that the 'common man' could have used to 'earn money'. I know, all this is easy to say in retrospect, but for those who know some basics of how the world of money works, the gold option was and is by far the obvious and easy one to take advantage of.

In the light of the above, I would like you to ponder upon what you could have done differently and helped yourself (and your family and friends) to earn at least something (or a lot) during the pandemic. **Post Script:** At the time of sending this article to the press, Covid 19 infections have surged to the highest ever. As this happens, Gold has started to rally up again. It is up from its recent lows of 44,000 / 10 gms to 47,000 (a 7% rise in 4 weeks).

Is a run back to the highs of 56,000 on the cards?

(The author is a doctor, financial educator and investor. He is working on a hobby-project on sharia compliant global, multi-asset investing and trading. If you have questions, suggestions and comments, you can write to the author at askmusa@gmail.com)

The Workshop is Oxygen for Life!

The Discover Yourself Workshop was held on 12, 13 & 14 February 2021 in Osmanabad, Maharashtra. The workshop was organized by Awareness Group, Osmanabad.

Some of the Participants Share their Experiences

- Inspiring three days of my life. Now I realized that I had deviated and am back on the straight path.
- This workshop helped me to accept my mistakes and I received the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.
- Excellent workshop. The way of presentation is very good—I do not have the words to explain!
- Great workshop, I totally enjoyed and learnt a lot, in a comfortable environment.
- It helped me a lot. Now I am so peaceful and relaxed. Now, I can truly and honestly say, "I am happy". No questions are there in my mind.
- I realized from the workshop how we are stuck either in the past or in the future and never are in the present. This shift to the present is the shift that we must make.
- It was exceptionally good, and from now onwards, I will keep my word.
- It was unique and beautiful. It helps in handling any situation and assists us in the path of Jannah.
- Before the workshop, my behavior was awfully bad with others. After the workshop, I realized that I was wrong. Opinion is just an opinion, and not a reality. I will keep my word and give up my ego from now.
- The workshop is essential to become a human being, living life peacefully, happily and serving others.
- The workshop is oxygen for life. Everyone should introspect rather than retrospect.
- It helped me to discover myself, be patient and give up negativity.
- The workshop is the best mind-changer.
- It was motivational, and I felt a slight change in me. I am hoping to use these therapies for better results.
- It was an impactful workshop. The love and bonding between members of my family has increased.



HEADING SPIRITUALITY

A Brilliant Advice



Rajat Malhotra

Always remember that if you stop complaining, you can become a superhero.

I received a true introduction to Islam from the books and lectures of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Founder of the New Delhi-based Centre for Peace and Spirituality, and through my interactions with him. I personally believe that he is a true symbol of spiritual guidance.

I would like to share with you here a master-advice that I gained from Maulana Sahib which can make you tension-free and stress-free. One day, a young man and his wife came to meet Maulana Sahib and asked him for some advice. The Maulana said to them: "I will only say one thing, and that is, consider complaining to be forbidden to you."

The man asked Maulana Sahib as to why he considered complaining to be so bad. The Maulana replied, "The 'complaint culture' is a Satanic culture, and it was the head of the Jins, Iblis who first invented the 'complaint culture'. He had complained to God claiming that he was better than man and questioned God's decision to give man the charge of the earth instead of him."

About Satan it is said that he is the biggest enemy of man (The Quran, 12:5) So, how does Satan go about doing this work of enmity against man? His method is very simple: He looks around to see which person has developed a complaint and then he begins to further fuel that complaint inside them. Satan takes this psyche of complaint to such an extreme that the person becomes overpowered with complaints. Complaining becomes the biggest and most prominent feature of such a person.

Understand this, that if you put a

stone in your pocket, it will remain as it is even after a hundred years. But the issue of complaint is entirely different. Complaints always grow. They keep mounting. It is the root of all evils. Once complaining takes root, it turns into hate, which can then assume the form of revenge. It can further intensify and even transform into violence and even war.

