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JMI Vice-Chancellor Prof. Najma Akhtar conferred with Padma Shri



New Delhi: Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) Vice-Chancellor Prof. Najma Akhtar received Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of the country, from the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ramnath Kovind at a ceremony held at the Darbar Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 21, 2022. The government of India (GoI) selected her for the award for her invaluable contribution to literature and education.

Prof. Akhtar is the first woman Vice-Chancellor of JMI-an institution accredited with A++ by the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) in December 2021. She is widely recognized as a leading educationist for having brought transformation in the delivery of

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UN makes March 15 International Day to Combat Islamophobia

London: The UN has adopted a resolution proposed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Pakistan to designate March 15 the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The resolution was adopted two years ago since a right-wing extremist murdered over 50 Muslims in a New Zealand terror attack on two mosques.

The day will be cemented as an annual reminder of the need to combat Islamophobia.

The resolution was introduced on March 15 by Pakistan's ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, on behalf of the OIC.

"Islamophobia is a reality. Its manifestations hate speech, discrimination, and violence against Muslims are increasing in



Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, presents an Introductory Statement on Resolution "International Day to Combat Islamophobia" March 15, 2022, New York. (UN Perm Rep Pakistan)

several parts of the world," he said. "Such acts of discrimination, hostility, and violence towards

Muslim individuals and communities constitute grave violations of their human rights and violate their freedom of religion and belief. They also cause great anguish within the Islamic world."

Akram cited the words of the UN's special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, who said: "Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, institutional suspicion and fear of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim has escalated to epidemic proportions."

Women and girls have often found themselves at the sharp end of this hatred, said Akram, adding: "The gender aspect of Islamophobia is also gaining prominence, with girls and women being targeted due to mode of their dress and the general notion that Muslim

women are oppressed and thus must be liberated."

He warned that Islamophobia is a "poorly understood" phenomenon that often intersects with the anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment.

He said it is "essential" to promote information about this "disturbing global trend" that can reach the very top of governments in many parts of the world.

The adoption of the resolution follows years of discussion about the need for an international day to combat Islamophobia, initiated in Makkah in 2019 following the New Zealand mosque attacks.

At that time, OIC members, including Saudi Arabia, "stressed the necessity to combat hate and fear of Islam and Muslims." (Source: <https://arab.news/9hbd9>)

Milli Council Meeting Demands Minority Protection Bill

New Delhi: The working committee meeting of the All India Milli Council was held online on March 14. The meeting examined the current state of affairs in the country and offered recommendations for improving the communal environment. Following the outcomes of the five assembly elections, the council stated that there is no need to be depressed because such periods come and go.

Council President Maulana Hakeem Mohammad Abdullah Mughisi remarked in his presidential address that we must be concerned about the current situation in the country. Still, we must tackle it with resolve and courage. As a result, there isn't any room for conjecture. "We were working together," he remarked, referring to the recent elections in five states and their results. "But the opposition's approach has hurt, but

we also need to send a message to them."

Dr. Muhammad Manzoor Alam, the Council's General Secretary, stated that there are some scenarios for which we need to develop a better plan. On humanitarian grounds, we must engage with all concerned citizens of this country, particularly those among our compatriots who believe in the country's constitution and democratic values. It is also

planned to open the door to further engagement with religious leaders from other faiths. The work that has been done in this area in the recent past needs to be rethought, and they need to be trusted with their concerns and difficulties, and a systematic movement needs to be initiated.

To carry out the tasks at the organizational level across the country with enthusiasm while

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Board to approach Supreme Court on the Hijab issue; Appeals to Muslims to stay calm and peaceful

New Delhi: Following a Karnataka High Court decision upholding the ban on Hijab in educational institutions on the pretext that it is not an essential Islamic practice, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said that it will file an appeal in the Supreme Court.

Board's general secretary, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, said that an online meeting of the Board's legal committee and its secretaries were held on March 14 to review the court order.

Senior Advocate Yusuf Hathim Muchhala, Legal Committee Convener, Advocates M.R. Shamshad, Tahir Hakeem, Fuzail Ahmed Ayyubi, Niyaz Ahmed Farooqui, and Secretaries Maulana Muhammed Fazlurraheem Mujaddadi, Maulana Muhammed Umrain Mehfooz Rehmani, Dr. Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, Kamal Farooqui, Maulana Sagheer Ahmed Rushadi, (Ameer-e-Shariat, Karnataka), Maulana Ateeq Ahmed Bastavi and K Rehman Khan participated in the meeting.

The Board felt that the judgment had numerous flaws. First, the verdict completely disregards the right to personal liberty.

