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Muslim women around the world celebrate World Hijab Day



World Hijab Day, celebrated each year on Feb. 1, and the non-profit organization behind it were founded in 2013 by Bangladeshi American Nazma Khan with the aim of educating people and raising awareness of why many Muslim women choose to wear the hijab, and encouraging women to wear and experience it for a day. The annual event, which originated in New York and was initially organized on Facebook, has grown into a global phenomenon.

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Thousands of weavers and their families in eastern UP suffering from acute indebtedness, and beggary: Study



Abdul Bari
Masoud

New Delhi: A study examining the impact of the Covid-19 Lockdown on the traditional weaving industry in Purvanchal (Eastern Uttar Pradesh) highlighted the plight and misery of traditional weaving families.

Because of the work stoppages caused significant economic and structural damage, as well as acute suffering, indebtedness, beggary, and starvation, which any community and state should be ashamed of. So far, neither the Uttar Pradesh state administration nor the federal government have shown any empathy for the plight of hundreds of thousands of weavers and their families and have failed to respond to the issue. The anticipated loss to eastern UP's handicraft, handloom, and power loom industries during and after the Lockdown is Rs 3,000 crores.

The report's extensive analysis and data show how the artisanal weaving and Zardozi industries, which have been in a state of crisis for decades due to the



government's ambiguous, if not hostile policies, have fallen further into despair as a result of the unexpected Lockdown.

According to the fact-finding report prepared by the Citizens for Justice and Peace, "A staggering 89 percent of those interviewed stated that due to a trust deficit, they simply could not or did not approach the local and state government for a variety of relief measures: food rations, monetary assistance, inflated electricity bills, sewage-related and other civic problems. Of the 11 percent who did, they were dissatisfied

with the response".

Dr. Muniza Khan, a Varanasi-based social science researcher, led a 17-member survey team that conducted detailed interviews with 204 respondents, 37 video interviews, and 19 audio interviews in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of people engaged in weaving the famous Banarasi fabric and related activities.

The locations of the respondents were: Varanasi (13 locations), Gorakhpur (Rasoolpur, Purana Gorakhnath), Azamgarh (Mubarakpur, Ibrahimpur,

Shahpur), and Mau (Ghosi, Madhuban).

The following are some of the most important (and, to be honest, surprising) results.

- A stunning 89 percent of individuals polled said they couldn't or wouldn't approach the local and state governments for a range of relief measures, including food rations, monetary help, inflated electricity bills, and sewage-related and other municipal issues, due to a trust deficit. They were unsatisfied with the response of the 11% that did.

- Weavers who labour for a living or have a small number of looms are from communities such as Muslim Ansari, Dalit, OBC, and some Muslims from higher classes. A large portion of the artisanal business is currently destitute and invisible. In order to influence not just political but also economic policy and decision-making, informed and reasoned public debate is required.

- Federal schemes are not accessible here to these people.

- The federal government's much-publicized Pradhan Mantri Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) (started

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Innovator Abdul Khader Nadakattin awarded Padma Shri

New Delhi: Abdul Khader Nadakattin, a resident of Dharwad in Karnataka, has been awarded the Padma Shri award in the Other Category (Grassroots Innovation) by the Union government. Nadakattin, a serial grassroots innovator from Dharwad, is best known for his tamarind seed separator, ploughing blade-making machine, seed cum fertilizer drill, water-heating boiler, mechanized sugarcane sowing driller, and wheel tiller.

All of his innovations are based on concepts of long-term viability, cost-effectiveness, environmental friendliness, and, most significantly, societal acceptance. His extensive knowledge of agro-climatic conditions and soil characteristics has served as an example to other farmers across the country.

His initial invention was a "Wa(h!)ter Alarm," which was his personal attempt to overcome his natural tendency to sleep late in the mornings. He connected a thin rope to the end of the alarm key so that when the key unwound, the string tied to the key-wound as well. When the key was totally unraveled, the thread was linked to a bottle filled with water, and when the key was unwound entirely, the bottle tilted, and the water fell on his face.

Later, he devised agricultural technology and equipment that met a range of local demands while



remaining relevant to modern agriculture.

He received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015 from the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), India, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology of the Central government, during NIF's 8th National Grassroots Innovation and Outstanding Traditional Knowledge Awards, presented by then-President Pranab Mukherjee.

In keeping with his grassroots ethos and as a symbol of respect for the prize, he elected to walk barefoot, earning him the moniker "barefoot scientist" in the process.

People started dubbing him "hunase huccha," which means "tamarind maniac," because of his portfolio of tamarind-related ideas. It began with his success in

producing tamarind with scant but alkaline water. It progressed to trials such as the technique for harvesting tamarind off the tree and the widely used equipment for separating tamarind seeds.

This prompted him to develop a tamarind-slicing machine. He developed inventions to handle agriculture processes like deep ploughing, seed sowing, and a fuel-efficient water heating boiler due to his tamarind success.

For several years in a row, grassroots innovators have been recognised in various categories of India's highest civilian awards, the Padma awards, which are given in various disciplines literature and education, arts, science and engineering, trade and industry, civil services, public affairs, sports, and medicine inspiring the next generation to innovate further. ■

Poverty-stricken karate player Ayesha Noor gets International Recognition

Kolkata: Nothing in the world can stop a person from achieving a high position in life if they have the drive to do so. Ayesha Noor, an international karate player, is an example of this. Who has achieved such great success in Karate despite poverty and disease that the world now refers to Ayesha Noor as the "Golden Girl"?

Ayesha Noor, who has won numerous gold medals for India in international karate contests worldwide, has gained international recognition. The A-One Global TV Award was given to her in honour of her karate achievements by the famous media company A-One Global TV in the United Kingdom.

On occasion in Kolkata, Ayesha Noor received the A-One Global TV Award from J Lamin of the Gambia, a West African country. Ayesha has been wished further success in the future by A-One Global TV. It is to mention that she was also honored with the USA's Hero of Gender Equality Award.



In addition, the National Open Karate Championship was held under the direction of MA Ali, an international karate coach, and champion. There was a competition involving Karate players from various locations. Shailen Pal, DK Acharya, Mohd. Farooq, Arup Dasgupta, and Monimala Halder were also present.

The sad truth is that, while countries like America and the United Kingdom recognize Ayesha Noor, our government refuses to assist her. As a result, Ayesha Noor continues to live in poverty. ■

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Thousands of weavers and their families in eastern UP suffering from acute indebtedness, and beggary: Study

on May 1, 2016) has not reached people on the ground. Only 10% of the women in the survey were even registered to receive Ujjwala Gas under this scheme; the rest were turned down despite several attempts to apply.

According to the respondents

- The Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was similarly difficult to access. A shocking 52 percent of those polled did not have access to the account, and only 58 percent of the 48 percent did receive cash transfers more than once.

- Women are the backbone of the industry, with jobs ranging from actual weaving to ancillary tasks like spool feeding, saree embellishment, and finishing. Even in this day and age, their work is typically unpaid because it is considered part of their household tasks.

- Apart from poverty, starvation, and domestic abuse, these women and girls' testimonials were tragic tales of malnutrition and related health conditions. Many young women were compelled to leave school.

- Over the last three decades, the overall impact of a brutal type of

targeted sectarian violence and politics has had a specific impact on women, particularly Muslim women. This communal splintering of gender identity has significantly impacted conventional gender-driven solidarity, which has frequently broken through denials and divides like those that swept India during the Covid-19 outbreak.

- The role of commercial media, particularly television, in promoting a divisive discourse that, in addition to being based on no facts, was tailored to suit an anti-constitutional agenda, exacerbating the humiliation and acuteness of the sufferings of all sections of the minority, including the artisanal weaving community in eastern UP.

- Days and weeks after the spread of the virus was purposefully misinterpreted and identified with one community, a large number of responders spoke of economic boycotts at work in their neighbourhoods (with terms like Coronona-Jihad, Superspreaders of the Virus, being used).

Recommendations

- The report presents specific recommendations to the federal

and state governments, suggesting that all sector stakeholders be consulted before policies are devised and budgetary allocations (which have been decreasing for the previous seven years) are approved. At the village, taluka, and state levels, there has also been a focus on state-driven incentives for professional co-operatives.

- Authorities should make sure that all initiatives and campaigns benefit every single weaver and artisan.

- Invoking the 2011 UN Principles on Business and Human Rights, the report also asks Corporations, Export Houses, and Brands that thrive on this rich and traditional art and craft to uphold standards of dignified wage and social security, as the creator is at the heart of the items produced.

- It is necessary to raise public awareness that the creators of the Banarasi saree and brocade are the proprietors of this intellectual property, which is a truth that the weavers and artisans are unaware of. (In 2009, it was registered under the Geographical Indication Handicrafts Act.) (<https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIR>

“Women are the backbone of the industry, with jobs ranging from actual weaving to ancillary tasks like spool feeding, saree embellishment, and finishing. Even in this day and age, their work is typically unpaid because it is considered part of their household tasks.”

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Call for a National and Regional Campaign

There is an urgent need for a sustainable and concerted national and regional campaign that highlights the following:

- Ensure a sustained revival of this industry and craft so closely linked to rural-urban livelihoods and the cultural heritage of India
- Democratic engagement before policy, economic, and business practices are developed, emerge, or pushed by the government
- Social Security Schemes for various levels of craftspeople,

craftsmen, and weavers, with a particular focus on women

- Reach out to Corporations and Businesses to incorporate a component of social responsibility and human rights when dealing with the creators of products

- Ensure that the elected representatives also respond to the campaign demands in this report.

- All Indians, including buyers of these products, should get involved to raise their voices and protect the survival of this vital heritage industry. ■

Telangana Muslims demand review petition on SC ruling on Waqf Property

Abdul Bari Masoud

New Delhi/ Hyderabad:

Telangana Muslims have slammed and protested the State Waqf Board for failing to defend the Waqf property valued at over a lakh crore rupees in the Supreme Court. The Telangana Waqf Board was dealt a big setback in the first week of February when the Supreme Court ruled that "land committed to religious and pious purposes is not immune from being vested in the state." The Court upheld the Telangana government's claim on a 1654-acre waqf land belonging to Dargah Hussain Shah Wali in Manikonda, which has far-reaching implications for waqf properties across India.

In a talk with *Islamic Voice*, Osman Al Hajri, president of Deccan Waqf Protection Society, blamed the entire debacle on the Telangana state Waqf board. He claimed that Waqf authorities' sloppy approach to defending the case of Dargah Hussain Shah Wali Waqf Land of Manikonda before the Supreme Court resulted in a defeat of the case, which has far-reaching implications for Waqf estates across India.

It was arguably an airtight case that won all of the trials from tribunals to the Telangana high court, but it was dealt a severe setback in the Supreme Court. When the case was brought up for hearing in the

Supreme Court, it is alleged that an honest Tahsildar who gave all the evidence and defended the case in the High Court was transferred.

Despite having all of the documents and indisputable proof to support the claim, the Board was unable to successfully defend it in Court. Al Hajri, the Congress leader, said there was a definite "connection between the TRS administration and the Waqf board officials" in this instance.

It is to mention that the Supreme Court observed while setting aside the action of the Andhra Pradesh Wakf Board that declared land measuring 1654 acres and 32 guntas as waqf property. A bench of justices Hemant Gupta and V Ramasubramanian said, "The land dedicated for pious and religious purpose is not immune from its vesting with the State... The Sovereign had granted the right to do service to Dargah, and the Sovereign who had the right to give jagir village for service had a right to take away that right as well." The Court was deciding appeals filed by the Andhra Pradesh government (now Telangana) against the Andhra Pradesh Wakf Board against an April 2012 ruling by the Andhra Pradesh High Court deciding in favour of the Wakf Board.

The decision came as a big relief for the Telangana government, as the State had subsequently leased out

the land for setting up a university, township, and other institutions of repute. The state government had appealed to the Supreme Court after losing out before the Andhra Pradesh high court in April 2012. The State had claimed before the High Court that as a result of the HC ruling, it would be required to pay a considerable sum running into thousands of crores of rupees as compensation to the Telangana Waqf Board.

A massive demonstration was staged at the Waqf Board headquarters at the Haj House here on February 11 to condemn the Telangana Waqf Board's lacklustre attitude is not going to review to contest the Supreme Court verdict in the issue of Dargah Hussain Shah Wali. Activists and leaders demanded that the Board file the review petition right away, accusing the Board of failing to



defend the case in the Supreme Court.

The demonstration was led by Syed Azeez Pasha, ex-MP and president of All India Tanzeem Insaf. Azeez Pasha recalled the Telangana Chief Minister KC Rao's promise that his administration would relinquish its claim to Dargah Hussain Shah Wali's Jagir land and pass it over to the Waqf Board. He said that a significant individual like KCR should think carefully and proclaim before making any public

commitment. In contrast to the Waqf Board, which has meekly surrendered to the government's wishes to surrender and therefore weakened the case, everyone realizes the government's powers. Osman al Hajri pointed out that Mohammad Ilyas, the then Tehsildar, was fired in the dead of night despite the fact that he was actively pursuing the matter in the Supreme Court. Munthakab's removal from the case reveals their

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Dr. Mohd
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Analyzing the Financial Budget-2022 from Social and Welfare Lenses



The pandemic metamorphosed into tragedy for people across countries, and it was more brutal for the unprivileged who suffered on many fronts. The second wave turned people's lives upside down; many lost their lives, loved ones, social and economic security, mental health, etc. In a democracy, if a country undergoes a tragedy, the government is expected to function accordingly, especially keeping in focus the needs of marginalized sections, who bear the brunt of such humanitarian crises. The budget is one such policy that gives people hope for a better life. All the sections of society eagerly look for schemes and plan for their representation in society with equity.

The FY2022-23 Union budget should reflect the measures aimed at improving people's lives, which has been thumped by the rising poverty and unemployment since the pandemic hit the nation. Looking at the financial budget this year, the government seemed to have missed the welfare strategy mark. While hikes in some programs and schemes like the 'Housing for All' and plans to set up a National Tele-Mental Health programme to deal with the ever-increasing mental health

issue is appreciated, many other essential categories like health, education, social welfare programs did not make the cut this year.

The nation and its citizen have not still recovered from the havoc created by the second wave; the statistics of the death rate due to the unavailability and inaccessibility of resources is known to all, which is why it was expected of the government to boost the monetary allocation of the healthcare sector. However, this year, it has been allotted 2.2% of the total expenditure, a marginal 1 % increase than FY2021. Also, last year, under "India COVID-19 Emergency

Response and Health System Preparedness," ₹ 12,359 crores were allocated, which unfortunately saw no budgetary allocation this year. Reports show that healthcare is becoming costlier as prices of health-related items such as X-rays, ECG, pathological tests, etc., increased from 2.8% in June 2020 to 5.7% in December 2021. Similarly, the agriculture sector declined from 3.92% in 2021- to 3.84% this year. Another blow came from the decline in the government's subsidies on food, fertilizers, and petroleum by 39%.

A shocking 25% cut in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

(MGNREGS) would affect thousands of families whose employment is dependent on this scheme. During the second wave of the pandemic, over 10 million people lost their jobs; many experienced a salary cut, and millions of households were distraught with the loss of the earning members of their families. The economic slowdown aggravated by COVID-19 has resulted in the perpetual loss of employment; therefore, the revival of job opportunities in the coming years should have been given the utmost attention. The only reliance on private investment by increasing capital expenditure to boost job openings up to 6 million in the next five years might not work as anticipated by the finance minister.

While the education sector was painted in the hue of 'Digital India' and the hollow promises of e-learning, the digital divide in terms of accessibility of the internet and digital devices was grossly undermined. We cannot deny the importance of the mid-day meal schemes in government institutions that fed millions of poor kids, the lack of which would result in hunger and malnutrition across the country due to the

shutdown of schools. The scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for the Scheduled Castes (from ₹450 to ₹364 crores) and OBCs (₹130 crores to ₹80 crores) saw a cut this fiscal year, which would further accentuate the institutional prejudice faced by the students of reserved categories.

Also, the budget has been criticized for ignoring the middle-class by economists and other political parties. Besides, there has been no mention of benefits for middle-class salaried people, such as aid for the elderly population. The unemployment rate is at an all-time high, more so after lakhs of people from the unorganized and informal sector lost their jobs due to COVID-19 related lockdowns.

The spending on the social sector has been either stagnant or saw a marginal increase, which is a cause for concern, given the reliability of the underprivileged on the government's welfare schemes and plans. Moreover, a decline in the allocation of funds in many sectors says a lot about the inclination of the budget, which is evidently not on the poor or underprivileged sections of society. Sadly, the budget reinforces the substantially divided society- the rich and the poor. Hence, we can say the financial budget for 2022 is aligning towards pro-rich and anti-poor proclivities.

(Source
<http://www.iosworld.org>)

Aligarh: Professor Noam Chomsky, a well-known thinker, linguist, philosopher, and cognitive scientist, explained why humans have the capability for language and the ability to utilize it in infinitely creative ways. He gave an online talk on February 11 at Aligarh Muslim University's Department of Linguistics on "The Human Capacity: Language and Thought."

He stated that people are born with a predisposition to learn a language and that humans have been naming and describing things since the dawn of time to inform others about what is going on around us.

He discussed theories of language, language acquisition, universal grammar, innate language, and language acquisition in young children and how human beings are pre-wired to learn a language and are born with the basic principles intact. Celebrated linguist claims that the human brain is ready to learn language quickly at certain phases of development.

He talked about the importance of cognition in language acquisition and development and linguistic aspects that influence general cognitive development.

"Language can be described as an

People born with a predisposition to learn a language:

Prof Noam Chomsky



aspect of cognition and its development as an aspect of the development of cognition. There are a number of cognitive systems which seem to have distinct and specific properties, and provide a basis for certain cognitive capacities — for simplicity of exposition", emphasized Prof Chomsky.

"The human mind comprises an extensive cluster of innate 'modules,' one of which is language. Each module operates automatically, independently of individual control, based on a distinct, domain-specific set of rules that take determinate inputs from some modules and yield determinate outputs for others. The various modules interact in complex ways to yield perception, thought, and a large number of

other cognitive products," said Prof Chomsky.

Speaking about language acquisition, he indicated that children are born with an inbuilt aptitude to acquire language, and that grammar is a crucial skill for children to learn language.

He ignored the importance of imitation alone, especially when the adult is utilizing a framework that the youngster has not yet begun to employ.

"I also like to believe that language is complex and with an unlimited combination of sounds, words, and phrases, the environmental learning is not able to account for language acquisition alone," said Prof Chomsky.

"We were fortunate to have Prof Chomsky here (virtually), and our students, faculty members, and scholars from around the world have had the opportunity to interact with one of the most influential scholars and brilliant minds in the world," said Prof M J Warsi, Chairman, Department of Linguistics, who conducted the programme.

"Prof Chomsky's talk, as usual, was deeper and intelligent,

connecting numerous points to answer many of the complicated questions," he said and adding that, "It is a rare privilege to have

this legend with us that may prove transformational in ways to many of us that we cannot imagine right now".

The web discussion drew over 1000 participants from all around the country and throughout the world. ■

Fazul Rahman new VC of
Dr. Abdul Haq Urdu University, Karnool

Hyderabad: Prof. P. Fazul Rahman, Director, UGC-Human Resource Development Centre (UGC-HRDC), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Abdul Haq Urdu University (DAHUU), Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh for a four year term.

Prof. Rahman obtained his Ph.D in Nematology from Aligarh Muslim University in 1993. He is the first employee who joined MANUU in 1998, served as Assistant Director, Reader before being appointed as Professor-Director, UGC-Academic Staff College in 2007, Professor, School of Sciences in 2013 and Director, UGC-HRDC in 2019. He also served in different capacities in MANUU.

He has 27 years of experience in the following areas: research, teaching, academic administration, institutional development, and



management. Professor Rahman has also travelled to the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

He co-authored a book "Nematode Taxonomy: Concepts and recent trends" and also presented research papers in international seminars and attended various International Conferences. He has been nominated by UGC for various academic committees. ■



**Masih-ul-Mulk
Hakim Ajmal Khan**

Staff Writer

New Delhi: The All India Unani Tibbi Congress and the Jamia Hamdard have organized events to commemorate Maseehul Mulk Hakim Ajmal Khan, a stalwart of the liberation movement, on February 12. Hakim Ajmal Khan was hailed as the rescuer of India's traditional medical system at both gatherings.