Complaining may seem like just a single evil, but it inevitably grows and grows and turns into a thousand evils. As far as one's character is concerned, complaining is nothing less than a killer.

Always remember that if you stop complaining, you can become a superhero.

(Rajat Malhotra is the global co-ordinator of Centre for Peace and Spirituality International and is involved in initiatives of interfaith, peace and spirituality of the Centre. He has done his masters in Islamic History and Ph. D. on the subject of the life of Prophet Muhammad.)

www.discoveryyourself.in



SAMEENA: I am so happy because I learnt many things in this workshop. The environment was friendly. I learnt how to face problems in life and to control stress. I am feeling so good because I removed all the evil from my mind. Thank you, Sir, for such profound knowledge.

FAUZIYA: This workshop has been very inspiring, and I am really happy to have been able to be a part of this journey. The workshop is remarkably interesting, with brilliant results. The style and the knowledge of the presenter were totally amazing. The techniques healed and helped me to get over some of my emotional and physical pains, and I am giving up my ego, anger, and selfish attitude. The workshop was highly informative and I really enjoyed the three valuable days. Thank you, sir.

SANA: Allah is the reason I smile even in pain. Sadath Sir, you gave me the power. I am happy! All problems, all questions and all worries disappeared and I got the answers for all my questions and I feel relaxed. My family saw the change in me, and they are all happy. On the second day of the workshop, they all came with me. I am so happy, and I have a lot of peace. Allah is with me.

RAHAT: My life before the workshop was boring and complicated. I was always finding fault with others. After attending the workshop, I changed myself. I am feeling good, and my focus now

is on the present and not on the past or being anxious about the future.

SAYYAD: The workshop helped me to learn values and morals and to know my strengths and abilities. Many professional as well as personal things changed after attending this workshop. I am giving up my stress and anxiety. I will not allow other's opinions to affect me.

YASMEEN: Our entire family attended the workshop, and all are feeling very satisfied. We now know how to live with Islamic principles. We must live in the present, not in the past, nor in the future. We need to adopt acceptance and gratitude as a way of life. The workshop has changed the way I think of myself and the world. The concept of 'Haq' made me realize this. I will keep my word. I will help every human being.

NOUSHEEN: The workshop was really good and worth attending. I was a bit stubborn, trapped in my own imagination/illusion, but now I can see the bigger picture more clearly and enjoy life to the fullest. When you keep Allah inside your heart, it is really amazing. My view towards life and the way I should see the world has changed. No worries about the future, nor grief or regrets about the past. Focus on the present and enjoy life to the fullest. I am committed to serving humanity by becoming an IAS officer, God willing!

« Page 12

The Spiritual Role of Women

The spiritual role of women has never been properly realized because of the failure to institutionalize their role in society.

In Rabia Basi's times, Muslim society was rent with great religious differences. But her strong spiritual personality exerted such a powerful influence that people eventually forgot their doctrinal differences and rallied around her. She laid emphasis on pure divine love, which alone could minimize all these differences.

According to a *hadith*, the Prophet of Islam observed: "Men and women are two halves of a single unit."

Teachings to this effect in the Quran and Hadith ushered in a new age of gender equality.

Both biological and historical studies show that women have been specially gifted with qualities required for the establishment of social harmony. In the Muslim case, this potential of women has never been properly realized because of the failure to institutionalize their role in Muslim society. Had Muslim women been trained to perform this task, they would have been able to play this role far more effectively, and on a far greater scale. The need of the hour today is to institutionalize this role and give proper training to women so that this capability with which women have been so abundantly endowed by nature may be fully harnessed.

Once this feminine potential has been realized, the world will be a better place for all to live in.

(Extracted with some modification from spiritofislam.co.in)



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Maulana Wali Rahmani

Noted educationist Maulana Mohammad Wali Rahmani breathed his last in Patna on April 3. He became the "Sajjada Nashin" of Khanqah Rahmani, Munger (Bihar) in 1991, after the death of his father, Sayyid Minatullah Rahmani. He served as Secretary-General of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and was Ameer-e-Shariat, or the head, of the Imarat-e-Shariah of Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha. He was well-known for his efforts in the field of education through the organization Rahmani30, founded in 2008.

Prof. Ishtiaque Danish



Scholar of Islamic Studies, Prof. Ishtiaque Danish passed away due to a cardiac arrest recently. He was a member of the governing council of the Institute of Objective Studies, and a former professor in the Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.

Prof K.A. Siddique Hassan

Prominent Islamic scholar Prof K.A. Siddique Hassan passed away after a prolonged illness at his home in Koorur near Kozhikode, Kerala. He was 76. A former vice president of the Jamiat-e-Islami Hind, he was the founder of the Malayalam daily 'Madhyamam'. Born in Kottangal of Thrissur district in 1945, he received education from Rouzzath Uloom Arabic College, Feroke, and Islamia College Santapattam. Later, he took a job as a college teacher. He authored and translated a number of books and contributed articles to different newspapers.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



Internationally acclaimed Islamic scholar and thinker Maulana Wahiduddin Khan passed away in Delhi recently. Born in 1925 in a village in Azamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, he authored numerous books on Islam, spirituality, and coexistence in a multi-religious society. He started the Urdu monthly *Al-Risala* in 1976, consisting of almost entirely his articles and writing. The English magazine 'Spirit of Islam', which was launched some years ago, consisted mainly of translations of writings by him. He was the founder of the New Delhi based Centre for Peace and Spirituality.

The Maulana received the Demurgus Peace International Award, under the patronage of the former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev; India's third-highest civilian honour, the Padma Bhushan, in January 2000; the National Citizens' Award, presented by Mother Teresa, and the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award (2009). He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian honour, in January 2021.

Syed Zulfiqar Hashmi



Former Bihar MLA Syed Zulfiqar Hashmi passed away due to kidney failure in recently at a Hospital in Hyderabad. He is survived by his wife, three sons and two daughters. He was elected to the Vidhana Sabha from the Bihar constituency in 1994 on the Bahujan Samaj Party ticket. Hashmi had been undergoing dialysis for the past four months and was admitted to Asara Hospital in Hyderabad due to deteriorating health.

Dr. Abidullah Ghazi

Founder member and former Board of Director of the Aligarh Muslim University Alumni Association, Greater Chicago, Dr. Abidullah Ghazi passed away on April 11, 2021. Dr. Ghazi was also the founder of IQRA Educational Foundation, which is a community project to teach Muslim children about their faith. Through Iqra Foundation, he authored more than 140 books in English, along with his wife Dr. Tasneema Ghazi. His books are part of the syllabus in Islamic schools in more than 40 countries. Dr. Ghazi was named among the "500 Most Influential Muslims in the World" by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. He was a well-known Urdu poet and writer. He received his Master's degree from the Aligarh Muslim University (in 1959), M.Sc. from the London School of Economics (in 1967), and PhD from Harvard University (in 1973). He is survived by his wife, Dr. Tasneema Ghazi and five children.

Fatima Rafiq Zakaria



Fatima Rafiq Zakaria, a Padma Shri awardee, renowned journalist, academician and chairman of Maulana Azad Educational Trust and Khairul Islam Trust Mumbai, passed away at the Bajaj Hospital in Maharashtra's Aurangabad due to age-related illness recently. She was 85. She was also the executive vice-chairman of the Board of Governors of the Trust's Institute of Hotel Management which is run in collaboration with the Taj Group of Hotels. Ms Zakaria, who had played an eminent role in the field of education, was also honoured with the Sarojini Naidu Integration Award for Journalism in 1983. She was awarded the Padma Shri in recognition of her work in education in 2006.