At the Tibbi Congress function, the Unani fraternity urged the government to treat the Unani system at par with other Indian systems of Medicine. They underlined that not a single member was appointed in the newly constituted National Commission for Indian system of Medicine.

At Jamia Hamdard's program on

Hakim Abdul Hameed's contributions are unparalleled: VC Afshar Alam

its campus on February 15, speakers underlined the importance and usefulness of the age-old Unani medical system in tackling the pandemic disaster and the contributions of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hakim Abdul Hameed for the development of Unani Medicine. When it comes to the achievements of Unani Medicine, Jamia Hamdard Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) M. Afshar Alam said Hakim Abdul Hameed's contributions to its growth are unmatched and unparalleled.

Prof Alam said both the stalwarts were prominent Unani physicians and institution builders who worked selflessly and tirelessly for the community's empowerment. He noted that Jamia Hamdard's founder, Hakim Abdul Hameed, was a visionary figure in every respect and that Jamia Hamdard and other institutions are proof of that.

When the Muslim elite began migrating to Pakistan during the turbulent times, Hakim sab was the one who was busy buying a large plot of land in an uninhabited and isolated district of Delhi, based on his intuition about the land the VC added.

He reiterated his commitment to eliminating the shortcomings in the functioning of the School of



Unani Medical Education and Research. The VC also made it clear that there was no move to end Urdu's mandatory status as a medium of instruction for Unani Medicine.

On occasion, speakers underlined that the major goal of World Unani Day is to raise awareness about the Unani system of Medicine and its preventive and curative philosophy in healthcare delivery. They said the programme will serve as a demonstration for the effectiveness of Unani Medicine in addressing today's health issues. Every year, Unani Day is observed to commemorate the global spread of Unani Medicine and remember the birth anniversary of Unani scholar and social reformer Hakim Ajmal Khan. He was a prominent Indian Unani physician who was a multi-talented genius, a great scholar, a social reformer, a noted freedom warrior, an Unani medical educator, and the originator of scientific study in the Unani System Medicine.

In his remarks, Vaidya Jayant Deopujari, Chairperson, National Commission for Indian System of Medicine, stressed the importance of communicating information and research findings to the general public, especially in local languages. He advised teachers to gain a thorough understanding of the

system and to excite and motivate students.

Prof. Asim Ali Khan, Director General of the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM), gave an overview of the Central Council's research activities. He also told the audience about the research

centers in Hyderabad, Srinagar, Chennai, and Aligarh. He emphasized the importance of Wellness Centers, where patients can receive advantages from all Indian Pathies under the AYUSH umbrella. He promised that the Research Council would fund Jamia Hamdard's collaborative studies.

Prof. Mohammad Idris, Head, PG Department of Ilmul Advia and Saidla, A & U Tibbiya College, Karolbagh, emphasized Unani Medicine's importance in today's health scenario. He emphasized the importance of human values ineffective therapy and asked Unani Practitioners to treat each patient with the highest kindness and moral standards.

Hammad Ahmed, son of late Hakim Abdul Hameed sahib, Chancellor of Jamia Hamdard, and Chief Mutawalli of Hamdard National Foundation, hailed the organizing team's efforts for a successful event and assured Unani School and Jamia Hamdard his full support. ■

Rahmani30 invites Application for admission to new Session

RAHMANI 30



ENTRANCE EXAM FOR Session 2022-2024

Patna: The Rahmani Program of Excellence (Rahmani30) has invited applications for its new Session 2022-24. The entrance test for the Session will be conducted as per the COVID situation. Applicants will be notified of the exam via email and website. Like every year, students will be selected from all over the country. Muslim minority students will be able to take part in this entrance test, for which they will have to complete the online application form at www.rahmanimission.org. The entrance test is based on the minimum common syllabus between CBSE, ICSE, and the State Boards and covers subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Social Studies, English Language, and general principles of Islam. The test will also feature questions from mental math and aptitude, and students will be required to attempt all subjects. Note that the Application is open only for those who are going to complete 10th

class in 2022. Selected students will prepare for highly competitive national examinations such as CA, CS, CLAT, JEE, NDA, NEET. Despite the pandemic-induced adverse situation, 185 and 68 students from Rahmani30's engineering stream qualified for JEE Mains and JEE Advanced this year, respectively, while 100 percent of its medical students passed the NEET entrance exam and 61 received government seats. This year, in the commerce stream, 37 students qualified ICAI Commerce Wizard, adding feathers in the institution's cap. According to Fahad Rahmani, CEO, the movement aims to achieve academic excellence and raise hope in the youth, especially from the underserved and underprivileged minorities. Under the banner of Rahmani30, Muslim minority students have achieved remarkable success in engineering, medicine, and commerce. ■

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Minority Ministry develops Waqf properties through two Schemes

By Zeenat Akhtar

New Delhi: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi told the Parliament that his Ministry is executing two schemes through the Central Waqf Council, the Qaumi Waqf Board Taraqqiati Scheme (QWBTS) and the Shahari Waqf Sampatti Vikas Yojana (SWSVY).

State Waqf Boards (SWBs) receive financial help from QWBTS for computerization and digitalization of Waqf data and GIS mapping of Waqf holdings. The Ministry also assists SWBs in the deployment of manpower, such as Assistant Programmer, Survey Assistant, Accountant, and Legal Assistant, as well as the establishment of Video Conferencing Facilities, the maintenance of Centralized Computing Facilities (CCF), and the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Solutions for better SWB administration. SWSVY provides Waqf Institutions/Waqf Boards with interest-free loans to finance economically feasible projects on urban Waqf land, such as commercial complexes, marriage halls, hospitals, cold storages, etc. Replying to a written question, the minister said the Ministry's Grants-in-Aid to CWC for 2016-



17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 are Rs. 280 lakh, Rs. 1218 lakh, Rs. 1495 lakh, Rs. 1491 lakh, and Rs. 300 lakh, respectively. CWC has provided an amount of Rs.1761.90 lakh in interest-free loans to various Waqf institutions/ Waqf Boards to develop multiple projects like commercial and residential complexes, auditoriums, hospitals, wedding halls, cold storage, and other projects over the last five years.

All credible proposals received through SWBs from Waqf institutions seeking interest-free loans for the developments of Waqf properties in various states, including Maharashtra, are evaluated in accordance with the plan standards. ■

«Page 3

Telangana Muslims demand review petition on SC ruling on Waqf Property

true motive: to take the valuable waqf property. It is deeply concerning that the MIM has made no position on this crucial and massive matter of waqf.

ET Narasimha, Secretary City CPI, said the best way to solve Waqf lands' problems is to turn the Waqf Board into a commissionerate. Despite having all the necessary documentation, Hameed Shuttari,

president of, All India Sunni Ulema Board, stated his great disappointment that a Waqf land valued at one lakh crore will be handed over to Lanco Hills, Emaar, and the government.

Mohammad Afzal Advocate emphasized the importance of the Waqf Board filing a review petition as soon as possible while engaging the services of notable lawyers. ■

Bazm Niswan distributes scholarships worth Rs 1.32 crore to 3613 Girls

Bangalore: Bazm Niswan Charitable Trust, a charitable organization, gave scholarships of Rs. 1.32 crore to 3613 underprivileged and eligible girl students through cheques. The women's group, founded in 1971, has granted scholarships to over 63,000 female students to pursue their studies. After completing their studies, these pupils are now successful teachers, professors, doctors, lawyers, government officials, business women, engineers, and journalists in government and non-government departments.

On February 10, a special event was conducted here to present scholarships. Bazm President Mrs. Husna Sharief told the kids that due to Covid pandemic criteria, only ten pupils were invited to the program. The remaining students will get their scholarship funds via an online deposit into their bank accounts. She advised the pupils to follow the four-point programme in order



to live a good life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed us always, to tell the truth, never compromise our integrity, always treat others with respect, seek permissible subsistence, and be content with lawful sustenance. She said Bazm had invited online applications in October and November 2021. 4505 online applications have been received in the last two months, with 70% of female students coming from BPL families and 29% from APL families.

12.2 percent of these students received 90 to 100 percent on their previous examinations, while 23 percent obtained 80-90 percent. Similarly, 27% of students have secured 70 to 80 %. She stated that the academic achievement of these young ladies has improved with each passing year. The meeting was also attended by Bazm's Joint Secretary Rehmat Bano and Trustee Ms. Parveen Apa. Career Counselor Ameen Mudassir moderated the proceedings of the event. ■



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Staff Writer

At AMU, books are available at a 50% discount

Aligarh: Students and other bibliophiles at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) can rejoice since the university's Publications Division is offering half-price books.

University students can now get a 50% discount on all heavy tomes, hardbacks, paperbacks, and softbacks produced by Publications Division and Sir Syed Academy from any year, while book enthusiasts who are not AMU students can get a 50% discount on any books released up to 2005.

"The large price drop for students and other readers is part of an appealing discount programme that was recently adopted," says Prof Ali Mohammad Naqvi (Director, Publications Division and Sir Syed Academy).

"However, non-university students will be able to purchase Publications Division and Sir Syed Academy books issued after 2005 using the regular discount procedures." They will still receive a 25% discount on purchases of up to nine books, a 30% discount on purchases of 10-24 books, a 33% discount on



purchases of 25-49 books, and a 50% discount on purchases of 50-100 books," he explained.

"To mark the AMU centenary year celebrations, the Sir Syed Academy has also released 11 monographs on prominent personalities associated with the mission of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and 'Aligarh Movement' including on Raja Jai Kishan Das (English), Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum (English), Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (English), Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan (English), Colonel Bashir Hussain Zaidi, (English), Sir Ross Masood (Urdu), Justice Sir Shah Mohammad Sulaiman

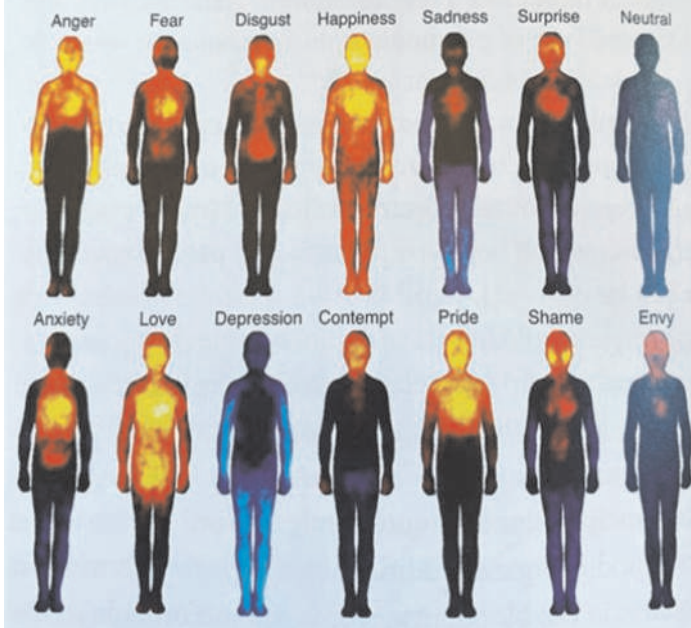
(Urdu), Moulvi Chirag Ali (Urdu), Papa Mian Shaikh Abdullah (Urdu), Nawab Sir Hafiz Ahmad Said Khan (Urdu), and Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk (Urdu), Prof Naqvi adds.


Dr Mohammad Shahid (Deputy Director, Publications Division) said: "To commemorate the hundredth year of the university, special centenary year editions have also been published such as

'History of The MAO College' (Hardbound, Language: English) by SK Bhatnagar; 'The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan' (Hardbound, Language: English) by Lieut. Colonel GFI Graham; 'Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Re Interpretation of Muslim Theology' (Hardbound, Language: English) by Prof Christian W. Troll; 'Tabyin Al-Kalam: The Gospel according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98)' (Hardbound, Language: English) translated and annotated by Christian W. Troll, Mahboob Basharat Mughal and Charles M. Ramsey; 'Maqalat e Sir Syed', Vol- I, (Two Volumes, Hardbound, Language: Urdu) compiled by Maulana Mohammad Ismail Panipati; 'Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Memorial Lectures' (Hardbound, Language: English), compiled by Prof Shan Mohammad; 'Awaaz-e-Sir Syed' (A collection of articles by Prof

Shan Mohammad on various facets of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (Hardbound, Language: Urdu) compiled by Dr. Shahnoor Shan; and 'Women in AMU at 100' by Dr Faiza Abbasi, which traces the educational and personal philosophies of three vital figures in the Aligarh Movement- Sir Syed, the founder; Begum Sultan Jahan, the first Chancellor; and Sheikh Abdullah, the pioneer of female education in Aligarh." He also mentioned that 'A History of Aligarh Muslim University 1920-2020,' a pictorial depiction of AMU's 100 years, and Jahan-e-Syed (Hardbound, Language: English, Edition: 2017, available at a 50% discount), a coffee table book on Sir Syed's life and works with rare photographs, are available at the Publications Division's sales outlet. Several more notable volumes have been produced by the Publications Division and the Sir Syed Academy as part of the AMU centennial celebrations. ■

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A.S. Ibrahim

Inventing a French version of Islam?

After numerous horrifying attacks in recent years, the French government seems to acknowledge that atrocities and terrorism can be driven by religious beliefs and in fulfillment of theological commitments by self-identified Muslims.

France now seeks to reform Islam by government action. The Associated Press reports that the plan is to form a "new body" of Muslims named The Forum of Islam, which will work closely with the government "to reshape Islam in France and rid it of extremism." All the members of this forum "will be hand-picked by the government, and women will make up at least a quarter of them."

This forum is labeled "new" because France has been trying in vain for years to deal with Islamic extremism. Since he took office, French President Emmanuel Macron has repeatedly called for a French version of Islam. More than once, he insisted, "The influence of Islamism must be eradicated from public institutions."

But nothing has really changed, and extremism under the umbrella of Islam continues to terrify the French people.

Some claim that Macron is making a political move to please conservatives and right-wingers to secure his reelection later this

year, but this seems simplistic, as people across the political spectrum see a problem of Islamic extremism in France.

The Islamic masses are not likely to be impressed by the French government's official version of a new Islam that is completely compatible with modern secular values.

The idea of Islam for France reflects another desperate attempt by the French nation to deal with its Muslim community—the largest outside the Islamic world. The plan demonstrates that the secular government has finally been forced to acknowledge the significant role Islam plays in the life of many of its citizens. But can a government reshape or reform Islam? Should it try? Is this government's role?

While we can all hope for successful efforts to see militant Islam substantively weakened, we should be skeptical that governments can reform ideologies. A government can redesign rhetoric about Islam and reshape Islamic interpretations by relying on liberal and progressive Muslims, but politicians can hardly achieve the reformation of Islam. Furthermore, the Islamic masses are not likely to be impressed by the French government's official version of a



France's government tries to create a new religion in its own image

new Islam that is completely compatible with modern secular values.

More fundamentally, we should be skeptical because the failure of France's various attempts to deal with Islamic extremism shows its inability to understand a distinctive Islamic worldview. While many French Muslims would arguably criticize and condemn attacks against non-Muslims, we should think carefully about the Muslim enthusiasts who carry out terrorist attacks. Muslim zealots are driven by a uniquely theological worldview.

In this worldview, France and the entire non-Muslim West for that matter—is the realm of Satan. For these Muslims, anything French is un-Islamic, and French values are evil. The French government is non-Muslim and thus an enemy. In a sense, these Muslims live in France, but France does not live in

them. Their hearts long for the day when France will be an Islamic state, completely subjugated to Islam's hegemony. For these religious zealots, the act of assimilation and integration in French society is to be despised and viewed as joining the camp of the unbelievers. This is a distinctive Islamic worldview.

Can they now create a French

Islam? Sure, they can but on paper only. Real life operates by different rules, and worldviews do matter.

(Source: <https://wng.org/opinions/inventing-a-french-version-of-islam>)

(The writer is a professor of Islamic studies and director of the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He authored several books) ■

OIC Underscores Importance of Agri produces in Poverty Reduction

Doha: Speaking at the opening ceremony of the OIC Forum on the Development of Strategic Agricultural Commodities and Experts Meeting on Food Safety and Healthy Food, in hybrid format in Doha, from 14th to 16th February 2022, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Economic Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, emphasized the importance of agricultural commodities for food and nutrition security.

In this perspective, he noted that agricultural commodity market volatility increased dramatically during the COVID-19 epidemic, making several OIC commodity-dependent countries more susceptible. Dr. Sengendo further stated that such vulnerability lay

at the heart of many of the OIC countries' economic and social difficulties and that tackling this phenomenon was critical to attaining sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and food security.

The Forum and Experts Meeting focused on implementing the OIC Programmes of Action for the Development of Three Agricultural Commodities, namely wheat, rice, and cassava, endorsed by the OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2021. The other topics highlighted are food safety, Halal food standards, establishing resilient food systems, expanding agricultural investments, and enhancing human and institutional skills in OIC Member States. ■

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A B MASOUD

The hijab row in the southern Indian state of Karnataka has triggered intense anti-India sentiments in the Arab world. A protest was also staged in front of the Indian embassy in Kuwait for the first time. Scores of Muslim women staged an in Kuwait City in connection with harassment of female students for wearing hijab in some Indian states, especially Karnataka.

However, Arab social media is rife with anti-India sentiments. However, this time was more intense than previous mob lynching incidents and attacks on mosques and cemeteries. Given

the absence of personal liberty in Arab countries, the outpouring of anti-India sentiment on social media platforms shows that Arab governments want to voice their dissatisfaction with developments in India, which might have far-reaching consequences for the Indo-Arab age-old relationship.

As a result, Arabs, particularly those from the oil-rich Gulf countries, have been calling for a boycott of Indian products on Twitter and other social media platforms for about a year. They use the logos of Indian businesses that sell their wares in the Gulf,

Hijab issue triggers anti-India sentiments in the Arab world



and they plan to use it to put pressure on India to abandon policies that they consider "anti-Muslim." The interesting aspect is that certain countries want to take advantage of exporting more from these Arab countries, thereby removing India from the market. This is the first time I've seen Arab social media influencers openly waging anti-India campaigns and urging people to help India's "250 million" Muslims, according to Faizul Haq, a senior journalist who has worked in the Arab media and maintains a close eye on events in the region. Many writers and social media activists have

claimed that India's saffron brigade despises all things associated with Islam, according to Faizul Haq, who spoke with *Islamic Voice*. The majority of Arab women wear the hijab, which is an integral part of their culture. He went on to say that the anti-Hijab movement in India offends their culture and faith.

Anti-Islamic hostility is said to be on the rise in India. Because they believe that Indians come here to work in their country but disdain their faith and culture, which is also practiced by a religious minority in India, these attitudes have developed into hatred towards Indians.

As a result, Arabs, notably those from the oil-rich Gulf countries, have been using a hashtag on Twitter and other social media platforms to call for a boycott of Indian products for almost a year.

They use the logos of Indian enterprises that sell their products in the Gulf market. They aim to use it as a means of putting pressure on India to stop pursuing policies that they consider to be "anti-Muslim." The interesting element is that some countries want to take advantage of the potential to export more from these Arab countries, thereby displacing India from the market. The demand for the expulsion of Indians from the majority group from the Gulf to pressure India not to harm Indian Muslims is a new component of this social media campaign. Because employment is a key issue among Arabs, there is the likelihood that this campaign will gain traction. They would want to replace Indians in as many jobs as possible to ensure their employment. In the Gulf countries, Indians make up the largest expatriate group. Other countries, likewise, would like to send their personnel to the Gulf. ■

VIEWPOINT

Where is India Heading Towards?

Dr Mohd Manzoor Alam

The framers of our Constitution dreamt of an ideal nation, which aspired to be inclusive and respected the nation's rich diversity. Striving at the nation's prosperity and progress, India's Constitution embraced a democratic ethos ahead of its time. The far-sightedness of these leaders could be summed up as phenomenal. The extensive constitutional debates at the time of its formation are a testimony to the efforts put in by our nation's founding fathers to make India the inclusive country that it is intended for.

Cut to 2022, where do we stand as a nation? The state-affiliated violence ushered on minorities, the vilification of Muslims and weaker sections of society, and the Hindutva zealots' pursuit of recasting the democratic nation into a Hindu *Rashtra* pinpoint the failure of the vision of independent India entwined by the Constitution makers of India. The country has been stooping low each day to a new record. Now, the students belonging to the Muslim community are being denied their fundamental rights, and the people of India are busy debating whether sporting a *hijab* is an "essential" practice or not.

The sacrifices made by our people during the Partition, who lost their blood and sweat, are being humiliated and ridiculed by the demonstrative pseudo-nationalists. The spirit of the Constitutional institutions is losing its sheen and has been painted in the hue of "saffronised" political ideology. The utter silent policy adopted by the ruling party on the matters of hate speech, lynching, online auction of Muslim women, slapping draconian laws on political activists, etc., against people from minority communities say a lot about their ideological alignment.

In such bleak days, what are we left with? The Constitution is the simplest answer. The idea of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity of "SOVEREIGN

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India is the only ray of hope we have at our disposal. Upholding these values is both the responsibility of our government and its people, especially those who believe in religious majoritarianism. We must remind ourselves why India embraced everyone, irrespective of caste, class, and religion. There is a vast contrast between what our forefathers imagined India and how it turned out to be. We now have our elected leaders who use derogatory name-calling for Muslims and identify people by their clothes. What are they feeding the young mind? Isn't this behaviour normalizing institutional violence and hate speech? The other pillars of democracy need to take cognizance of the departure of democratic India into an authoritative one and proceed accordingly.

The vision of our forefathers to set a precedent for the world, modeling India as an inclusive and diverse country, is being crushed by anti-minorities brigades. Prior to this, India had been looked up to as one of the fastest-growing economies with socio-cultural development, aiming to make India a global power. Currently, India is lagging in all the social indices, which puts India into a compromised position. Globally, multiple reports indicate decay in India's democratic ethics. Earlier, the world that used to look at India with such fascination with regards to its commitment to secularism and economic progress is now watching India's violent attacks on minorities at each step. The dent in the Constitutional practices has placed India as "partly free" (according to an annual report on global political rights and liberties) from a "free" country, indicating a downfall of India's democracy.

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The Impacts of Western Movies on Muslim Youths



Amina Aliyu .M,
Ladidi Aliyu .M

This study which is a desktop review analyses the impact of movies on the moral decay of Youth in the Islamic world. Such issues like Moral deterioration which refers to the failure to uphold sound morality of the individual or the society, Morality according to Islamic injunction which is the ability to uphold sound morality as laid down by the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Good character, Modesty and Humility in Islam are analysed. The study went ahead to examine and analyze the impact of both Western and Home movies in contributing to the deterioration of morality of Youth living in an organized, sound and ideal society. A society that is guided by the holy Qur'an and the teachings of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). At the end of the study, it is concluded that movies whether western or home movies have more negative effect on the moral lives of the Youth than they have positively.

Western movies and the moral deterioration of Youth

Western movies in the form of Hollywood movies have come to dominate the way of thinking of the Youth in the Islamic World. The Youth tend to adopt the lifestyles represented in the movies for example, the way the Youth behave, dress or express their feelings are in most cases in accordance with the movies Youth have been exposed to. And some of these lifestyles appearing in the movies are, for example, dressing half-naked, partying, smoking, and drinking alcohol. Others might be the language effect as people may turn to speak American accent, adopt American slangs and jargons to their daily lives which have seriously caused the change in the behaviours and thoughts of the Youth. A study carried out by psychological researchers at Dartmouth and published in Psychological Science, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science confirms that Hollywood movies are sexually charged and that fact has negatively impacted teenagers who watch them.

The study asserts that Youth who regularly view movies with sexual content have a greater tendency to begin engaging in sexual activity at a younger age and also have more casual sexual partners. Much research has shown that adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviours are influenced by media. Prior to the study, O'Hara and his fellow Dartmouth researchers surveyed nearly 700 of the top-grossing movies from 1998 to 2004, rating the movies for sexual content ranging from heavy kissing to sexual intercourse.

According to O'Hara, the research found that those Youth who had been exposed to sexual content in movies tended to be more highly sexualized than those who are sheltered from such content. In analyzing films over the past six decades, the researchers found that among Hollywood films produced from 1950 to 2006 around 85 percent contained sexual content. And by Hollywood ratings, 88 per cent of R-rated movies had sexual content, 85 percent of PG-13 movies, 82 percent of PG-rated movies, and, surprisingly, 68 percent of G-rated films. The researchers found that sexually explicit content has increased steadily over the past decade for both PG-13-rated and R-rated movies. They also found that 70 percent of the sexual acts depicted in movies from 1983 to 2003 occurred between newly acquainted partners and 89 percent of those sexual acts resulted in no consequences. Impressionable children and teens are influenced by the media they consume. Over 60 years of research and over 3,000 studies now have linked violent media content, aggression, cigarette smoking in films and the likelihood teens will take up smoking, and more recently, exposure to sexual content in entertainment and early onset of sexual activity is evident in teens. Globalization as pointed out by (Hachten & Scotton, 2011) is on the rise, thus, the media has made it easy to access everything that one needs without much effort. It is possible to get all the movies and music that one wants in all parts of the world. Western



The conservative nature of Islamic morals is slowly being eroded out (Khalil & Kraidy, 2009). According to Meltzoff and Moore (1977), heavy exposure to television is believed to be one of the causes of aggressive behaviour, crime, and violence in society.



movies tend to reflect the Western lifestyle, which is luxurious in nature and full of freedom. When people watch American lifestyle from these movies, for example, the shows are bound to affect their attitudes. The movies may make such individuals question what they have always believed in for a long time. Hence, many Youths are often influenced by these lifestyles since most of them want to live the way the actors live. Parents believe that these movies are the source of queer behaviours among the Youths. Even though most Youths are passive audiences, there is the fear that they tend to pick the wrong ideas and practices. Youths are most likely to be affected given that they are very flexible both culturally and socially. The flexibility allows them to shift easily from one culture to the next. Youths are the main targets due to the high rate of unemployment in the world (Mahdi, 2003). The Youths have a lot of time at their disposal, and most of them spend it watching American movies. In fact, Western movies are easily accessible. Some of such movies are shown on televisions that most Youths watch through satellite, buy or rent from the internet. The level at which exposure to Western movies is influencing the Youths identities has increased. The relationships between sexes have increased, Girls' modes of dressing have changed to be revealing and daring. The conservative nature of Islamic morals is slowly being eroded out (Khalil & Kraidy, 2009). According to Meltzoff and Moore (1977), heavy exposure to television is believed to be one of the causes of aggressive behaviour, crime, and violence in society.

(source: <https://prnigeria.com/>)

Moscow's Oldest Mosque Representing Islamic Culture, Art



TEHRAN (IQNA): The Old Mosque of Moscow is one of Russia's most magnificent Muslim places of worship. Located in the Russian capital city's Bolshaya Tatarskaya Street, it is the oldest mosque in Moscow. Its construction began in 1823, and the mosque was completed in 1881. Since then, it has been repaired and restored several times. In 1881, during the reign of Alexander II, permission was given to complete the minaret and dome of the mosque. Later a restoration project was carried out by a famous Russian architect, and the capacity of the mosque was raised to 1,500. Until 1904, it was known as the grand mosque of Moscow. When the current grand mosque was built in Olimpiysky Avenue, close to the Olympic Stadium in the center of the city, the older one was renamed

to the Old Mosque of Moscow.

In 1939, the mosque was closed at the order of the Soviet authorities. In January 1991, the Moscow City Council decided to reopen the mosque and hand its management over to the Muslim community. The interior of the mosque is very soothing, and the walls have been decorated with traditional artwork.

It is not only a mosque but a cultural and education center where educational courses on Quran, Islamic teachings, and Arabic are offered.

Hosting Friday prayers is one of the major religious activities in the mosque.

Representing the Islamic culture and art in Moscow, the mosque, with its unique architecture, has turned into a tourism attraction in recent years.

(Source: <https://iqna.ir/en/news/>)

Dr. Afnan Al-Shuaiby new Executive Director of OIC's Women Development Organizations

Jeddah: A high-level delegation of the OIC General Secretariat participated in the Women Development Organization's (WDO) third Extraordinary Ministerial Council meeting in OIC Member States, virtually on February 16, 2022.

Dr. Maya Morsi, President of the National Council for Women in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chair of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, and Chair of the Women Development Organization's Ministerial Council presided over the meeting.

Dr. Afnan Abdullah Al-Shuaiby, the first Executive Director, WDO, the OIC's newly founded specialized organization in charge of women empowerment and development, based in Cairo, Egypt, was announced by Dr. Morsi in her inaugural remark.

In his introductory remarks, OIC Secretary-General Hissein Ibrahim Taha welcomed the newly appointed Executive Director and wished her all the best in her new role as head of the OIC's most significant specialized organization.

According to the secretary-general, the OIC places a high value on the



WDO's role as a major contributor to women's empowerment in the Member States. "With the selection of its Executive Director, the OIC General Secretariat is confident that this Organization will achieve a qualitative breakthrough that will meet the ambitions of all women in the Member States, regardless of their circumstances," he said. The new WDO Executive Director, for her part, expressed gratitude to the Organization's Member States for their trust in her.

Dr. Afnan, a Saudi national, brings more than two decades of expertise and a strong track record of providing budgetary, strategic, and operational leadership in unique settings in Saudi Arabia, the wider Arab world, the United Kingdom, and the United States to the role.

Siddhartha

A significant way to promote communal harmony is to work together on common themes that interest all faith traditions. One such important theme is climate change. Today, it is amply clear that climate change will create millions of climate refugees in the decades to come, dramatically reduce food production, and flood coastal cities. We are already witnessing these effects worldwide with forest fires, hurricanes, floods, and high temperatures. All the faith traditions have expressed significant concerns about this.

Therefore, dealing with the climate emergency would also foster friendship, trust, and harmony between the religions.

When our ancient religions emerged in history, ecological threats hardly existed. Hence, the various scriptures may not find forceful statements on the environment. Nevertheless, there are significant statements strewn here and there that could provide the basis for a fresh interpretation of texts.

Here are a few responses from some major religions on how to view nature and respond to the ecological challenges we face:

Many Hindus would consider protecting the environment as an integral expression of dharma. In 2015, the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change (from the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies) stated that it is a

"dharmic duty [to ensure that] we have a functioning, abundant, and bountiful planet."

The "Hindu Declaration on Climate Change," presented at the Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne, Australia, December 8, 2009, states:

"The Hindu tradition understands that man is not separate from nature, that we are linked by spiritual, psychological, and physical bonds with the elements around us. Knowing that the Divine is present everywhere and in all things, Hindus strive not to harm. We hold a deep reverence for life and an awareness that the great forces of nature the Earth, the water, the fire, the air and space as well as all the various orders of life, including plants and trees, forests and animals, are bound to each other within life's cosmic web.

We cannot continue to destroy nature without also destroying ourselves.

In May 2015, A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change was addressed to the Paris conference on climate change. Our concern is founded on the Buddha's realization of dependent co-arising, which interconnects all things in the universe. Understanding this interconnected causality and the consequences of our actions are critical steps in reducing our environmental impact. Cultivating the insight of

Interfaith Dialogue and Climate Change

Climate Change and Stewardship of the Earth



interbeing and compassion, we will be able to act out of love, not fear, to protect our planet. Buddhist leaders have been speaking about this for decades. However, everyday life can easily lead us to forget that our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world through every breath, water, and food we eat. We are destroying the very life support systems that we and all other living beings depend on for survival through our lack of insight.

A Hadith related by a Muslim from Ab Sa'd Al-Khudr states: "We bear in mind the words of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): The world is sweet and verdant, and verily Allah has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves."

Here are excerpts from the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate change, made in Istanbul in August 2015

2.8 In view of these considerations, we affirm that our responsibility as Muslims is to act according to the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who guided his companions to conserve water even in washing for prayer, forbade the felling of trees in the desert, ordered a man who had taken some nestlings from their nest to return them to their mother, and when he came upon a man who had lit a fire on an anthill, commanded, "Put it out, put it out!"; · Established inviolable zones (harams) around Makkah and Al-Madinah, within which native plants may not be felled or cut and wild animals may not be hunted or disturbed; ·

Established protected areas (him s) for the conservation and sustainable use of rangelands, plant cover, and wildlife; · Lived a frugal life, free of excess, waste, and ostentation; · Renewed and recycled his meager possessions by repairing or giving them away; · Ate simple, healthy food, which only occasionally included meat; · Took delight in the created world; and · Was, in the words of the Qur'an, "a mercy to all beings."

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Bossey, Switzerland, on 20-26 November 2019, stated the desire to join: "other faith leaders, communities and civil society organizations in declaring a climate change emergency, which demands an urgent and unprecedented response by everyone everywhere- locally, nationally and internationally.

In the foreword to the five volumes of the earth Bible project, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Nobel Prize winner, asks if biblical texts devalue the Earth "by making the self-interest of humans its dominant concerns." The "Earth's Bible" project explores the biblical texts from the Earth, suspecting that the text and its interpreters may be anthropocentric and not geocentric. It asks whether there is a concern for the Earth community in the text or whether Earth is being treated unjustly. It attempts to retrieve traditions that hear the voice of the Earth that value the Earth more than as a human instrument.

Ernst M. Conradie

Indigenous peoples have always lived close to nature. Here is a quote from Chief Seattle, after which the city of Seattle is named.

We know this: the Earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the Earth. Man has not woven the net of life: he is just a thread in it. Everything he does to this net, he does to himself. What befalls the Earth will befall the sons of the Earth. We know this. All things are bound up in each other like the blood that binds the family.

Let me conclude with a story that I call the parable of the frogs:



Several water wells existed in a dusty village. One well had pleasing saffron walls. A few frogs rested tranquility on its wall with their big, bulging, black eyes looking nowhere in particular. A gentle breeze stirred the few plants that clambered on the inside walls of the well. Life is good, the frogs thought to themselves. Other frogs were feeling the same way about life in a nearby well. This well had vibrant green walls. In the relative cool of the morning, the frogs gazed at the other wells nearby. One had yellow walls, another blue, and yet another silver.

The frogs sitting on the walls seemed happy to breathe the cool fragrance of moss and herb. By noon the weather got very hot. The frogs began to feel restless with the heat. As their irritation grew, they heard voices in their heads. The frogs in the green well heard a voice saying, "You are right to be upset, for although your well is the best one, and the waters the purest, the frogs in the other wells do not recognize this truth." The frogs in the saffron well also heard a voice saying that their well was the most

pristine. The frogs in the yellow and blue wells also heard similar 'truths'. Soon the frogs began to croak aggressively at the frogs on other wells, each trying to outdo the other.

This went on for a long time until the frogs became tired. And then a few frogs in the saffron well, now completely exhausted, decided to swim to the depths of their own well to cool themselves. The deeper they went, the cooler they felt... and calmer too. Then they noticed little crevices in the walls and went into them, and the water was even cooler. They progressed in horizontal mode through these crevices. When they later came up, they realized, to their utter astonishment, that they were in the wrong well. The frogs from the saffron well had come up in the green well. The frogs from the green well had the same experience, some of them coming up in the saffron well. Likewise, the yellow and blue frogs came up in other wells, not their own.

Word of the discovery that all the wells were interconnected at their depths and were nourished with the same waters, spread with the swiftness of frog-croak. The frogs realized that they experienced the illusion that the waters were different as long as they remained on the surface. At the surface level, the frogs experienced their separateness, but the deeper they swam, they experienced the healing influence of the common waters. The waters were, after all the same, coursing through each well through subterranean passages.

The story illustrates that there is a potential for all of us to meet together in the common waters deep within ourselves and sense our oneness, our non-duality. While we see differences on the top of the wells, deep down, they are all interconnected, and it's the same water that flows through all the wells.

**Siddhartha is the founder of Fireflies Ashram, an intercultural center in the South of India. He is also the Coordinator of the Meeting Rivers programme (sidd173@gmail.com)*

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Hijab Vs. Education Of Muslim Girls:

Onus Again is on Ulema to guide nothing is compromised.
Sir,

Though, recent happenings and debates on Hijab just sparked in the small town of Udupi, becoming a national level debate, are never to be mistaken as an accidental isolated incident being blown up. It is a larger conspiracy to distract the entire community and keep it busy dwelling on an issue that would keep it away from the path of solid education, which is the only way to keep them empowered and relevant in the country. Each of these issues raised from time to time systematically serves two purposes. One to polarise Indian cosmopolitan society and isolate Muslims as an untouchable tribe from majority Hindu brothers and sisters. Secondly, divert and distract Muslims into something that will stop their education and community-building progress. My point is proved when the Muslim girls skipped their exams and returned home, preferring the Hijab of a particular style over the exam. That could have been managed with dupatta on the head also tactfully. My greater fear is if our innocent and poor parents who courageously were sending their girls to schools and colleges as first-generation learners fall prey to the emotional speeches of our learned leaders and Ulema and discontinue their studies. There can not be a bigger disaster for the community and future generations if that happens. There is a great responsibility on Ulema, the community leaders, to sink on one resolve that Muslim women shall not discontinue or compromise on their education and path to their empowerment and of their prodigy, come what may. Please do not forget the Hadith of taking the middle path in times of crisis and Hikmath (tact and strategy) to keep your honour and still march ahead, without taking any step that takes you back in time. After all, you should realize that the section of extremist majority intends to distract you with one issue after another and keep you emotionally charged all the time for you don't concentrate on your educational progression. If our

leaders and Ulema easily fall prey to this and instead of collectively finding an intelligent compromising middle path solution to protect our girls from discontinuing education, take an uncompromising position, disaster to the community is ensured by depriving them of education. After all, we all want our daughters to be doctors, engineers, lawyers, professors, teachers, scientists, and administrators and make our community relevant in the country, not the congregation of illiterate women. Whatever the court's decision, my appeal to parents and Muslim girls is to take the middle path and never discontinue schools and colleges. I would even urge the community to now send more girls with a vengeance to schools and professional colleges if we have to be relevant in the country and benefit from the country's future prosperity and development.

Prof Jalees Ahmed Khan Tareen (Padma Shri) Former VC to Kashmir University, Pondicherry University and BSA University

"Interfaith Dialogue and Religious Tolerance"

Sir,

"Interfaith dialogue and Religious Tolerance" is a topic that has become pertinent and addressed by Tahsin Ahmed in the IV Feb 2022 issue.

As pointed out by the writer, many "interfaith dialogue events" are organized at both local and global levels. The idea of these interfaith dialogues is to bring an understanding among followers of different faiths and put forth the common ground to promote peace and harmony.

In this regard, Western countries are much more ahead of Eastern countries.

Why? For the simple reason that Western society is much more open-minded, they give themselves a chance to know and learn what they don't know.

The law and justice in these countries are not as much prejudiced.

Open dialogues unveil the shrouds and curtains of assumed secrecy.

Coming to India, as the author points out, by the passing of time, the dividing lines between Hindus



and Muslims are getting ever thicker and wider.

After independence, India was mainly and mostly ruled by democratically elected secular political parties. In the past few years, right-wingers have taken over the country's reins. Every election is being contested strictly based on "suppress the minority and appease the majority, not on social issues but religious bigotry and it is working well with the masses.

From the above observations, it is clear that an open-minded and educated society is the key for interfaith dialogues to be successful. Secondly, dialogues in limited captive intellectuals in the auditorium will not have that mass effect compared to brainwashed people in political rallies.

History has witnessed how the dictators and autocratic rulers came to power and carried out atrocities with such evil and cruelty.

India being thickly populated and a vast majority being poorly literate, immersed deep into blind faith can easily be manipulated by political leaders. Suppose the political leaders with extreme discriminative and biased ideology and salutation of Hitler come in power through the democratic process and treat one particular minority as the arch-enemy. Where would the room be for any dialogue? At every step, minorities are targeted over their eating habits, clothes they wear, Eid they celebrate, and thousands of places of worship are claimed as temples then; where will be the room for dialogue?

My argument is interfaith dialogue is possible in an educated and open society, not in the environment where so-called national leaders promote animosity.

Your observation of the WhatsApp group is partially true. Human beings are social animals,

and they like to find and prefer to mingle with their own kind. This can be based on religion, sect, language, geographical location, etc. They could relate to some common bonds.