Maulana Abdul Momin Nadwi



Noted intellectual Maulana Abdul Momin Nadwi of Sambhal passed away on April 16, 2021. He was around 56 years of age.



Syed Ahmed Esar

Noted Urdu writer and translator Syed Ahmed Esar, 98, known for his translations of classical Persian poetry of Allama Iqbal and Rumi into Urdu, passed away in Bengaluru recently. A former Indian Forest Service officer, he worked as the Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka, and retired from service in 1980. Though his interest in classical Persian poetry began at a very young age and he began trying his hand at poetry adopting a pen name "Esar", which he later added to his name, his first collection of translation was published only in 1997, 17 years after his retirement.

Persian poetry was his constant companion on lonely postings in the forests during his service. He translated the entire seven volume corpus of Allama Iqbal's Persian poetry into Urdu. He next took up the challenge of translating Rumi's 13th century magnum opus *Masnavi* of over 27,000 verses into Urdu. The work took up almost two decades of his life and the six-volume poem was published by the National Council for the Promotion of Urdu Language in 2019. He also published a collection of his own poems and an autobiography. He was given the Rajyotsava Award in 2017 and was the recipient of several literary awards. (Extracted from the hindu.com)

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THEOLOGY & SOCIETY

Un-Islamic Practices Related to Marriage



Mohammad Hazique Nadvi

Ideally, the marriage of a Muslim couple should be simple.

Islamic teachings related to a range of issues are clearly specified, and so it is not permissible for any self-made custom to be added to them. But despite this, numerous customary practices, that are against Islamic teachings, are prevalent among a large section of Muslims. Demanding dowry and some other marriage-related practices are among the worst of these. The case of a dowry-related suicide of a Muslim woman recently has highlighted the issue of dowry among a section of the Muslim population. Performing a marriage in an approved manner is included as an act of obedience to God, and like other such acts, it must be kept

financially through his earnings. The responsibility of managing the financial affairs of the family falls on the husband.

For a man, or his family, to demand any money or other such wealth from his wife or her family is not permissible according to Islamic teachings. The Quran (4:29) says: 'O believers! Do not devour one another's wealth illegally'. Elsewhere, the Quran (2:188) says: 'Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly'. From this we learn that all forms of wealth that are acquired wrongfully or unjustly from others are forbidden in Islam. Islamic scholars agree that dowry is also one such wrongfully acquired form of wealth and is

the marriage of their daughters, starting from the time when a group of people from the prospective groom's family comes to see the daughter up to the point of not only the marriage, but also long after, if and when she has her first child.

Let us do a rough calculation of the sort of expenses often involved in this regard:

1. Food etc. on the day when a group of people from the boy's side comes to see the girl and her family in their house: Rs. 10-20 thousand.
2. Engagement feast, clothes etc.: Rs. 2-5 lakhs.
3. Marriage function (*mehendi* and *haldi*) ceremony, wedding hall, clothes, jewellery, dowry, food etc.): Rs. 15-20 lakhs.
4. Customs after marriage: Rs. 20-50 thousand.
5. First Eid, clothes, cash etc.: Rs. 20-50 thousand.
6. Birth of first child, 40-day ceremony: Rs. 2-3 lakhs.

If one takes an average of the expenses incurred on each of these counts, the burden on an average family because of unnecessary customs related to marriage appears really huge. The expenses incurred on a marriage go further up, if one includes the amount spent on the *walima*.

In a city with a population of say 2 or 3 lakh Muslims, one could estimate that every year there are between 500 and 700 marriages among Muslims. If one leaves aside the marriages among economically wealthy Muslims, on the one hand, and pious Muslim families who have very simple marriages, on the other, and selects 300 middle-range marriages, the total expenses incurred on the wasteful practices appears to be really large. On an average, around Rs. 10 lakhs are spent on such marriages, which means that for the 300 families, the total expenses come to some 30 crore rupees! Of this sum, around 60% may be spent on things like food, decoration and wasteful customs. That means that in a city with a population of 2-3 lakh Muslims, between 15 and 20 crore rupees are possibly being wasted by Muslims every year uselessly in this manner. Given this, why do many Muslims complain that they are poor and illiterate?