You are right that there are no constructive dialogues in the mixed groups. On the contrary, they are used to spreading hate messages and biased political views without considering that they could be hurtful to other group members.

The suggestions made by the author in "The way forward" are all valid and must be put into practice wherever and whenever we can, especially in good causes and in times of need.

Unfortunately, there is another side to how many segregated communities have been formed where people find themselves and their families safe and protected. Denial dealing with real estate, whether for rental or purchase, has become a common occurrence, and this has become a pan India problem, including cosmopolitan places.

In most countries, the majority gets aggressive and the minority suppressive. When the ruling political party from the majority with a skewed philosophy creates a vitriolic and vitiated atmosphere, it becomes tough for the minority, lagging in education and struggling for daily survival. When the communities of minorities are neglected by the municipalities and discrimination is faced at every level, it becomes challenging. Everything being privatized is also a conspiracy. No laws of minority quota will be applicable in these firms and companies.

The author has suggested an attempt to bring harmony and understanding to the world we live in, but it will be an uphill task.

The first place where we have to start is to learn to use our vote wisely. There is a need to find and form our leadership to represent minorities in Assemblies and Parliament.

The environment has become so venomous that being friendly with Cobra doesn't mean that you are safe from its bite. The only way to be safe is to defang the serpent politically. Politics is the source of both extreme evilness and atrocities. At the same time, it is also the source of reform and the community's respect. Politicians should understand that in unity, we stand, and divided we fall. As rightly pointed out in the article, the nation's prosperity is in the unity among its citizens.

Qazi Minhaj Azher
USA

Sir,

Your February 2022 issue of IV carried an excellent article on "Interfaith Dialogue and Religious Tolerance" written by Mr. Syed Tahsin Ahmed. This article has been written after good research, and as is usual with this author's writings, it is thoughtful. The author points out the basic tendencies among the various religions in not mingling with one another and having self-created boundaries. This impedes the intermingling of different religious groups. It is indeed challenging to overcome all such taboos. Despite centuries of living together in this country, such distancing remains. We need to work to integrate our society. The recommendations given by the author for mitigating the problems within the Muslim community deserve serious consideration. Congratulations to the author and IV for such a brilliant article.

Iqbal Ahmed,
Bangalore

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Syed Tahsin
Ahmed

Standing at the gate of my house, I heard two young boys in a group quarreling with each other, or so it seemed to me. They were freely using abusive words (*gaalis*) on mother/sister, unprintable. But I realized soon enough that they were not quarreling. It was friendly banter but mixed with expletives and sometimes even accompanied by a slap on the back. It seems it has become a habit for them to speak thus.

For quite some time now, I have been watching the language of young boys in the age group of 10-20 years in Muslim-dominated areas, and I get shocked to hear the filthy language in day-to-day conversation. Every sentence they utter is either preceded or succeeded by foul words about the private parts. Some of the boys are school drop-outs, but many of them are school or college-going. Even small children, while playing, use the exact detestable words without understanding the horrible meaning of such words.

It is not surprising why they use such language uninhibited. The tongue of the father is no better. Thus, the cycle continues. These boys will grow up, get married, and have children who continue the bad precedent again. Sometimes the

mother can also stoop low and will freely use foul words. In the first place, we have corrupted the sweet Urdu language in our local dialect in Karnataka, and if that was not enough, this heavy use of expletives. My late father used to say that in the Lucknow of 1940s, a Tongawallah would quarrel thus: “*aap qamosh rahiye warna hum aap ki shaan mein gustaqi kardenge*”. Imagine how the elite would have conversed if an ordinary person could speak with such subtlety.

But things have changed everywhere. The English-speaking youngsters and even adults freely use the ‘F’ word, ‘shit,’ ‘bloody’ etc. These words are commonly used in Hollywood films nowadays. At one time, the use of the word ‘damn’ was considered profanity. In the 1939 film “*Gone with the wind*,” based on the novel by Margaret Mitchell, the line “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a ‘damn’” is claimed to be the first use of profanity in a major American film. Our Bollywood films freely use cuss words under the pretext that they want to make the characters more realistic. A few years back, Pahlaj Nihalani, Chairman, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), sent a list of words that cannot be used in films to the Producer’s Association and Regional Officers. While this was



welcomed by many, there was much negative criticism. The list was subsequently withdrawn.

The foul and abusive words in Urdu/Hindi often refer to the names of animals or incest or sex and generally degrade women by dragging the mother and sister into this. Those who freely use this kind of language forget the high and noble position accorded to the relationship with one’s mother and sister in every culture. In Islam, a popular *hadees* states that: “Paradise lies beneath the feet of mother.” These lines are often heard in sermons in the mosque, but they have no qualms about having a loose tongue once they are outside the mosque. It has to be drilled in both young and old minds that they should not use such detestable words. In the Friday sermons and elsewhere, efforts should be made to impress the people to speak courteously,

politely, decently, and without using foul words. A Persian proverb says “*zubaan sheerein mulk geeri*” (a sweet tongue wins the world). A sharp tongue kills, and a sweet tongue conquers the world.

Allah has given human beings the gift of eloquence. The way a man or woman speaks reflects his/her culture, upbringing, and character. We like to impress others with our dresses, hairstyle, and other paraphernalia. But what matters most is what we speak and how we speak. Quite often, a person is judged by his talk. It is common to see people reviling and mocking others and calling them names. But it should be remembered that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said: “A believer is never a person who scoffs at others, calls them names, or utters vulgar and obscene phrases” (Tirmidhi). This *hadith* reveals that slandering people, belittling them, and cursing them is prohibited. Believers are

expected to speak politely and pleasantly. Many Ahadees demonstrate that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would not abuse others, he would not use obscene words, and he would not curse others.

A social campaign called “*Gaali free India*” was started by Vandana Sethi in 2016 against profanity and abusive words. The motive of this campaign was to raise awareness among youth who are unable to control their feelings and find refuge in *gaalis* to vent their feelings and frustration. Creative online graphics and professional videos on a digital platform made it one of the most influential campaigns. The avowed objective was to create awareness against profanity (*gaalis*) in spoken and online interactions. Indeed, we need a ‘*Gaali free campaign*’ to create awareness among the young and old men and women of our community against abusive language (*gaalis*).

(The author is a retired KAS officer and can be contacted at tahsin789@yahoo.com)

In the Friday sermons and elsewhere, efforts should be made to impress the people to speak courteously, politely, decently, and without using foul words. A Persian proverb says “Zubaan Sheerein Mulk Geeri” (a sweet tongue wins the world). A sharp tongue kills, and a sweet tongue conquers the world.



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لِيُؤْتِيَهُمُ أَجْرَهُم وَيزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

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Reviewed by
M A Siraj

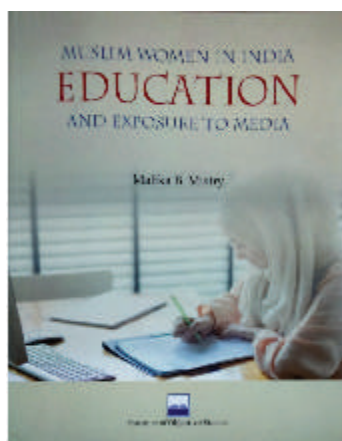
The book under review is a monumental exercise in mining data pertaining to education and media exposure of Muslims women from the four National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) held between 1992 and 2016. Pune based researcher Dr. Malika Mistry puts in perspective the educational backwardness of Muslims, especially their women, in terms of literacy, school attendance, general enrolment ratio (GER) and academic attainments in relation with women from other religious communities.

Several factors hinder the education of Muslims, especially the women. A general perception that women are better suited for role as a wife and mother discourages most families from enrolling the girl in schools and colleges. Distance of schools from homes is generally cited as a factors restricting enrolment of girls. Often the interpretation of the Quranic term *Qiwama* too reinforces patriarchal behavior. In olden days, most Quranic commentaries interpreted *Qiwama* as male being guardians of (and over) women. Recent commentators have digressed and would like the verse to be read as 'Muslim men should stand up for the women'. Absence of schools and colleges in Muslim concentrated areas too prove to be a bane. Muslims also suffer from a high dropout rate, even higher than

those among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Average annual dropout rate is said to be 9.1, highest among all communities. Any strategy to expedite the pace of literacy and enhancement of quality of education within the community would have to address these factors.

But it is the Muslims in the Hindi heartland who are the major laggards. As the study notes, four poorest states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh have 196 million or over half of the MPI (Multi-dimensional Poverty Index) poor of India. One has therefore to be mindful that educational backwardness is rampant among Muslims in states where also reside the most educationally backward Hindus. Haryana is another depressing story. Muslims in the state were found to be most excluded from the education mainstream, almost a 23% gap between its Muslim literacy rate and the state average in 2011. Muslim women in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu are almost on par with those among Hindus and Christians across scales of literacy, attendance, enrolment, and academic attainments. Those in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh too are catching up. Special schools set up by Telangana Government to promote quality education bore handsome results. These may serve as a few silver linings in the otherwise gloomy scenario.

Addressing Gender disparity in Muslim Education



**Muslim Women In India
Education and Exposure
to Media**
Malika B. Mistry
Institute of Objective
Studies
New Delhi,
Rs. 895/-, Pages 212.

The 2011 Census puts the rate of literacy among Muslims at 58% while 63% of Hindu population was literate. Christians had 74.3% literacy while the figure for the Sikhs stood at 67.5%. But the educational attainment is a more robust index of the quality of people. Only 2.8% of Muslims were found to be graduates. This was just half of what the Hindus were i.e., 6% while 25.6% among the Jains were graduates. The figure for the Christians was 8.8% while that for

the Sikhs was 6.4%. Women fare still worse. But the good news is that, of late, Muslims women are doing better than their male counterparts in urban areas and the pace of enrolment for community as a whole, in higher education has gone up considerably.

State intervention and initiatives from the NGOs within the Muslim community has led to encouraging results. In 90 minority-concentrated districts (MCDs) where the Prime Minister's 15-point programme and MSDP were launched, the Muslim literacy rate rose from 52.4% in 2001 to 63.5% in 2011. However, the gap between the average Muslim literacy rate for the MCDs and that for all the other religions which had been 4.2 in 2001, increased to 4.5 in 2011. In the past five years, the enrolment of Muslim women increased by 46%, while the overall figures for all categories rose by 24%. The ratio of Muslim women to overall Muslims enrolment has been one point higher than the general ratio. As many as 49% of Muslims enrolled in higher education were women, while it was 48% for all the communities taken together.

As for media exposure, Muslim women fared the worst in matters of newspaper reading. Hindus though fared better than them but were far behind the Jain and Christian women. In 1998-99, 20.2% Hindu women and 17.2% Muslim women were reading newspapers and magazines. This percentage rose



New initiatives have shown that more and more Muslim women can be brought into educational mainstream across all markers like literacy, general enrolment ratio, academic attainments and media exposure.



rather sluggishly to 26.4% and 22% respectively.

Mistry suggests Muslims to follow success models from Christian and Sikh communities who have achieved formidable success in elevating the educational standards of the respective communities. More residential schools for girls would address the concern on account of safety and commutation. The community would need to check dropout and take corrective measure to ensure retention of students for considerable number of years in schools.

The book serves as a timely reminder for a community waking up from deep slumbers and taking up stock of its situation. Data-filled pages may deter a casual browser from delving deep into the pages. Nonetheless, it fulfills a void that has often proved a handicap in taking up proactive measures. ■

Syed Ali Mujtaba

In the long list of bibliography on Kashmir, the fresh addition is the book 'Kashmir at the Crossroads' by Sumantra Bose. The book's unique selling point is its chapter 'The Hindu Nationalist Offensive' that dwells on the developments from 2019 onwards.

Sumantra Bose is no stranger to the world of academics. Apart from being the grandson of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, he is a Professor of international and comparative politics at the London School of Economics. He specializes in the study of ethnic and national conflicts and their management, with a particular focus on the Indian subcontinent (especially Kashmir) and the former Yugoslavia (in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina). The author writes; New Delhi's policy towards Kashmir resulted in a dysfunctional polity bordering on dystopia, ruled by a host of Draconian laws that hollowed out Article 370, and little that was left in an empty shell was taken out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government in 2019.

The unique contribution of this book is the study of the recent past, particularly the developments surrounding it since 5th August 2019. The fine print of the book is the burial of the skeleton of Article 370 is consequential as the author is of the view that the recent

developments have inaugurated a new phase in the history of the Kashmir dispute.

The author minces no words that the decision of the BJP was a politically motivated move to consolidate its Hindu constituency in the Indian hinterland. He argues that depriving JK of its special status wasn't motivated by a desire for equity in the Indian Union; rather it was an attempt to subdue the autonomy of a majority Muslim state, which was incongruous with their belief in a Hindunation.

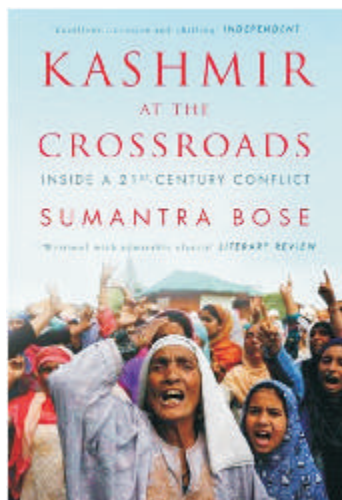
He writes; "Modi and Shah anticipated that the Pakistani reaction to the 'iron-fisted Kashmir policy' would make it hysterical and that this reaction would help the BJP to sell their brand of nationalism to the majority Indian public."

The BJP got it right in its first assumption but "the strongman duo did not anticipate the nature and severity of China's response and their master stroke on Kashmir brought China to India's doorsteps.

On 6 August 2019, a day after the move separating Ladakh from J&K, the Chinese foreign ministry issued a statement criticizing the action for unilaterally changing the status quo and exacerbating tensions.

The Chinese statement said, "India has continued to undermine China's territorial sovereignty by unilaterally changing its domestic

Kashmir at the Crossroads



law (on J & K) which is unacceptable."

Bose writes that this was not a mere statement as China moved from lurking in the background to looming in the foreground in 2020 and now the Kashmir conflict has become trilateral India-Pakistan-China.

Bose further writes "at the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first century, the Hindu nationalist attempt to radically reset the Kashmir question has resulted in the regional geopolitics of the conflict becoming explicitly trilateral India-Pakistan-China. He adds, "The Hindu Nationalist Offensive' on Kashmir has made the current

situation "highly flammable."

The book is divided into five sections; three sections focus on historical background: 1947-89, 1990-2004, and 2005-2019. The two sections are on the present-day, one on the actions of the ruling BJP government and one on the international dimensions of the crisis.

The section 'The Dispute' is an overview of the conflict from 1947 to 1989. 'The Carnage' chronicles the years of insurgency from 1990 to 2004 and the brutal state repression.

Bose writes the carnage that engulfed Jammu and Kashmir from 1990 is "a grim lesson in the ruinous potential... of nationalisms competing for supremacy."

The section 'The Stone Pellets' dwells on years from 2005-19. And section 'The Hindu Nationalist Offensive' deals from 2019 onwards, where the author opinions that the Kashmir conflict has entered a new phase.

The final chapter, "the 21st Century Conflict," details the current geopolitical status of the crisis. There is a summary of China's role in the conflict, which starts with explaining the Aksai Chin dispute and the bloody 2019 Galway encounter.

Then there is an analysis of the US's role, including Trump's courting of

Modi, and some predictions are made for the Biden administration. Here Bose highlights the major drivers and factors that will shape the conflict over the next few years and makes insightful predictions that allow us to see how almost seven decades on, this conflict is just as crucial for the future of the region as ever.

'Kashmir at the Crossroads' is a solid, unafraid scholarship peppered with personal reminiscences from the author's decades of engagement with the area and the subject. Every major political event of the last seven decades is discussed and analyzed in detail in this book.

Bose's book on Kashmir is commendable because he advocates rapprochement between "equally legitimate political aspirations" following the example of Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement.

He writes that if such a major crisis does explode, all is not lost as "such a conflagration might pave the way to finally laying the conflict to rest through diplomacy and statecraft." This relatively neutral stance by the author makes the book readable because this is one subject where truths are hidden under the heaps of lies.

(The Author is a journalist based in Chennai. He can be contacted at syedalimujtaba2007@gmail.com) ■



Ghulame Ghouse

Can Wishes And Sermons Solve Our Problem

You go to any Muslim majority area in India. You will find the majority of the Muslim children and youth who are uneducated, unemployed, drug users, quarrelsome, eve teasers, users of abusive language, law breakers, and a headache to the parents and police. It may be possible that my observation is wrong. When I spoke to some such youth, they told me that "they do not have interest in going to school because their parents are poor and could not provide sufficient food and can not bear their education expenses. This forces us to be what we are. parents quarrel over less income every day, which affects our psychology". If what is told by them is right, We, as members of this community, have to seriously think about whether we intellectuals, religious persons, and rich persons in the society are in some way or the other responsible for this situation or not. Wishing and lecturing are easy, but we have to solve these problems practically. To lead a

respectable life, we need education or skill. Both are absent; poverty, quarrels, and desperation are common. None of us can escape from our responsibility to the community. Undoubtedly, population growth among Muslims is on par with the other communities, but we are not providing quality education in this competitive world. This must be our priority. We have got innumerable problems, but we do not maintain priorities. Our teachers in Government primary and middle schools are not as competitive and knowledgeable as those in private schools because they do not read newspapers and other books. In higher studies, Muslims in 2010 were 2.5% but in 2019, it is 5.55%, and in teaching faculty from 2.95 to 5.55%. 77.63% have taken admission in meritless schools and colleges. Our progress in education is slow compared to other communities. Our next priority should be our participation in Government jobs. To better serve the community and the country, we need more clerks, supervisors, and class 2 officers because every issue and policy

starts with these officials and the files start moving from this level. Senior officers and politicians make decisions on the suggestion of these officials. I do not deny the importance of the senior officers, but the role of these junior officials is more important. Given this, we must prepare our children for these jobs in the Government. Likewise, we must have more constables and sub Inspectors. The other priority should be to induce our retired officers to serve the community by joining the political parties and the community organizations with a service motive. What we see today is these retired officers fade away after retirement. They expect that the community should respect them the way they were treated while in service, forgetting that they never interacted with the common Muslims. After retirement, they must forget that they were senior officers for at least two years and mingle with the common Muslims and serve them to get recognition. It is only then that they will be recognized and respected. These officers are better positioned to serve the community because of their

knowledge and experience while in service.

The Muslim organizations must identify them and encourage them to serve the community in other communities. Political power is significant in solving community problems. To achieve this, we must induce our retired and talented officers to join the political parties so that they, because of their knowledge and experience, become the eyes and ears of the politicians and become a part of the framing of policies. We must also remember that we become politically relevant and powerful only when we increase the percentage of voting from 40% to 90% by inducing every Muslim to go out and vote. We must attempt to form a group of advocates who can serve the community by charging reasonable fees, releasing innocent prisoners, and undertrials from the prisons. For this, we must encourage the talented children of rich people to get a legal education. Rich, because they may not have the desire to make more money. Their motive should be to serve the community instead of making more money. Unfortunately, we

have not succeeded in this attempt so far. The other priority is unity among the Muslims. My observation and experience of the last thirty years are that unity based on religion is impossible because of the various conflicting *maslaks* and infighting. Unity is possible only in education, employment, political power, health, and housing. This is the need of every Muslim.

We must understand that non-Muslims do not read and understand Islam and Muslims by reading Quran and Hadis but by observing the behavior, dealings, and character of Muslims in everyday life. In this respect, our auto-rickshaw drivers, business people, advocates, teachers, laborers, etc., play a significant role. Our Ulemas can transmit these ideas, and our Ulemas' opinions can be transmitted to common Muslims during their Friday sermons and other lectures. Unfortunately, most of them do not read newspapers, magazines, and modern books. If we arm our ulemas with knowledge and awareness, we can easily achieve our goals.