Because of the wasteful expenditure that many people indulge in for marriage, which is becoming a norm, marriages are becoming difficult for many others. To meet the expected

marriage expenses, including, sometimes, dowry demands, some parents even sell off their ancestral property or take loans and land up deep in debt. Because of dowry, some men have become useless, considering their in-laws like some sort of ATM machine. Because of dowry demands, divorces and oppression of women are an increasing phenomenon. And as a recent case of a Muslim woman that was widely publicised in the media indicates, dowry demands may drive some women to commit suicide.

Now, what can be done about this dismal situation? Here are some suggestions:

1. Each of us must resolve not to be a part of this system of wasteful expenditure on marriage, including dowry. We must neither take nor give dowry.
2. We should not attend marriages

that involve dowry and extravagant marriage feasts.

3. There should be a system for pre-marital counselling for Muslim women and men through which they should be made aware that dowry and other such practices have no sanction in Islam.

4. Social organisations must engage in promoting awareness among the Muslim masses that dowry is un-Islamic, as are numerous other customs and practices associated with marriage.

5. Muslim *ulema* should not solemnise marriages that involve dowry.

6. Women should be given their rightful share, according to the Islamic rules, in their parents' property.

7. Teams of young people can be formed to help women who may be harassed in the name of dowry.

8. Above all, God-consciousness needs to be cultivated and promoted in each of us, for it is the solution to all ills.

(The author is Academic Director, Dar ul-Uloom, Tipu Sultan Research Centre, Srirangapatna, Karnataka. He can be contacted on mdhazique@gmail.com)

Today, sections of Muslim society follow various practices related to marriage, including dowry, that have no sanction in Islam.

simple and pure. The Prophet of Islam stressed that the blessed marriage is one that carries less expense. Seen in this light, extravagant spending in marriages is against Islamic teachings.

In Islam, ideally a marriage partner should be selected on the basis of his or her piety, and not on the basis of wealth, lineage or physical beauty or charm. It is tragic, therefore, that quantum of wealth, including amount of dowry, is a major consideration for some people in their choice of marriage partners.

According to Islamic teachings, from the moment a woman's marriage gets fixed and all along the rest of her married life, there is no financial obligation on her. The financial aspect is for the man to manage. Given this, the custom of extracting or expecting money from the woman as dowry, is completely un-Islamic.

Ideally, the marriage of a Muslim couple should be simple. It could be held in a mosque. For the guests, a few light refreshments—even just a few fruits—could be provided. The husband should give his wife the stipulated *mahr*, and should arrange, after one or two days, a *walima* function, conducted in a simple way, without any show or extravagant spending. Then, throughout their married life, he should maintain the family

thus forbidden—be it that which might be demanded by the groom or his family or that which might be offered as an incentive by the bride's side in order to 'buy' a groom.

Today, sections of Muslim society follow various practices related to marriage, including dowry, that have no sanction in Islam. To demand anything—whether in cash or kind—from the bride's family is forbidden in Islam. So too is the expectation in the name of 'good hospitality' from the groom's side that the bride's family will arrange for a lavish marriage feast, with a large number of guests. This sort of showing off and wasteful expense is clearly forbidden in Islam. In the name of 'good hospitality', the five- or seven-course meal that is sometimes arranged is an abuse of God's blessings, resulting in an enormous wastage of food.

There is a new trend in some economically prosperous Muslim families: They offer the would-be groom a house and a vehicle and so on, in the hope that he would leave his parents and set up his own separate home with their daughter. If that happens, often the boy's parents lose their son's support in their old age. This practice is also not proper.

Many middle-class Muslim families today reel under the burden of huge, and completely unnecessary, expenses related to

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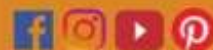
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