(The author can be contacted at geghouse1@gmail.com)

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Sana Rubiyana

Stress can be defined as any change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. However, the way you respond to stress makes a big difference to your overall well-being. There are three types of stress, acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress. Stress can negatively impact our lives, and it can cause physical conditions such as headaches, digestive issues, and sleep disturbances. It can also cause psychological and emotional strains, including confusion, anxiety, and depression. A stressor can be a person, place, or situation that is causing you stress. There is a general notion that homemakers are living in a comfortable zone. But the reality is that they bore a very high responsibility of running the family and meeting the requirements of day-to-day commitments. Even for the social occasions of their families, the expectations of the homemaker's presence are very high. They cannot escape from their obligations. The boundaries of home restrict a homemaker's exposure to the outside world. The expectancy from a homemaker to play multiple roles, such as that of a daughter, wife, sister, mother, and

daughter-in-law, pressures them and creates stress. Additional stress comes from assorted duties of cooking, cleaning, driving, caring for kids, elders and maintaining a healthy relationship with relatives and other members of family and society; this constructs stress in their minds, brick by brick. Lack of recognition is another major stressor. Though homemakers perform numerous tasks, they are still considered jobless. The yearning to be recognized for their work is a rightful expectation of a homemaker. At the same time, its absence or lack hasten high pressure and stress on their mind. We can't deny the dependent culture these homemakers are brought up in. Our culture insists on the dependency on women; she has to depend on parents, brothers, elders, husband, extended family, even on their children. This mounts the stress for non-working women to a greater extent. Even though she works hard for the family, she cannot be a part of decision-making; being a non-earning member of the family can lead to others ignoring homemakers' inputs on important matters. Child care is a challenging task; kids pose numerous work and obligations to their mothers at every age and stage. The psychological pressure created by the kids is probably met by women alone as their fathers do not share the parent care. The support system doesn't support



child care effectively, which mounts the stress level for homemakers.

In today's hectic world, the workplace too often seems like an emotional roller coaster. Long hours, tight deadlines, and ever-increasing demands can leave you feeling worried, drained, stressed, and overwhelmed. Stress isn't always bad, and a little bit of stress can help you perform better and help you stay focused. But when pressure exceeds your ability to cope, it stops being helpful and starts to cause damage to your mind and body.

Studies have suggested that; Stressful experiences for women concern their family roles. Housewives, especially those with young children, are significantly more anxious and depressed than working husbands. Whereas for working women, their family roles were much more of a concern than problems on the job, it has been

reported in a study.

Common causes of workplace stress include- fear of being laid off, more overtime due to staff cutbacks, pressure to perform to meet rising expectations. But with no increase in job satisfaction, pressure to work at optimum levels, the disparity with salary and income, lack of control over how you do your work.

You can't control everything in your work environment or at home, but that doesn't mean you are powerless; no matter what you do for a living, what your ambitions are, or how stressful your job is, there are plenty of things you can do to reduce stress and cope better. To begin with, it is simply sharing your focus with someone you are close to. The act of talking it out and getting support and empathy, especially face to face, can be a highly effective way of blowing off the steam and regaining your sense of calm. Turn to co-workers for support. Lean on your friends and family members; it is important to have a strong network of supportive friends and family. Make time for regular exercise, from aerobic exercises to rhythmic movements. Take a stroll outside the workplace if possible or for some time, leave the confined spaces of your house and go for a walk. Your food choices have a huge impact on how you feel during the day; eat small, frequent, and healthy meals. Don't skimp on

Resist perfectionism, don't try to control the uncontrollable, and look for humor in challenging situations. Take time off, give yourself regular breaks, and indulge in activities you are passionate about.

sleep; improve the quality of your sleep by making healthy changes to your daytime and nighttime routine; go to bed early and get up at the same time every day, even on the weekends. End your screen-time two hours before bedtime. Prioritize your goals activities and manage time better. Create a balanced schedule for yourself. Don't over-commit yourself and establish healthy boundaries. Resist perfectionism, don't try to control the uncontrollable, and look for humor in challenging situations. Take time off, give yourself regular breaks, and indulge in activities you are passionate about. Lastly, start looking for satisfaction and meaning in your work, whether household chores, work from home, or a corporate job.

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Arshad Sayyed

Levels of Personality and Pursuit of Happiness: A Motivational Journey

Why do we want to be successful in our life? Why do we wish for a big house, a big car, lots of Money? Because we believe that having and owning all these stuff will make us a successful person and eventually make us "Happy." In other words, we want success in life because it makes us happy, and in the end, everyone wants a life full of Peace and Happiness. So it is safe to say that our highest pursuit in life is to be "Happy." In this article, Based on several studies in psychology by different scholars, we are trying to figure out the levels of our Personality and our pursuits in life.

1. Pursuit of Happiness:

As we discussed above, our ultimate goal in life is to be happy. So, the first and lowest pursuit in your life is Happiness. Because Happiness is easy in small things, Getting More sleeping hours, Sudden holiday from work, small gifts, favorite dinner, or quality time spent with our loved ones gives us Happiness. This means it doesn't take much to be happy, and Happiness comes fast and goes fast as well., we can't stay Happy Forever and no matter where you

are living or how much Money you have, it's a fact that nobody is always happy. Because almighty gave us the score of emotions to experience, and Happiness is one of them.

And that's why Happiness lies at the bottom of our pursuit.

2. Pursuit of Fit In:

Pursuit of fitting in the society simply means to match the standards of the society, whether it will be your school or College of workplace or the city you are living in. The way you look, the way you talk with people, or how you behave are all included in it so that you will blend in with society, and people will not criticize you and consider you a good person. And it takes some effort to look after yourself and fit in the society. So, the second pursuit is to fit in the society.

3. Pursuit of Popularity:

I don't just want to blend in the society; I want to be the famous person in society, whether it will be College or workplace or anywhere else. Some people want popularity to talk about me, or I want to be the center of attention. And it takes some more effort to take than just fit in the society, and some people



try as hard as they can to be the center of attention and achieve the pursuit of popularity.

4. Pursuit of Prestige:

Prestige means you want to associate yourself with something very valuable. You wanted to tell people how you studied in a prestigious institution or worked for a big company or own branded clothes, car, mobile phone, etc. Why do we give so much importance to a brand? Because we believe they have some prestigious value and associating ourselves with them will make us prestigious. So in order to gain some prestigious value for ourselves, we try to associate ourselves with something that already has a prestigious value. And it takes a lot more effort to achieve it.

5. Pursuit of Money:

Some people don't care about any pursuit, all they care about is how to

make a lot of Money, and some of them are really good at it. So for some people, their ultimate pursuit is Money.

Overall, as we move up on this ladder, it takes more and more work to achieve the subsequent pursuit, and we need to go through more and more pain to get there and accomplish our goals, and more is our pursuit, more amount we get amongst these 5 Levels.

6. Pursuit of Excellence:

Some people think above Money, and all they think about is excellence. Whatever thing they were doing, they wanted to be number one at it. Whether it will become class topper or best employee of company or whatever it is, they try to push themselves to excellence. And people with excellent aren't just competing with others who can achieve excellence in the world.

7. Pursuit of Impact:

Some excellent people in the world believe in impact. All they care about is making this society better, making this world better, and they don't care what they are getting in return. They know they have limited time here, so they want to make this world better for others,

leave a legacy behind which people will follow, make this world a better place, and earn deeds for their hereafter life. Instead of believing in popularity, prestige, or Money, they believe in impact. And that kind of selflessness is in very few people who are already excellent in their lives.

Prophets are the most excellent people ever walked on this planet. And they lived for a cause to make this world and hereafter better for the ummah. They were working for a cause, and we, as an ummah, following their footsteps will eventually make us the person with excellent Personalities and pursuit. And if we pursue the truth. Almighty will impact our efforts in ways we can't imagine.

Some tips on pursuing excellence for youths are:

- Today, you have more time and fewer responsibilities, so this is the time to push yourself to be excellent.
- Never get stuck in any of the bottom five levels
- Today you should be best in your studies, eating habits, sleeping habits, lifestyles.
- Find the things you are good at; you love to do, try to be excellent in it, and use your talent to pursue your goal and truth in ways that will leave an impact on the betterment of this world.

Md. Mekail Ahmed

Racism has no Religion

Racism is the practice of discriminating against people based on their skin color differences. In recent years, racism has spread beyond racial inequality and into racial groups, countries, classes, castes, sects, religions, and even all spheres of society.

Racism is a heinous crime against humanity that Islam has consistently condemned. Islam encourages all people to coexist in harmony with the unique message of mutual harmony and friendship, regardless of their differences. As a religion, Islam was the first to strike at the root of apartheid and establish a religion of peace, as evidenced by the pilgrims staying in the mosque for prayers and Makkah during the holy Hajj. It is here that the true beauty of Islam is revealed.

Racism is an unspoken conflict between whites and blacks. The mastery of this war has lasted for eons. The sound of war could be heard from time to time. At times, it appears that this racist war has surpassed the horrors of all previous wars in the world. The reason for this is that it is easily imaginable. This dirty game of racism has been going on for centuries for such a trivial reason. World War I has ended. World War II has also ended. Nobody knows when the apartheid war will end. Nobody knows if it will ever end. The world has evolved into the modern era. People have emerged from the primitive, barbaric life of the dark cave. Modern people have created society, civilization, city, and port. But have people truly evolved into civilized beings? Is racism on the decline?

Is the violence, fighting, and bloodshed over?

In this racist war, the color of the human body is more visible, and as a result of this racism, the worst incidents such as black-and-white fights, violence, or loss of life occur regularly. Many people have died as a result of racism throughout history. There is no place for racism in Islam. Islam has laid a unique foundation for the peaceful coexistence of black and white where black and white, rich and poor citizens, soldiers and rulers, kings and subjects have equal status. The Qur'an and Hadith forbid racism and tribalism. The difference between people of different caste's languages has been highlighted as one of the signs of Allah the Almighty. Allah says: 'Indeed in that are signs for a people who know.' (Surah Rum: 22) The religion of everlasting peace

Islam has never supported the claim of superiority of any individual or nation by the arrogance of religion, caste, creed, dignity, and muscle power. Allah has said in the Holy Quran 'O mankind! Surely We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.' (Surah Hujurat: verse 13)

Allah Ta'ala further said, 'O you who believe! Stand firm as witnesses for Allah with justice. Don't let enmity towards any nation persuade you in any way that you will not do justice. Do justice that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Surely whatever you do, Allah is fully aware of that.' (Surat al-Ma'idah: 7)

Islam did not give any opportunity

for racist behavior. Who is white, black; There is no time to distinguish between rich and poor and good and evil. It has been narrated in the hadith that the Prophet (pbuh) said, 'The white man has no superiority over the black man. There is no superiority of any Arab over any non-Arab, nor non-Arab over an Arab. A white man is not superior to a black man, and a black man is not superior to a white man. The only difference is in the character and actions of the people.'

In that historic speech of the Farewell Hajj, the Prophet (pbuh) said what would be the standard of honor and dignity, 'O people! That person among you has the highest honor and dignity in the sight of Allah; The one who is more pious pays more attention to the word of Allah in all matters.'

The Prophet (pbuh) made it even clearer in this regard, 'No matter how beautiful a person looks, if there is no fear of Allah in him, there is no good deed; There is no practice of Quran-Sunnah, but that person can never be the best.'

Why does racism exist in today's civilized society? What is the distinction between the age of ignorance and the age of barbarism? Why would people of a civilized age be so barbaric? Is there anyone who knows the answer? Countless people

continue to perish as a result of racists' arrogance. Can anyone tell us when we will be able to enter the truly civilized world? Everyone agrees that whether he was born white or black.

Racism is the practice of discriminating against people based on their skin color differences. In recent years, racism has spread beyond racial inequality and into racial groups, countries, classes, religions, and even all spheres of society.

Many anti-racism movements have occurred in many countries around the world. But has this racism come to an end? Why are people unable to accept this cover of birth differences? There is no solution or effective formula to eliminate racism inequality in any man-made provision or policy; Islam is the only solution and effective formula. In Islam, there is no caste discrimination. Islam in no way condones racism; the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has set a unique example of establishing an ideal state and society by eradicating racism. He was successful. If we do not follow the path he has shown us, it is our problem if we do not follow his advice.

(The author is a researcher and article writer ICMAB, Dhaka, Bangladesh, mekailahmed117@gmail.com)

50 countries to participate in Aqsa Week 2022 to promote Love of Mosque and Raise Awareness

Aqsa Week was launched in 2017 to inform people of Al-Aqsa and its history and significance, and the dangers faced by the mosque and the Palestinian people. FOA organized a fortnight march to call on Londoners to boycott Israeli apartheid.

According to organizers, a UK-based initiative to shed light on the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem has gone global for the second year in a row, with more than 50 countries set to take part.

Aqsa Week 2022, which will run from February 24 to March 2, is being organized by the British-based Friends of Al-Aqsa (FOA) an NGO concerned with defending the human rights of Palestinians and protecting the Al-Aqsa Sanctuary.

FOA said that during the week, which they anticipate being the biggest one yet, mosques, universities, local councils, and parliaments would hold talks, workshops and other activities and educational events to highlight the mosque's heritage and bring a global focus to its issues and the plight of the Palestinians.

"It is an incredible week for people around the world to create conversation and raise awareness on the centrality of Masjid Al-Aqsa as well as the plight of the Palestinian people," FOA said.



Al-Aqsa is Islam's third holiest site and is in close proximity to religious sites significant to Jews and Christians, making the area a flashpoint in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Israeli government has on occasion prevented Muslim worshippers from accessing the mosque.

Several of the FAO events will be streamed live on their social media

accounts and TV and radio, and they have chosen #LoveAqsa as this year's hashtag.

"Aqsa Week 2021 was an unprecedented global success, receiving incredible support from government departments and prominent institutions, including the Departments of Religious Affairs in Turkey and Malaysia, the Iraqi government, and the Palestinian Awqaf," FOA said.

"FOA called on individuals and businesses to stop buying Coca-Cola until the company ends its complicity in the human rights abuse of Palestinians," it said, as part of its #NotInMyFridge campaign, which says the company operates in an illegal Israeli settlement, making it complicit in apartheid.

(Source: Arab News)

«Page 16

Levels of Personality and Pursuit of Happiness: A Motivational Journey

- Don't wait for results; work on your good cause and put effort, and the result will surely follow you one day.

- And one day, people will follow your example of success.

In that way, your pursuit will help you develop your Personality and be happy. Because when you have

pursuit, your life means something, and when your life means something, That makes you HAPPY...!!

(The author is a Software Engineer, International NLP Master, Motivational Speaker, Corporate Trainer, Author / Blogger)

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Moqheeta

Khadijah Saleem
Ahmed (Hyderabad)

In a small town lived a family of three: six-year-old Uzma and her parents. Whenever Uzma went out with her parents, they would perform small acts of kindness and tell her that Allah would reward them for every good deed. Uzma felt inspired by them and would help her parents too. Sometimes, they fed all the cats. On other days, they placed small water containers in trees for thirsty birds. Uzma prayed to Allah to keep all the animals safe and happy.

One day, Uzma was waiting in the park for her friend, Sara. She sat on a bench and was looking around when she saw something moving on a branch in a bush.

'A butterfly's cocoon!' she thought. She had never seen one so close. As she watched it, the cocoon moved a little again, and a small hole appeared. When Sara came, she started watching the cocoon too, hoping they could see the butterfly come out.

After two hours, Sara said, 'I don't think the butterfly can come out, and it is too weak!' The butterfly had stopped moving. Uzma



wondered how she could help; she had never seen her parents help a butterfly. But she had an idea! She asked Sara to wait and ran back to her house. Opening a drawer, she took a pair of scissors out and ran back to the park.

When Sara asked what she would do, Uzma replied, 'My parents tell me that Allah rewards those who do good deeds! So I will help the butterfly.' She cut the cocoon slowly, and the butterfly came out, but it couldn't fly, and Uzma realized that it was still weak.

'I'll take care of it at home so it can grow strong,' Sara said. She had other pets, too, so Uzma knew she would take care of the butterfly well.

But even after a few weeks, the butterfly stayed weak. Finally,

Uzma told her parents to help the butterfly. That's when her parents hugged her gently and said that indeed, Allah would reward her for she had good intentions. But when they asked what she learned from this, Uzma could not answer. Then, Uzma's mother explained, 'A butterfly sometimes needs more time to grow. So it's okay for it to stay inside. We are all created by Allah, and Allah gives little tests to all of us. Maybe the test for the butterfly was to stay inside and grow strong.'

Uzma's father smiled at Uzma. He said, 'We also have our tests in life. If others help us, we will not learn well or grow strong. Sometimes, we need to be patient and work hard to get the right result, just like the butterfly needs to stay inside and grow its wings. We should thank Allah for our tests too because they make us stronger.'

Uzma finally understood that Allah's tests come in different ways. 'Does this mean I did a bad deed instead of a good one?' she asked, feeling a little sad.

'Of course not! Allah knows you meant well, and you made sure that the butterfly has a good home now. He will reward you for all of that!' Uzma's parents smiled and hugged their child, knowing she would be an excellent example for other Muslims as she grew up. ■

(Asma Rubab,
Hyderabad)

Easy Tarbiyah of Children

Muslims firmly believe that every child is born on *fitrah*. *Fitrah* is the state of purity that gives the ability to choose Good or Evil. But gradually, the child absorbs different behaviors and treatments from the people he interacts with and develops another character accordingly.

If we want to help children remain on *Fitrah*, connecting them to Allah (swt) at a young age is crucial. Alhamdulillah, most of us realize this, but we do not know how to do it. Social Media and television are doing enough damage to the character-building of young children. The parents need to take charge and engage their children from a very young age in productive activities which connect them to Allah (swt). The traditional way of doing *tarbiyah* for children doesn't bring the desired result in our times. Parents need to integrate productive activities with Islam. Islam and everyday learning are not two separate areas, and they are the same. Parents need to understand the importance of using the prescribed *tarbiyah* approach.

A few activities of the integrated *tarbiyah* model are mentioned below:

1. Reading: This is the best

activity to train tiny brains. Parents should begin reading aloud to their children when they are babies. And what better stories than the stories from Quran and Islamic history. And through the Quranic stories, the parents can discuss the qualities every Muslim should have; trust in Allah swt, courage, truthfulness, gratitude, and humility are just a few areas a parent can steer the discussion towards.

2. Art And Craft: While doing simple art and craft, we can explain Allah's creation's vast uniqueness. We can quote relevant the Quranic Ayat in this context, and children would admire Allah swt for His unique attributes.

3. Cooking and Serving: This is another excellent activity to impart many good values to children. Cooking interesting dishes can be fun. But it would become more meaningful if it is connected to Islam and its importance. Going over the fruits and vegetables mentioned in the



Quran and using them to cook something nice can be an activity. Feeding people have great significance in Islam. Encouraging children to serve food with love and humility to the needy would extend the same activity.

The list can be endless. But these few suggestions might have given the reader a fair idea of integrating the two areas in bringing up the children.

Learning doesn't start at schools, it begins at home. It is essential to engage our children in productive activities that help them develop their moral values. ■

Parenthood and its challenges



Farzana

Crossing the threshold from being couples to being parents opens a whirlwind of changes in our lives. Keeping aside the physical, mental, and emotional overdrive, we must deal with other issues too. One of them is the people with whom we interact.

There are two types of people one comes across when we become parents. First ones who would flood you with suggestions, such as, "do so and so...try this and that.." and the second are the ones that start off with "don't you know.." or "haven't you already..?" making one wonder if one should have known this beforehand. A new parent would feel overwhelmed by this overload of suggestions and advice, especially the mother, as women are the primary caregivers of children in India.

To begin with, we must remember that the age of our parenthood is the same as our first child. So, if you have a 6-month-old baby, then your parenthood age is six months. Keeping this in mind while navigating the roller-coaster of parenting is helpful. This knowledge helps one be more compassionate to him or herself. It is okay to make mistakes (instead of learning opportunities). One learns to trust their own instincts and learns to read the child as we become observant. As the parent is more in tune with the child's needs, the child will have fewer episodes of distress. This will strengthen the bonding between the parent and the child.

One learns early on to respect the child's needs, and the child, in turn, learns through modeling how to be respectful and considerate to other beings in one's life. This reminds me of the Hadith of our beloved Prophet, where he visits a young child whose bird had died. The compassion and respect that our Prophet modeled was a balm to the hurting child's heart.

Life would have been so easy if, as when one entered parenthood, we were also handed a parenting

manual. But regretfully so, that is not the case. The day our children are born, we become parents. We must learn on the job and through trial and error, most of the time. One must remember to calculate our parenthood age as our first child. We must keep this in mind rather than our biological age.

By the mercy and grace of Allah, Allah has provided us with a broad framework in the Quran. The Hadith also gives us practical tips in the implementation of this framework. It applies both to the parents and the child (when they reach the age of understanding).

To make any process smooth, we must first accept the role's responsibility. Acceptance opens one's heart and mind to look at the best possible way of executing that responsibility. The work or role should benefit both parties; the parents and the children are here. Yes, as parents, we want the best for our children. So, what is best for our children? We want to teach the love for Allah to our children. We want our children to see Allah as the Most Merciful, the Most Just, and the Provider of all things. This love for Allah will help set them on a path of Submission.

One way of inculcating love for Allah is to teach them, from a very young age, all the beautiful names of Allah. Make stories of them and narrate them in an engaging way. Through these stories, one can teach children the power of choice, of the blessing of free will that Allah has blessed us with, to name a few. We want to guide them to make such choices that would benefit them in duniya and the hereafter—the choice between Haq and Batil.

(The writer is a *mental Health Counselor, Bangalore*) ■

We want to teach the love for Allah to our children. We want our children to see Allah as the Most Merciful, the Most Just, and the Provider of all things. This love for Allah will help set them on a path of Submission.

Page 9 Where is India Heading Towards?

Assessing the rise in hate speech and violence against minorities, Justice Madan B. Lokur, former judge of the Supreme Court, called for enacting a special law to combat hate speech against minorities. There is no doubt the Hindu nationalist ideology has compromised the institutions of democracy. But, it is never too late to come back to the Constitutional obligation to secularism. As Justice Lokur pointed out, the court

machinery has to ensure that they are functioning as per the Constitution and not aligning towards the majoritarian assertion of India by the Hindutva forces. India is home to people belonging to a different religion, caste, ethnicity, culture, class, etc. Therefore, coercing this multiplicity into a dogmatic and hollowed idea of Hindu *Rashtra* could break India into shards. (The writer is *General Secretary, All India Milli Council*) ■

LITTLE BROWN FRIENDS

World Sparrow Day on March 20

Sahera Jamal

We grew up watching the little brown birds pecking rice grains and drinking water from bowls placed by us, flying in flocks and spreading the musical notes of their chirping song in the air.... The SPARROW.

On a nostalgic note, I share my thoughts on the sparrow. Sparrow, a friend to the farmers, was a common sight in the urban stretches lined by paddy fields. With the city's development-driven expansion, these fields slowly got replaced by concrete stretches, and the spike in cell phone towers erased them significantly. Each time my eyes wander in search of at least a few available brown birds, all I see is the chain of grey stray



pigeons dwelling on every road, every building, and every electrical wire in the city, but no sign of sparrows.

This common wild bird was first introduced in America to tackle pests. Sparrows are very important. A gardener's most significant enemy is the non-beneficial pests that damage the plants. Sparrows feed on problems like the common aphids, which are a menace. Sparrows help the plants flourish and help gardeners.

We can try to attract Sparrows by creating a conducive environment for them. They love wheat and rice grains. Placing a bowl of water and spreading birdseed on the floor of your balcony can attract these tiny friends to your house.

Sparrows make nests from grasses in tree holes or crevices of buildings and walls. They love making nests around streetlights because of the warmth around them. Next time you see a grass nest with these tiny brown feathered creatures in any of these places, try to safeguard them and avoid disturbing them in any way. They are lovely to watch. Show them to your children and educate them on their importance and the need to conserve them. ■

In Solidarity with Sparrows

World Sparrow Day (WSD) is celebrated on March 20 every year. This day is observed to raise awareness about the house sparrow and threats to its well being. World Sparrow Day was first celebrated in 2010. You can celebrate this day by organizing sparrow-watching walks & hikes, hosting a sparrow photography contest, organizing classroom activities for kids, and installing sparrow nest boxes and feeders.

In 2022, World Sparrow Day will be celebrated on March 20. Islam teaches us to be kind to



animals, birds, and trees, respect nature, and live in harmony. Sadly, we human beings and Muslims do not practice this. Like all other birds, Sparrows are humble, simple creatures of Almighty

Allah.

These little birds have disappeared from cities and big towns. Our materialistic wants of building tall buildings packed grains, compared to how our grandmothers used to sit in the front yard of their huts cleaning grains which gave sparrows their food, have made these pretty birds fly away.

In solidarity with the sparrows and all birds and animals, Islamic Voice brings a touching piece here to awaken our conscience and pray for the well-being of the sparrows! ■

God Cares for Cats As Well

God created the cats and He provides for them



Nigar Ataula

There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on God: He knows the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: All is in a clear Record. (The Qur'an 11:6)

I feel very consoled, secure and at peace whenever I read this verse. Often, when I recall the many 'stray' cats who would come over to the place where I lived, eat the food that was laid out for them and then, after some weeks or months, disappear, I would feel very sad. I would worry and feel anxious



about their whereabouts. I would feel helpless as I could not go out searching for them because they were 'wild' and 'stray'. But God knew where they had gone. At times like these, the above verse would give me meaning as I reflected that it is God who created the cats and He would take care of their food.

In the above verse, 'moving creature' applies to all creatures, including cats. If God wanted the cats to live in a certain place and get their sustenance there, so be it. Regarding 'temporary deposit' referred to in the above verse: It is God who provides all that they

need to the cats, as well as all other creatures, for the temporary period that He has willed they should be here, on Earth, for. So, if a certain cat had stayed at a certain place for a few days and then scampered off elsewhere, that was God's will, and God will take care of the creature.

If we look around and observe nature carefully, we can see that all creatures birds, plants, animals and so on depend on God for their sustenance. Imagine you are sitting on a bench in a garden, munching a biscuit and a few crumbs fall down. In a matter of just a few minutes, or perhaps even less, a big line of ants might start heading towards the crumbs! They might start feasting on them there and then, or else pick up tiny bits and head off to their home, in a very orderly manner! Now, how did the ants know about the biscuit crumbs that God had placed as sustenance for them? It was God's will!

'All is in a clear Record': By this I understand that what each one of us gets as sustenance food, money, shelter and so on all is already written in God's 'record book' for all creatures, human beings and others.

The Caged Bird Sings

Sarah Fathima



Each morning dawns a new-born beautiful day
Serene and surreal, like a blooming flower
Unfurling with delicate grace
But how heartless and ruthless
Our unsparing, selfish fancies are
To deny the caged bird its fond glorious pleasures
Like a forgotten dream, the caged bird reminisces
The feel and bliss of flying
Under the canopy of blue sky
With raging desires
To reach far beyond the horizon, wild and free
To glide through the snowy clouds of ethereal white
To cozily nestle in the comfort of their snug nests,
Feeling at home, tranquil and safe
To ruffle the feathers and give a friendly peck
To their fluffy comrades, a chirp away
But fate conspires, and the vulnerable bird fails
To fight against our hearts of stone
And the inevitable bars of the awful cage
No one hears the caged bird's silent wails
Painful despair and agony
Is all that generously reigns
The caged bird's burning hope of being set free
It starts to slowly but certainly diminish and fade
Maybe the caged bird's helpless plight
And endless tears surmised our ill-fate
And we bear the burden of blame
Like a bolt of lightning,
The deadly blow of the pandemic
Set lives ablaze

An invisible enemy, though intangible
Was clearly unfazed
The covid virus deftly turns the world topsy-turvy
Rebelliously shaking the might of the world
Leaving the entire system a mess,
Chaotic and restrained
Need we explain?
Cooped up in our homes,
Craving for sunshine and nostalgic normalcy
We were forced to remain confined
Just like the sad caged bird
Just like the sad caged bird
Craving for our loved ones' embrace
A warm hug or even a hearty handshake
Pining for unconditional freedom
To be carefree, to discover and experience life
Devoid of any fatal fear
To live mask-free, to simply breathe
And be fully alive
The caged bird's woeful story was now ours too
The dilemma was deep,
And the paths of aversion
Lead to the grave
Now we could distinctly realize
Heaving a solemn sigh
The tragic price of our heinous deeds
That mercilessly destroyed
The caged bird's lofty dreams
And all that we could never suffice, never suffice
(Sarah Fathima from Bangalore has done her Diploma in Creative Writing from Symbiosis University and is currently pursuing her second year BA (English)) ■

It may have happened to you as it does to me at times: I might have planned that by a certain time I would begin preparing for cooking a meal. But then, lo and behold, half an hour or so before that, a kind neighbour comes over with a gift of food! That is God's will! He sends sustenance in the ways He wants to, sometimes in

unexpected ways. So, the next time the cats wander off elsewhere, I should not feel sad. I should have the firm faith that God is providing them the sustenance they need elsewhere it could be, in the words of the verse cited above, their 'temporary deposit' or their 'definite abode' God knows best! ■

If we look around and observe nature carefully, we can see that all creatures birds, plants, animals and so on depend on God for their sustenance.

Prof Akhtarul Wasey

Controversy over Hijab:**What is the stand of the Qur'an and Hadith?**

For the past few days, the *hijab* of schoolgirls has been unnecessarily the subject of controversy in the country's media. Neither is it constitutionally right with individual and religious freedom nor with the country's social harmony. At the same time, it is affecting the better image of the country in the world, as the issue has spread beyond the national media to the world media. Interviews by some people who are misrepresenting the issue, or distorting the stand of the Qur'an and *Hadith* regarding *hijab*, are playing a major role in further aggravating and confusing the issue. They are misleading the common people.

In this article, we want to make clear the stand of the Qur'an and *Hadith* regarding *hijab* because it is very important to know its true picture. Like other religions, the Constitution of our country has provided guarantees and protection to the stand of Islam also. Let us briefly clarify the Islamic stand regarding *hijab* in a few points:

1. *Hijab* is an Arabic word that means to cover. At present, the cloth used to cover the head is called a *hijab*, while the word's original meaning is simply "veiling." In the Holy Qur'an, the word *hijab* is used in the sense of "veil." There is a verse in the Qur'an that says that Allah speaks to a person from behind a veil. (Chapter *Shura*, 51:42) In Chapter *Maryam*, it is said that Maryam (AS) had taken veil (*hijab*) from the people. (Chapter *Maryam*, 17:19) Regarding the Day of Judgment, the Qur'an says that a veil will be placed between the people of Paradise and the people of Hell. (Chapter *A'raf*, 46: 7) Thus, in seven places in the Qur'an, the word *hijab* is used in the meaning of the veil. It is important to understand that a word in one language does not have the same meaning in another language. For example, in Urdu

we use the word "aurat" for a woman. In Arabic we have the words "imra't" or "Nisa'a" for a woman. The word "aurat" has a different meaning in Arabic.

2. Islam commands to cover the body parts. This order is mandatory, not optional. This rule applies to both men and women. In legal parlance, this is called "veiling the private parts" and the term "satr-i-aurat" that is, veiling the parts which are commanded to be veiled. These parts of the body are separate for both men and women. The rules of veiling become mandatory after reaching adulthood.

3. When a woman goes out of the house, what parts of her body are supposed to be veiled? The Islamic law is as follows:

- A woman can keep her face, head, neck, feet, shins, and arms unveiled in front of her *mahram* (someone with whom it is unlawful to marry) at home.
- A woman can keep her hands and face unveiled in front of strangers, which is the opinion of Jurist Abu Hanifa and some scholars. Other scholars are of the opinion that the whole body must be veiled; only the eye can be kept unveiled so that they can walk comfortably.
- It should be noted that this difference is related to the unveiling of the face; the unveiling of the head and hair is not allowed anywhere.

1. There is clear guidance in the

Qur'an and *Hadith* regarding this ruling. Therefore, to understand a concept, it is necessary to study the Qur'an and *Hadith* together. Islamic *Shari'ah* refers to the rules stated in the Qur'an and *Hadith*, and at the same time, the rules derived from the method of *Ijtihad* (reasoning) mentioned by the Prophet (pbuh) are also part of the Islamic *Shari'ah*. The Companions themselves performed this *Ijtihad*, then by their disciples, i.e., their followers, then by their disciples, the followers, and it has been going on since that time. The opinions derived from *Ijtihad* differ, but the rulings of the Qur'an and *Hadith* are absolutely conclusive. Each of the dissenting opinions that accompany the argument of the Qur'an and *Hadith* can be acted upon.

2. The Qur'an has specifically stated the rules for women to veil (wear *hijab*) in two places. Apart from these two places, general rules have been stated at other places also. One is in Chapter *Al-Noor*, and the other is in Chapter *Al-Ahza'ab*. Chapter *Al-Noor* is in the 18th part of the Qur'an, in which both men and women are commanded to keep their eyes down and protect their private parts. After that, women are specifically commanded to show off their adornment and make-up to their *mehram*, and not

to other men. Women were also told to put their veils on their breasts in the same context. The word in the Qur'an is *Khimar* that means *dupatta*, and its plural is *Khumur*. The other term used in the Qur'an is *jeb* that, is called the chest and collar, and its plural is *juyoob*. In this verse, two things are commanded: to cover the adornment and the other to cover the breasts.

Chapter *Ahza'ab* is in the 22nd part of the Qur'an. This verse is commanded: "O Prophet! Tell your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers to cover their bosoms and breasts". The word *Jilbab* in Arabic means robe, and its plural is *Jalabeeb*. It has been ordered to put such a robe over one's head, which is put over one's head and comes down while covering the face. This command is for all believing women.

In view of both verses of the Qur'an, it is commanded that women should hide their adornment in front of strangers, cover their chests, and veil themselves. In a *Hadith*, the Mother of believers, Ayesha (AR) says that Asma bint Abu Bakr (AR) came to the Prophet (pbuh) as her clothes were thin, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "When a girl becomes an adult, only her face and hands should be unveiled". (Abu Dawood: Hadith No. 4104). So the directive of both the verses of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* is that women should not unveil their heads in front of strangers, should not show off their adornment, and they should put a robe over their heads which is like a veil and cover their chest. However, they have the option to cover their face or not.

3. According to *Sharia'h*, obedience to this purpose and order is required in whatever form or with any cloth. The cloth in trend today is known as the scarf or *hijab*, and it covers the head.

Some women cover their faces; some do not. But the heads are covered by all the women who follow the rules of the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

4. After this explanation, it becomes clear that wearing a *hijab* or scarf is a command of the Qur'an and *Hadith*. And to forbid it is to forbid following the command of the Qur'an.

As a part of modesty, it has been a tradition for women in our country to cover their heads and faces within every community for thousands of years. In many parts of our country, Hindu women cover their heads and veil their faces. Sikh women cover their heads, and not even a man can go inside the Gurudwara without covering his head. Christian nuns and women cover their heads in many provinces and territories as it is a part of their religion and culture. The same is with Muslim women who have been covering their heads for hundreds of years, not just today. Many generations within schools and colleges have completed their education in the same way. Christian nuns teach in schools and colleges with their heads covered.

For Muslim women, head covering is as much a religious part as it is in many other religions and the Constitution of our country gives freedom of religion to everyone. As far as dress in schools is concerned, only a scarf of the dress's color can be worn, and wearing a scarf by a Muslim girl does not violate the dress, nor does it cause any other person's inconvenience. In the current issue, some extremists and those, who have ruined the country's *Ganga-Jamuni* (composite) culture and the atmosphere of mutual love and harmony, have made a long-standing peaceful tradition a means of creating unrest and they are spoiling the peaceful atmosphere of the country. Such miscreants need to be curbed.

(The Author is Professor Emeritus (Islamic Studies) at the Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) ■

Shamoona Zia

Myths against Islam

Islam is a peaceful religion, and Muslims have some distinct blessings owing to their belief in one God, "Allah," and accepting Muhammad (pbuh) as the last Prophet. For decades, the antagonist of the Muslim world has been engaged in Islamophobia, aiming to segregate Muslims. In the 21st century, anti-Muslim bigotry is rising more with the global rise of technology. Hybrid warfare and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have become easy tools to modify ideologies and barrage hate. Various social media platforms have been used to incite and hurt Muslim sentiments by spreading Islamophobia and xenophobic language.

Anti-Islamic propaganda is made chiefly during Muslim development to misdirect the original mission to shattering sentiments. Islamophobia is used as a tool of war, where prejudice against this particular religion is evident in Islam's amalgamation with "terrorism." This is such a firm

turn, as Muslim leaders unceasingly clarified that Islam has no link with terrorism, which is undoubtedly known to everyone; however, pretend fake to make a ground for propaganda against Muslims.

Who is brewing the anti-Muslim agendas?

For so long, various countries have been brazenly pursuing anti-Muslim agendas.

The reality of the countries who are involved in such inhumane acts is so acrimonious that on one side, they claim to be modern; on the contrary, they consider Islam as a conservative religion. Nonetheless, in reality, their thoughts are still blocked in a petite shell, restricting them from accepting other religions, particularly Islam. The short-sighted anti-Islam views reveal their harsh reality and dual standards. Fashion models in full clothes (head to toe), caps, and handkerchiefs (aimed to cover the head) are acceptable for them. However, *hijab* permitted in Islam is prohibited and considered disgraceful in their eyes.



The misperception regarding the Islamic veil is that it is a barrier that hinders people from expressing their thoughts; nonetheless, no apparel has the power to alter ideology. The time has shifted and has brought the world into the situation, which has forced everyone to wear face masks to get rid of COVID-19. Face covering, which was once a source of



Sadathullah Khan

Women's day is observed every year on 8 March.

The day commemorates women's cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements and raises awareness against bias. Women are invincible, strong, and real change-makers. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality and unbiased participation of women in each and every field. To observe IWD personally, all we can do is educate all the women around us of their basic rights, build inclusive thriving, and safe workplaces, encourage their creativity, and teach them about their healthy choices.

You may have heard claims stating that:

"In Islam, women are not loved, have no rights, and are oppressed." These may be some baseless claims that are being said about Muslim women. When we look at the life of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, we can see that these statements could not be further from the truth.

Although he was sent when women are widely believed to be inferior and not given meaningful recognition, he led by example with his respectful treatment towards women. Although Islam

Kindness and Gentleness Towards Women! The Prophet's Way!

Imagine a gender-equal world. A world is free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality, and collectively we can all.

acknowledges that Men and Women are not the same, the Quran mentions the equality of both in creation and in the sight of Allah.

O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, and from it, He created its mate (Adam & Eve), and through both, He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah in Whose Name you appeal to one another and (honour) family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you." (Surah An-Nisa, 4:1)

His relationships with his wives were based on mutual love and respect.

Throughout his life, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. treated his wives the way they should be treated. They were gratified by his presence, tenderness, affection, and the love he provided to them was second to none. The Quran perfectly encapsulates the tranquillity and affection in marriage.

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them, and He



placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

(Surah Ar-Rum, 30:21)

His first wife, Khadijah r.a. was his emotional and spiritual comfort source. It was Khadijah r.a. who instilled confidence in him when he received the first revelation. He sought support and strength throughout his quest to uplift humanity in her.

His wife, Ayesha r.a. was the one he spent his last days with, and throughout their marriage, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. treated her in a very gentle way.

He allowed women to engage in public roles

Unlike the social norm of the time, Muslim women held important

roles in the time of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. His wife, Ayesha r.a. was a scholar who used to be consulted by other companions on religious matters and expressed herself freely in the public sphere. She even praised the women of Ansar for not letting their shyness stop them from asking questions about Islam and learning their religion.

After the passing of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, Ayesha r.a. continued to impart knowledge to the companions. As she was the closest person to the Prophet s.a.w, she was one of the most knowledgeable individuals during that time. She inherited many of the hadiths from the Prophet s.a.w, which she continued to transmit to others around her.

Prophet Muhammad showed immense love for his daughter

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. was never shy about showing his deep love for his daughter, Fatima r.a. When she entered the room, he would stand up for her and make her sit in his place.

He uplifted the status of women Prophet s.a.w. uplifted the status of

women from that of being the property of men to that of equal status in the society with accorded rights and dignity. The Prophet s.a.w. paid special attention to the women in his society, who previously had been denied any rights, freedom, and space.

In real and everyday lives, we as a Muslim community and citizens of the world need to follow the noble Prophet's example in our respect for women. In my experience as anchor of the Discover Yourself Workshops, over so many years, I realized that women have so much potential as contributors to their families and society.

We as parents need to be respectful towards our daughters and help them with our support as they journey through their lives, be it in their professional or personal challenges. We should not cut their wings but encourage them to fly high towards their goals under protection.

As husbands, we need to understand our spouse and her emotional needs, support, and help her. We must uplift their confidence, seek their opinion in several matters and respect them as human beings.

I pray and hope that we all start honoring the women we know, starting from within our own homes first and spreading peace to women across the globe.

Only then can we celebrate Women's Day sincerely and honestly! ■

ISLAMIC FINANCE

Ray Mwareya and
Ashley Simango



Previously suppressed under Apartheid, Islamic banking had a shaky start in South Africa when Jaame Limited, the first Islamic bank in South Africa, was launched in 1980 but soon after collapsed into bankruptcy.

However, Sharia investments in South Africa are now enjoying an illustrious resurgence, to the point that even non-Muslim South Africans, fed up with excessive profiteering within mainstream banking, are now dabbling in the steady, moralist approach of Islamic finance.

In late 2014, the South Africa treasury issued a record \$500 million Sukuk, a first, hoping to tap into funding from Gulf Arab and Southeast Asian liquid capital markets and revamp the country's ports, roads, hospitals, and schools.

"Before that Sukuk fund floating, there was the common belief that Islamic banking products in South Africa were geared towards

Islamic banking makes a Resurgence in South Africa

Muslim South Africans only. This is untrue," says African technologist, TEDx speaker, and devout Muslim Yasin Kakande.

Twenty-five percent of all Sharia investments held by Old Mutual (South Africa's biggest investment bank) are held by non-Muslims. On paper, this makes South Africa one of the countries with the highest number of non-Muslims holding Sharia investments outside the Muslim world, says African technologist Yasin Kakande.

Muslims make up to three percent of South Africa's 60-million strong population. Muslims have a storied history and presence in South Africa, starting in the 1600s when the colonial Dutch East India Company began to transport slaves, political dissidents, and prisoners to the Western Cape of South Africa. Moreover, The Nizamiye Masjid, situated in Johannesburg – the commercial capital of South Africa – is believed to be the largest Mosque in sub-Saharan Africa.

As a whole, Africa has a healthy clientele base of 350 million unbanked residents. According to an Ernst and Young projection, by 2021, 150 million of that unbanked pool would be



(PHOTO: Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad speaks at an Islamic finance conference in Singapore in 2010. The former PM has been vocal in blaming Western lending practices for the world's financial problems and hailed Islamic banking as a 'superior' model [Getty Images])

attracted to Sharia compliant retail banking and Islamic Fintech, in a continent where Gulf Arab investors like the UAE have ploughed \$11 billion since 2016.

In the ashes of the defunct Jaame Limited, now a dozen South African banks now proudly offer a vast array of Islamic investments products.

So what's drawing South African's interest in Islamic banking?

Something is appealing about Islamic Finance in South Africa,

according to Kakande. He argues that it seems to resonate with those seeking to decolonize South Africa's banking system from its previous legacy of Apartheid. This has enticed locals into using Islamic term deposit accounts, Sharia-compliant funds (Sukuk and Sharia-insurance (takaful)).

"One hundred years of European Apartheid colonialism in South Africa – founded on the doctrine of rightwing Christianity – suppressed everything from Sharia marriages to Sharia finance until the early 80s," Kakande argues. "Out of colonial racism, Islamic banking, equities or housing bonds were frowned upon just like African communal savings clubs which were often prosecuted as gambling."

Thrilling time

Now, a healthy basket of Sharia banking products, life insurance, and equities offerings are easily available led by Old Mutual Albaraka Shari'ah Fund, the Old Mutual Albaraka Income Fund, Al Baraka Bank, Franklin Templeton, and Standard Bank South Africa, with the latter winning the 2021 Global Islamic Finance Awards for the second time in a row.

Islamic banking has long been repressed in South Africa due to Apartheid and general ignorance towards the Muslim banking system. However, with investment from the Gulf and Subcontinent, Islamic banking is now growing in popularity

"It's a thrilling time to be a South African citizen, Muslim or non-Muslim, we're spoiled with choice of Islamic housing bonds, Sharia savings funds, and Sharia life annuity insurance packages that are not only stable but follow the UN values of social justice, environmental protection, and commitment to charity," says Dennis Juru, president of *The South Africa Cross Border Traders Association* which lobbies for greater financial investments between the Southern Africa region, and the Middle East.

As the range of Sharia financial products in South Africa are

Qasim Abbas

Me'araaj-un-Nabi in light of Modern Science

According to Muslim Scripture Holy Quran, approximately 1,400 years ago, on the 26th night in the seventh Islamic month of Rajab, Islam's Last Messenger Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), physically and in an awakening state, visited his Creator Almighty Allah. This event is called ME'ARAJ in the Arabic language, i.e., ASCENSION. The journey was at an unimaginable height and millions of light-years away from the earth.

The Holy Quran mentions this event as under:

"Glory to Allah, Who took His Servant for a Journey by night from the sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless, so that We may show him some of Our signs, for He (Allah) is the One, Who hears and sees all things." (17:1)

"He was taught by One Mighty in Power. Endued with wisdom, for he appeared (in stately form). While he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he approached and came closer. And he was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer. So did Allah convey the Inspiration to His servant - conveyed what he meant to convey. The Prophet's mind and heart, in no way, falsified that which he saw." (53: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11)

1.6 billion Muslims living on this earth have absolute and unconditional faith that Islam's Last Messenger Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) had traveled at night, at un-imaginable and un-thinkable height to space, millions of light-years away from earth, in person, physically, and in the awakening state. And he had returned back to earth before sunrise the next morning i.e., within less than 24 hours.

The fact behind this seemingly



impossible event is that Almighty Allah is All-Powerful on all the things i.e., *Alaa Kulle Shayeen Qadeer* (2:284) ("Allah has power over all things."). The matter seeming impossible to a human being, it is absolutely possible for Almighty Allah, as revealed in the Holy Quran:

".....Kun Fayakoon!" Verily, when He (Allah) intends a thing, His command is, **'Be, and it is!'** (36:82)

Therefore, it was the fact that in one night, Islam's Last Messenger Hazrat Muhammed (pbuh.) traveled in space at night, millions of light-years away from the earth and returned back the next morning. And if anyone may think this as impossible, un-imaginable, and unthinkable, the fact is that today's modern science confirms this event. If we see the possibility of ME'ARAJ (Ascension) in light of modern science, we can find the proof. Let us understand the **Theory Of Relativity**,

invented by 20th century Noble Prize winner scientist Albert Einstein.

This great scientist of the 20th century, Albert Einstein was awarded Noble Prize for his invention of Theory Of Relativity. This Theory Of Relativity is very much complicated and is based on very sophisticated and complex laws of time and space. Let us try to understand the event of ME'ARAJ in light of and with the help of Theory Of Relativity in plain language.

When a spacecraft, with an astronaut, is launched in space, and after going beyond earth atmosphere i.e., in space, the astronaut experiences himself in weightless state. Similarly, in spacecraft, traveling in space, beyond earth atmosphere, at very, very high speed, according to Theory Of Relativity, timeless state is also being created. For this, we have to understand the speed of light.

Light travels at the speed of app. 186,000 miles (app. 310,000 kilometres) per second. According to sophisticated and complicated laws of Theory Of Relativity, a spacecraft traveling at 99% of the speed of light, beyond earth atmosphere in space, the period of 100 years of the earth is only 14 years in space. It means during this period of 14 years in spacecraft, traveling at 99% of the speed of light, the period of 100 years has passed on earth.

To understand this sophisticated truth, Albert Einstein gives an example this way. Suppose there are two youths, both of 25 years of age. One youth stays on earth, and the second youth travels in a spacecraft traveling beyond the earth's atmosphere in space, traveling at 99% of the speed of light. Under these circumstances, when the second youth will return to earth after 100 years, his age at that time will be 39 (25 + 14) years only. Whereas the age of the first youth, who stayed on earth, his age will be 125 (25 + 100) years. This is the simple way explanation of Theory Of Relativity.

(One Light year means the distance equivalent to the distance the light travels in one year at the speed of app. 186,000 miles i.e. app. 310,000 kilometres per second).

This is the scientific explanation of TIME and SPACE in relation to and in light of Theory Of Relativity, by which the event of ME'ARAJ is backed and confirmed. Islam's Last Messenger (pbuh.) mode of conveyance for ME'ARAJ was BURRAQ. (meaning: OF LIGHTNING from Arabic word BURQ). If BURRAQ is considered a spacecraft for the purpose of understanding the

event of ME'ARAJ, then this event can be understood easily. However, the speed of BURRAQ was much faster than spacecraft traveling at 99% speed of light because Almighty Allah, who is All-Powerful, can do all the things possible. Then how the event of ME'ARAJ cannot be termed as in person, physically, and in an awakening state?

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Shab e Meraj history and significance

Shab e Meraj or Lailat al Miraj or "The Night of Ascension" marks the ascension of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah to Masjid Al-Haram Al-Sharif along with the archangel Gabriel as they mount Al Buraq.

On the ascension, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was accompanied by Gabriel to make a few stops at remarkable historical places of the Muslims such as Madinah, Mount Sinai, Bethlehem, and the grave of Moses.

Before they could reach Masjid Al-Haram Al-Sharif, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) took a miraculous journey to the seven stages of heaven and met previous prophets, Prophet Adam (AS), Prophet Abraham (AS), Prophet Moses (AS), Prophet Jesus (AS), and some other prophets. As he reached the highest stage heaven where the Throne of Allah (Al-Arsh) is situated, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was given the command for five daily prayers by Allah swt, and that is why this marks the importance of the event since the five daily prayers are the most important thing that all Muslims have to practice every single day.

Mohammed Rafiq

So where are you going.....?

If a believer cannot relieve himself from the intrusive phone for a few minutes while he is supposed to be standing in front of the Lord of Lords, it is advisable to refrain from visiting the Masjid. At least others are not troubled in their weak prayers.

compelled to keep one eye on the screen and the other on the real world. Unfortunately, some believers walk into the Masjid with the devices on and are not even put on silent mode. Some phones bombard sleazy call-tones or notification buzz in the midst of the prayers. Some Masjid visitors use the ayah or poems to compensate for

One of the most important five pillars of Islam is Salah after Kalima. Offering Salah in the Masjid is mandatory unless there are some compelling reasons. Word "Masjid" literally means place of prostration (Sujood). Masjid is also known as "Baithullah" or house of Allah s.w.t. Abu Hurairah(RA) narrates that the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said: *"If anyone purifies himself in his house, and then walks to one of the houses of Allah to fulfill one of the obligations laid down by Allah, then [each one] of his steps will erase one of his sins and the next will raise his degrees."* Such is the sacred place of our Masjid.

People offering prayers have always shown deep respect towards the Masjid. It has always been a matter of pride and privilege for Muslims to live in the close vicinity. This not only adds to the convenience of offering salah but an opportunity to be the guest of the Allah s.w.t. five

times every day. More than that, one gets a chance to connect with Allah s.w.t. in privacy by being the guest; also angels may say Ameen when the believer makes dua. At the same time, there are numerous verses in the Quran and Ahadith of Prophet s.a.w. instructing to uphold the sacredness of Masjid. One such which uphold the sacredness of Masjid is Abu Huraira (RA), who narrated that: Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said: *"If salaah is started, do not approach it running, but approach it walking, with calmness. Whatever you catch up with, pray, and what you miss, complete it."* (Sahih Bukhari). The noise of running is unacceptable even at the cost of a believer missing out on prayer.

In the connected world, the communication device has not only made entry into the privacy of homes but has made unholy entry into the Masjid. Now people feel

the unholy characteristics of the ringtones. As if they are less bothersome and more acceptable.

Allah s.w.t. has made praying in the Masjid mandatory so that one can disconnect from the commotion of the world outside. Unfortunately, people have brought all the distractions right inside. Imagine being asked by some important person to his office or home to discuss something significant. Amid the discussion, what thoughts would be running through his mind and that of the hosts if his phone starts buzzing? Some praying souls start uncontrollably reaching their annoying phone to press the button to put it to silent. Other few go to the extent of attending the calls and replying to the messages sitting in the Masjid. Some others do the first act after completion of prayer of opening the screen; maybe they get the message of acceptance of prayer instantly. Do these behaviors

contest to be acts of an even a namesake believer?

If the believers complain of difficult times, there are attacks day-in-day-out challenging the very existence. Our prayers will continue to be hollow with such unscrupulous practices; we are not only jeopardizing our own salah but also the others. Seeking help through prayers has become a distant wish due to careless few attacking khushu and khudu.

If a believer cannot relieve himself from the intrusive phone for a few minutes while he is supposed to be standing in front of the Lord of Lords, it is advisable to refrain from visiting the Masjid. At least others are not troubled in their weak prayers. Time to introspect and attain to the call given by Allah s.w.t. in the holy Quran- *"then where are you going"* (Surah At-Takwir Verse 26)

(The author is an IT Professional & Life Coach mdrafiq2005@gmail.com)

Seeking The True Self

Swami Arul Jyothi Ananda

Human life is the process of a man knowing himself. Our real growth expands the knowledge of who we truly are for human persons. As we grow, we can come to know of our Self.

I am not the body, nor the mind, not the thinking;

If I am none of these, then who am I?

After negating all of the above

Mentioned as 'not this', 'not this', 'not this',

That Awareness which alone remains – that I am.

What is the Nature of Awareness?

The nature of Awareness is Existence. It is Consciousness or eternal Bliss. The Self is different from the physical body, the senses, and the mind. Ego is not the Self. Ego, or I-ness, is an idea only; it is purely mental. Being mental, it cannot be the Self. What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world and the individual Soul are appearances of the Self.

Who Am I?

Have you ever asked yourself, 'Who am I really?' You may say, 'I am a father, a husband, a friend, an engineer, a teacher, or whatever. But, are these really you, or are these roles that you may be playing?'

The truth is that you are a father because you have a son. You are a husband because you have a wife. You are a teacher because you have a student. So, all our identities, everything we conventionally believe ourselves to be, depend on something else. The relationships we make with external realities are the basis for these identities. So, if we are not these relationships and roles, who are we, actually?

Knowing who we really are is the challenge of our human life. We have to ask, seek and find within our Self in order to know the true



Self. It is very beautifully said that he who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings hates no one. It is possible for someone to hate others only when that Awareness of unity is not there. In contrast, Awareness of the Self's presence in all beings makes everyone dear to us. The spiritual goal of humanity is to experience this divine Self within and without. The desire to attain this should be the norm of life. You must first know who you really are, then do what you need to do. By not knowing the answer to the question, "Who am I?" one keeps on creating new identities of oneself, consequently going farther away from one's true Self. All the suffering in life is because of not knowing our true identity. Until one realizes one's true Self, one believes oneself to be the name or some other external label or identity that has been given to oneself.

In reality, however, we are an eternal reality (Soul). For infinite past, the Soul has been hidden beneath a veil of ignorance. Due to this, we have been unable to experience the true Self. With the grace of God, it is possible to realize your true Self. After that, a person not only understands that they are a pure reality (Soul), but they also experience their true bliss.

The righteous path aims to remove the roots of defilement from the mind. Through practice, one soon realizes what the root is, where suffering actually begins: in reactions of craving or aversion. If one learns to maintain equanimity with the wisdom of

impermanence. One emerges from the unhealthy habit of reacting, and the mind is purified. Understanding this reality will practice the rule of life correctly and give importance only to the essence of the path of righteousness and not to external, superficial matters. And, the service by such a person will be with the option of helping as many people as possible—whenever they may be—to come out of suffering and attain peace. The results of this service will be wonderful. Whoever serves must become firmly established in the righteous path, and as one does so, all attachments to sects, philosophies, and rituals are left behind. One then sees that the righteous path is a way of life, living in peace with oneself and with all others. Our actions must be pure, and this is possible only when the mind is freed of defilements such as anger, hatred, passion, and ill-will. When these are eliminated, good qualities naturally arise in mind: love, compassion, goodwill, and so on. That is the righteous path.

Remember that an empty vessel has nothing to offer others. Therefore, fill yourself with the righteous path and discover the real peace and harmony within yourself, and naturally, these will overflow to benefit others.

You may keep walking on the righteous path for your own good, happiness, and liberation, and it will also be for the good, happiness, and freedom of many. It is a life of peace, joy, and liberation.

May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be happy. May all beings be liberated.

(Swami Arul Jyothi Ananda is the founder and director of Arul Jyothi Peedam, a spiritual centre near Pondicherry, South India.)

Source: <https://www.goodnesstimes.org/>

Lost and Found -II Falling and Rising in Love

Sana Noorain

Safa was the kind of girl who'd get happy about little things, but now she was stuck in gloom and despair. Her mother observed that she was devoted to religion, worked hard to do good, and called others towards good, but she showed no interest in making dua for herself. Was religion an escape from a hidden emptiness inside her? She lacked the personal connection with God that makes one a grateful, fearless, patient, unconditionally loving, and constantly submissive worshiper. She was suffering silently but faked strength because she thought that vulnerability would weaken her and distract her from her goals. We humans can be afraid of showing authentic emotions. You may wear masks because you are so scared of not being accepted for who you are. You are afraid of being rejected. Fearful of being left empty. Fearful of being hurt. You see only darkness when you are left alone because you have not found the Light inside you. **"The wound is where the light enters."** (Rumi)

Safa was sick and tired of the emptiness inside her. Nothing in the world would make the darkness go away. She desperately searched for Light and sometimes in the wrong places. Little did she know that the journey towards **An-Noor** (the Light) would be such a painful one. She needed to fall and get hurt, and her heart needed to burn, melt and break to let the Light inside.

She tossed a few clothes in a bag and started for Makkah. She wanted to visit the Baytullah (House of Allah) to turn her heart into a baytullah. There she presented all pieces of her broken, darkened heart to the Lord of the Worlds, with her eyes continuously streaming, hoping that these tears would somehow wash and fix her heart. She struggled to find words to convert the sighs of her heart into dua. All the memorization from the Quran and Hadith could not help her during this emotional storm. She kept repeating Allah's name until an unplanned *dua* traveled from her aching heart to her lips. This *dua* was not written down in her *dua* list that she would usually recite from mechanically. In fact,

When God's love
hits your heart, it
changes you.

she didn't even glance at the book but followed the intuition that flashed in her heart. She begged for Love; Only love could light up her heart. Only love could grant her wandering, lonely heart a home. She desperately called out: **"O Allah, I need Your Love. I give myself to You completely. Keep my heart with You and never return it to me. Free my heart from everything except You. Choose me for Yourself. O Allah, please love me. Take me. Never leave me to myself. Choose me, ya Allah. Love me, ya Allah."**

She kept repeating her *dua* throughout the journey - during the *tawaaf*, the *sai'ee* between *Safa* and *Marwa*, and *Masjid an Nabawi*. The pain in her heart woke her in the middle of the night, so she let her tears wet the prayer mat knowing that the best place to cry was in front of Allah. When you cry alone, you feel heavier. When you cry in the company of Allah, the angels count your tears, and they are accepted as silent prayers that set you free. Know that with every injury, there's a healing process happening inside. With every pain, there's an immunity building inside. In every disaster, there's a miracle hidden. The Prophet s.a.w. said, **"When Allah loves a servant, He gives him difficulties,"** [Tirmidhi].

Sometimes the answer to a test is our need for God.

"Zarurat tod deti hai guroor e beniyazi ko, na hoti koi majboori to har banda Khuda hota"

Your cure is in pain. When you run away from the pain, you run away from growth. The same strength that protects the heart from injury is the wall that prevents it from expanding to its greatest form.

"From the perfection of *Allah's ihsan* is that He allows His slave to taste the bitterness of the break before the sweetness of the mend. So He does not break His believing slave, except to mend him. And He does not withhold from Him, except to give him. And He does not test him (with hardship), except to cure him." Ibn al Qayyim (RA) ■

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Islamic banking makes a Resurgence in South Africa

being expanded, Muslim clerics in South Africa are being actively consulted to make sure banking is in line with the scriptural values of the Quran, for example: avoiding excessive interest,

consistent donations to charity, and tax harmonisation.

"I'm glad that the Sharia savings accounts I invested in had low volatility compared to Western financial instruments, greater

diversification, robust risk-adjusted earnings and more generous yields than main street banks," says accountant Carter Mavhiza, a non-Muslim in Johannesburg, who says he is a first time subscriber to Islamic banking and has been won over along with his immediate family. "It all began with me, experimenting, transacting accounts into Al Baraka Bank, the biggest Islamic bank in South Africa."

(Ray Mwareya is the receiver of the 2016 UN Correspondents Association Media Prize and a regular freelancer for The New Arab. Ashley Simango is a freelance journalist. Source: Arab News) ■

"It's a thrilling time to be a South African citizen, Muslim or non-Muslim. We're spoiled with choice of Islamic housing bonds, Sharia savings funds, and Sharia life annuity insurance packages that are not only stable but follow the UN values of social justice, environmental protection, and commitment to charity."

Know that there's a healing process happening inside with every injury. With every pain, there's an immunity building inside. In every disaster, there's a miracle hidden

The Quran Foundation, Hyderabad Working Towards Making Lives Better!

The Quran Foundation (TQF) is a Registered and Non-Profit Organization based in Hyderabad working for the Educational, Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the poor and underprivileged sections of the society. Registered in 2009 under the Societies Registration Act and also registered under 12A of the Income Tax Act 1961. Together with other NGOs, we provide voluntary support for conducting programs aligned with the aims and objectives of The Quran Foundation.

- Orphan Empowerment Program
- Scholarship
- Tuition Center
- Career Guidance Council (Weekly offline and Online Sessions)
- Advanced Skills Development Center
- Small Vendor Development Program
- Oxfame
- Covid 19 Relief Program wave 2
- ICU setup at Al-Arif General Hospital
- Disaster Relief Program
- Feed the Hungry
- Health Support Program
- TQF Programs in Covid 19

Parents are the ones who look after the well-being of their children, but who will do so in the absence of the parents?



currently supporting about 48 orphan children. We look after them from shelter to education. We have 15 children staying in our 'Education Center for Underprivileged and Orphan Children', which is managed by The Quran Foundation in which they are getting a homely environment.

We are currently supporting 290+ students with school and college fees under our Education Support Program (ESP) with scholarship through The Quran Foundation (TQF) and in collaboration with Support for Education and Economic Development (SEED).



In this program, we supported deserving students from economically poor backgrounds who are on the verge of dropping out due to non-payment of fees. We make payments directly to



schools' accounts with cheques to avoid misappropriation of funds. We are currently running 20+ tuition centers with 750+ students from 1st to 9th classes at various places. In this, we are working towards improving the basics of the students by teaching English and Mathematics. As we know that the reason for dropouts in the community is due to a lack of seriousness from parents and teachers, this tuition helps make the foundation strong.



Career Guidance Council is a Non-Profit Organization and a sister concern organization of The Quran Foundation. It provides a platform for students/job seekers to connect with professionals from various industries who share their experiences and ideas on the CGC platform. These sessions help students decide their careers and help job seekers with interview training, workshops, and job placements. We also conduct walk-in drives for multiple companies to fulfill their job (opening) requirements. We manage 100+ WhatsApp groups to share authentic job notifications to job seekers across India.

ADVANCED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Advanced Skills Development Center (ASDC) in Collaboration with SEED is formed to help the students who could not continue their education with the required skills necessary for employment. Currently, 440+ students are getting trained in various skills-based courses. Trained students are getting placed in the companies before earning the certifications based on their leanings in ASDC.

SMALL VENDOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Small Vendor Development

Program. This project aims to empower and develop street vendors' skills.

OXFAME

To enhance human potential, we have started 'Seed Coaching Centre', at Patna city of Bihar, to help students who could not continue their education and acquire the necessary skills for employment. This project runs in collaboration with SEED & Oxfame Institute of Patna.

The training courses offered by 'Seed Coaching Centre' will be certified by the Department of Intermediate Education.



Covid Relief Program. In this program, we continued to support the hospitals and individuals with Oxygen Concentrators and Oxygen Cylinders to help the covid positive patients and with necessities for the survival of their families.

Under Covid 19 Relief Program, an ICU was set up with 10 Beds at Al-Arif General Hospital, Bandlaguda Hyderabad, with a ventilator facility to save people from the financial crisis on 17th October 2021 under the auspices of The Quran Foundation and in collaboration with the Imana Foundation USA. It is not operational yet as we have set up this ICU only for the covid positive people.

Cyclone YAAS, which intensified into a "very severe cyclonic storm," hit the states of West Bengal and Odisha and lashed southern Bangladesh. YAAS lashed coastal areas with ferocious wind and rain, making landfall in India. We have Supported 31 people to rebuild their homes.



Health Support Program provided support to individuals who are daily wage earners and cannot afford the hefty hospital bills of unintended health issues and saved them from financial crises.

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Myths against Islam

consternation for non-Muslims, has now become a universal requirement.

This brings up the issue of where are such narrow-minded ideologies now?

Has covering face changed their mindsets and visions too? No, it has definitely not changed anyone's ideology. Thus, it is essential to comprehend that covering body has no linkage with ideology or anything. Undeniably, wars and rivalries are a part of life; nevertheless, the question that arises here is that adversaries of the Muslim world have no other strategy than to inhumane or disrespect religion? This demonstrates that covering the head, face, or body or having a beard are not issues; instead, the problem for them is the existence of Muslims; thus, they objectify Islam which is nothing but a mere fear of Islam's exaltation and, inevitably, the Muslim world.

Muhammad (pbuh), an Islamic leader, says, "There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an



Arab, and no superiority of a white person over a black person or of a black person over a white person, except based on personal piety and righteousness."

Which elucidates Islam's non-discrimination stance. How long will such tactics be played to dislocate Muslims? France's Islamophobia case study 2021 is still alive in Muslims' hearts, and now Hijab row has compelled many Muslims to boycott their products and ideologies. Though such propagandas hurt Muslim sentiments simultaneously, it provides greater courage to raise their voice against such anti-humanitarian and anti-Islam views and spread Islam.

(Source: Global Village Space.)

The reality of the countries who are involved in such inhumane acts is so acrimonious that on one side, they claim to be modern; on the contrary, they consider Islam as a conservative religion.

Nonetheless, in reality, their thoughts are still blocked in a petite shell, restricting them from accepting other religions, particularly Islam. The short-sighted anti-Islam views reveal their harsh reality and dual standards

DYS WORKSHOP ONLINE REGISTRATION LINK
<https://tinyurl.com/DYSDelhi>

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REVISED 40,000+ PEOPLE

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Time: DYS HEART DETOX Program

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DISCOVER Yourself

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'Heart Blowing' Discover Yourself Workshop in Hyderabad!! **Powerful and Life Changing!!**

The Discover Yourself Workshop was held on 28,29 & 30 January 2022. It was organized by The Quran Foundation, Hyderabad, at the Al-Qurmoshi Institute Of Business Management, Opp Peeli Dargahg, Barkas, Hyderabad.

The participants share their experiences about the Workshop:

- I felt the feeling of 'RE-BIRTH.' It helped me in all areas of my life. Thank you, Sadath Sir, and I will commit to following your teachings.
- I realized the mistakes I was making till today. This Workshop is the need of the hour for the Ummah.
- My anger is in control, I am giving up making others wrong, and my mind is free from questions.
- I became aware of myself and nafs. Now I am free from all tensions.
- The Workshop helped me to reconnect to Allah. I am willing to give up my addictions and control my anger.
- It was the best moment of my life. I learned how easily we could leave the past and the future and live in the present.
- It helped me to understand the power of my word and to unleash the power of my heart. I have realized the power of Allah, and it is just 'HEART' Blowing.
- If I had not attended this Workshop, I would have achieved a lot in my life, but at the cost of my peace, self-acceptance, and worth.
- I am thankful to the Quran Foundation for organizing such a powerful workshop that helped us reflect and introspect our lives. It changed my perspective of seeing the world in a better way. I shall see and treat

everyone as a human being because this is the path for being a human and being a Muslim.

- After the Workshop, my family members were shocked by my positive, pleasing attitude and behavior when I reached home. I got the ability to distinguish what is good and what is evil.
- The curtains of 'EGO blinded me.' The Workshop helped me remove my blindness. I feel better now, not blinded by ego. Now, I see everyone as equal and do not attack anyone with my words.
- I learned in the Workshop that denial is my mind, and acceptance is my heart. I got the ability to distinguish between the external and internal world. Alhamdulillah, I am grateful that I met Sadath Sir.
- Very well explained, very simple, touches your heart, very practical, valuable, and living a happy life of cordial relationships. A golden, rare opportunity would have been missed if I had not attended it.

ISHTHIYAQ: This Workshop is a life-changing experience, self-realization, cleansing, and myth about Almighty. 100% - I would have missed the journey of discovering myself. Being a Muslim, I had never calibrated the small things, like, words, action, activity, and communication and their importance. It is not our prayers,

fasting, or zakat which will make us a Muslim, but the Workshop gave me a broad definition of a Muslim, and I will try to follow the path shown and explained in the Workshop.

AMEENA: The Workshop was very good, as I was before an overthinking person. It is the best place to discover yourself. I find many differences in myself. I lived in the past and now living in the present, focusing on others and not blaming. I got the distinction between *zahiri* and *Batini*. I would have missed many valuable learnings if not attended the Workshop. I am giving up my ego and stopped reacting to unnecessary things. I started behaving well with others, seeking Allah's love, and being grateful for the things He has blessed us.

SAMIUDDIN: Life was monotonous before the Workshop, eating, job, sleeping. Now there is meaning to life. I realized the importance of things God has gifted me. It helped and reminded me to differentiate between good and evil. It reminds and trains the mind to make mindful decisions. This Workshop is needed more than anything else.

SHAFIULLA: Alhamdulillah, it was very beneficial; InshaAllah, I will try to apply and think through my heart before taking

any decision. Allah swt blessed me with the *Towfeek* to attend this Workshop. I changed a lot after the Workshop. I could realize how *Satan* brings *fitna* within us. I will give up my ego and try to honor my word inshallah.

AZIZ: This Workshop organized by Quran Foundation was amazing. It cleared my view of seeing and way of thinking. Before the Workshop, I was confused and unable to understand the moral values, respect, family trends, and social aspects. This Workshop taught me how to deal with day-to-day problems from an Islamic perspective. And to face the truth and reality. It has allowed me to express myself clearly to others. My family noticed the changes in my attitudes and the confidence I got.

SADIYA: Excellent and fantastic to help us know ourselves and the reality. Great energy boosted our understanding of life and showed the path to reaching Jannah. It helped me to understand my faults. Before the Workshop, I inhaled every opinion and always regretted that 'I am bad,' but my *Qareen* let me down in every step. After the Workshop, I got the technique of what to listen to and what not to. It set me free from the burden of the past,

to love one another for the sake of only Allah, and to focus more on my path to Jannah.

SAYEEDUDDIN: Discover Yourself workshop is excellent, simple, and easy to understand with reference to our practical life in light of the Quran and Sunnah with the modern way of life. Say end to evil and start practicing to transform to make Allah and the Prophetic way of life. By not attending this Workshop, I would have missed the structured strategy that Sadath saheb has provided in a simple, easy-to-understand way.

ETHESHAM: This Workshop is life-changing, most valuable, simple, easy to understand, but very difficult to implement in life. But I have decided to start implementing from now only. It cleared the concept of reality, leading a happy, righteous, and peaceful life. Islam was made easy in this Workshop. All my prayers will be from my heart, and now, I am responsible for spreading love to everyone. I will personally hug every near and dear, look into their eyes with love and compassion, will forgive them, and ask for forgiveness. I am determined to spend time with my near and dear ones and with my Creator, who is very Compassionate and Merciful. ■



Islamic scholar dubbed 'Syrian Gandhi' for non-violent activism dies at 90



A prominent Syrian Islamic scholar and advocate for non-violence has died in Istanbul, Syrian media reported on 31 January 2022.

Jawdat Said, a 90-year-old critic of Syria's Assad regime who

graduated from Egypt's Al-Azhar university, dedicated much of his life to advocating for what he called "non-violent Islam," rejecting extremism and the use of violence even in self-defense. Many activists referred to him as "the Arab Gandhi" for his peaceful activism.

Said held lectures and seminars in universities and cultural centers across the World - including in Iran, Turkey, Canada, and the United States - stressing that Islam was a religion of peace.

Among Said's most famous works were 'The Problem of Violence in the Islamic World,' published in 1966, and his 2002 publication 'Non-violence, the basis of settling disputes in Islam'.

Jawdat was born in 1931 in Syria's Golan Heights - which was captured by Israel in 1967 - and left Syria in 2012 after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011.

Sayeedur Rahman



Sayeedur Rahman Nadvi, who heads the Bangalore-based Furqania Academy, passed away on 17 February 2022.

Sayeedur Rahman, born in 1966, was brought up in Chikkabanavara Town on the outskirts of Bangalore. After completing his modern education in Bangalore, Mr. Rahman moved to Lucknow to attain Islamic education from Nadwatul Ulama.

He completed his Aalimiyat course from 1985-1990. Since then, he started getting involved in the academic work of Furqania Academy Trust alongside his father Allama Mohammad Shihabuddin Nadvi. In 2002, after the demise of his father, Sayeedur Rahman shouldered the entire responsibility of his family and that of Furqania Academy Trust. He became the General Secretary of the Academy and continued with his late father's mission.

Sayeedur Rahman started his academic career by translating dozens of his father's Urdu books into English. He then pens his own prestigious and pioneering Book on the alien's passionate search. The book "Extraterrestrial Intelligence; Amazing New Insights from Qur'an" is a pioneering work in the realm of religion and science, seeking to build upon from where modern science stopped short in its passionate search for the aliens. The Book got published in

"CreateSpace" in the United States of America and was hailed by dozens of Scientists from NASA and other parts of the World. The Book also received praise from several Islamic Scholars (Ulama) from around the World.

Mr. Rahman dedicated his short-lived life to the community by being at the forefront of all community works. He was actively involved with the Karnataka Muslim Muttahida Mahaz during several elections.

He was also an active member of the Muslim World League in KSA for over two decades.

He was regarded as the Kohinoor of the Community in general, particularly our family. He was the brightest star among the learned modern personalities and the religious ones.

He is survived by his wife, two sons Rasheedur Rahman, Mahmood Rahman and daughter Sadia Farhat pursuing her Journalism & Psychology.

PEOPLE

New Delhi (Asia News/Agencies): K. V. Rabiya, an Indian Muslim woman, is one of this year's recipients of the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards, officially conferred on the country's Republic Day.

She had to deal with polio, cancer, and a broken back in her life, but this hasn't stopped her work to improve literacy among the poor in rural Kerala.

Born in 1966 in a village near Tirurangadi, Malappuram district, Rabiya found herself in a wheelchair due to polio at the age of 14. Nevertheless, she launched a campaign for adult literacy in her village in June 1990; her grandmother was one of her pupils. In a few years, that experience led to the creation of Chalanam

A wheelchair-bound Kerala woman honoured for her work with illiterate people



(movement), which Rabiya chairs. The association runs six schools for disabled children and has undertaken several initiatives to empower women, develop programmes and build facilities in

the poorest areas. Rabiya did not stop even when, in 2000, she found herself fighting cancer at the age of 34. She underwent chemotherapy giving hope to other patients. Once

healed, she performed the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, in 2002.

In 2004 she faced another major test when she broke her back, further reducing her ability to move.

Despite being bedridden, she wrote her autobiography, *Swapnangalkku Chirakukalundu* (Dreams have wings), published in 2009.

"God is great," she said when she was told that she had been awarded the Padma Shri. "The country has recognized my work and honoured me."

"Getting knowledge is foremost and imparting this to others is equally important," she added. "I feel education serves its purpose only if you impart the same to others and empower them."

MATRIMONIAL

WANTED GROOM

Sunni Muslim parents invite alliance for their daughters (practicing Muslimah) 33 yrs. 5.5 H working as a govt Lecturer in History subject in Bangalore. 27 years, 5.1 H Completed B.A in Bangalore. The prospective grooms should be broad-minded with a strong background of Islamic values and well educated professionals. **Contact: 8618677843 / 9066525619 Email: syedwaseem.kpimt@gmail.com**

Bangalore Sunni Muslim parents invite alliance for their daughter Software Engineer working for MNC, 29 years, 5'3" seeks alliance preferably Engineer from a well-educated family residing in Bangalore. **Contact mobile no. 9886419383 / 8904169930**

SM Bangalore-based parents invite alliance from well educated, religious, and cultured families from Bangalore or Gulf settled families for their V fair & beautiful daughter 26 years, MBA, HR, observes hijab. Mohammed Vaseemuddin - please email or WhatsApp profiles to - mvasim@gmail.com, Mob - +966567957472 (Riyadh, KSA)

WANTED BRIDE

Bangalore-based Sunni Muslim (Shaik) parents invite alliance for their only son age 35 yrs, 5'9 BA graduate, having own business and house. The girl should be slim and good looking, preferred in and around Bangalore, early marriage. **Contact # 7848003035**

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CEO'S MESSAGE

Dear valued investors,

A new year 2022 has dawned and all of us have prayed and wished for the new year to herald new hopes and good health and early and total relief from the Covid pandemic. The two preceding years have been stressful. Although, by Oct. 2021 the return to reasonable normalcy seemed well underway, but again since Nov. 2021 the new virus spreads and clouds of uncertainty have returned.

The year ended 2021 was a difficult year for most of the businesses including some of the companies in the financial services. But, on the other hand it was also a transformative year rounding off two years of accelerated digitization of economic activity across the globe, positive changes in Health care services and infrastructure, phenomenon growth in e-commerce, adaptation of quick changes in the business processes for surviving with the adversities and also the business entities making extraordinary efforts to achieve growth.

For Rehbar Fin Services Pvt Ltd, the holding company, the financial year ended March 2021, was a notable year of achievement. In the recently concluded AGM of shareholders, the company has recorded the turnaround as a dividend paying company.

Our Financial Performance for Q2 ended September 2021 for FY 21-22

The financial performance of Rehbar's SPVs: RERL I and II is summarized in the report and following are the notable highlights:

- Average investment has increased by Rs. 2.7 Cr to Rs. 55.7 Cr registering a growth in investment of 5%.
- Deployment has increased by 1.4 Cr to Rs. 45.5 Cr registering a growth in investment of 3.1%.
- Gross profit of Rs. 172 L was earned and the share of the profits attributable to the valued debenture holders is Rs. 144 L which translates to 9.2% (annualized).
- The average return to the debenture holders has increased marginally from 9% paid in the previous quarter. This is mainly on account of higher gross return on the deployments made. However, the net return has not increased as the deployment percentage vis-a-vis the total investment funds available has dipped mainly because of reduced demand for credit.

Our bond together and your continued trust and support will help our future growth and build a strong community and nation.

yours truly,

Mohamed Ashrafulla

Chief Executive Officer
Rehbar Financial Services

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For more details email us at: info@rehbar.co.in

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LET US TRY TO AVOID RIBA, IT IS CLASSIFIED AS 'HARAM'

PERFORMANCE OF RERL DURING THE QUARTER ENDING 30th SEP 2021

Average Investment from debenture holders	₹ 5,573.8 L
Average Deployment Made	₹ 4,547.3 L
Gross Profit incl cross deployment	₹ 187.7 L
Gross Profit from deals	₹ 171.8 L
Fees, expenses and appropriations	₹ 43.9 L
Amount due to debenture holders	₹ 143.8 L

Deployment to Investment Ratio	81.6%
Gross Return on Deployment	14.5% p.a.
Net Return on Investment (Rol) for the quarter	9.2% p.a.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- Facilitated payments of profits to investors of over Rs 24 Cr since inception.
- Facilitated investments of over Rs. 90 crores in 100+ businesses so far.
- Successfully facilitated over 2000 investments for more than 900 investors.
- Received IFFSA Business Excellence Award 2017 for the promotion of Islamic Finance in New Markets.
- Member of the Association for Mutual Funds in India (AMFI Registration No: 162773)



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