It was noted that the court decided what is and is not essential in Islam on its own. The right to interpret or expound a law, on the other hand, is reserved exclusively for professionals in that field. As a result, when it comes to Shariat or Islamic law, the view of the Ulama or Islamic experts will be more critical and persuasive. The Karnataka High Court, on the other hand, did not take this into account when delivering its Hijab judgment.

As a result, the Karnataka high

court in the Hijab case could not meet the demand for justice. Muslims are becoming greatly worried that the court, which had been the final light of hope for citizens' justice, is eroding.

The Board voiced its deep dissatisfaction with the Karnataka High Court's decision.

While maintaining within the bounds of the law, the Board plans to appeal the Karnataka high court's decision to the Supreme Court.

The Board also appealed to the Ulemas, intellectuals, community leaders, academicians, industrialists, and people in business to set up more girls' schools all over the country where girls from all communities can obtain high-quality education without compromising their culture, religion, and moral values.

The community must place a greater emphasis on girls' education and treat women with dignity and respect. Community leaders must approach private educational institutions and persuade their administrators to create separate classrooms for boys and girls in grades above Standard VII. Furthermore, the community must organize nonviolent protests in states where wearing the scarf is prohibited in educational institutions.

The Board lauded the girl students who chose not to remove their Hijab and remained firm in adopting the Islamic symbols as clearly mentioned in the Quran.

The Board appeals to the Muslim community to remain peaceful and calm and not take the law into their hands and wait for the instructions from the Board. ■

Muslim girl bags five prizes in MA Sanskrit

Staff Writer

Lucknow: A Muslim girl from Lucknow University (LU) has been awarded five prizes for being the top MA Sanskrit student. The University announced Ghazala's name during its convocation ceremony in November; however, owing to Covid-19, only a few students received medals during the ceremony. During a faculty-level medal distribution ceremony, Gazala was presented with the awards by dean arts Prof Shashi Shukla.

Ghazala, the daughter of a daily wage, speaks five languages: English, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, and Sanskrit. She struggled to finish her schooling after her father died in Class 10.



"These medals were acquired by my brothers, Shadab and Nayab, who dropped out of school and started working in a garage at the ages of 13 and 10 years, respectively, so that I could continue to study," Ghazala explained.

Yasmeen, her older sister, started working in a utensil shop while her mother, Nasreen Bano, took

care of the family.

Ghazala lives in a one-room residence with her family, rises at 5 a.m. to serve 'namaaz,' completes all household tasks, and studies Sanskrit for over seven hours each day. She wants to be a professor of Sanskrit.

Her interest in Sanskrit, she says, began in Class 5 in a government primary school in Nishatganj, where her teacher taught

her the language. "People who wonder how I gained a love for Sanskrit as a Muslim are often surprised by my understanding and interest in the language. They ask me what I want to do with it, but my family has always been supportive," Ghazala said. Ghazala is presently interested in pursuing a doctorate in Vedic literature. ■




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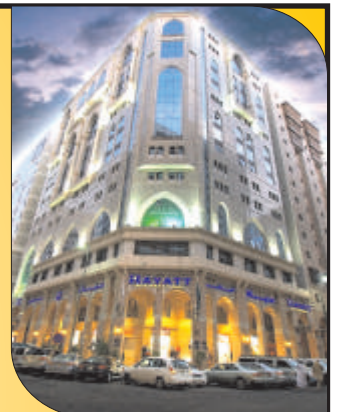
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Bushra Mateen Set a New Record by Winning 16 Gold Medals in Civil Engineering Exam



Bangalore: Bushra Mateen, a 22-year-old civil engineering graduate from SLN College of Engineering in Raichur, Karnataka, has set a new record by winning 16 gold medals. On March 10, she received her medals at the varsity's annual convocation, including the one for a topper.

She has the most gold medals in the history of Visvesvaraya Technological University, according to the university (VTU). The previous record for

the most gold medals earned by a single student was 13.

For her exceptional feat, she has received praise from several well-known figures. Swara Bhaskar, a Bollywood actress, congratulated her and called out prejudices of the people who stereotype hijab.

"Congratulations, Bushra! Apparently, academic excellence & achievement and #Hijab are not mutually exclusive! In a tweet, do we need to be 'liberated' from our prejudices," Swara said.

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'Courts Can't Dictate Citizens to Wear Against their Conscience and Faith'

New Delhi: Reacting to the Karnataka High Court's order on the Hijab ban, prominent Muslim organizations said that it is not the courts' job to decide about essential religious practices of any religion.

In a statement, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) President Syed Sadatullah Husaini said that "we disagreed with the judgment of the High Court. He hoped that the Supreme Court would bring the required essential correction into this ruling and would not allow a wrong precedent to be set. We are highly concerned about the mischievous reporting in certain sections of the media, giving a wrong impression that the court has put some ban on Hijab. The court order has nothing to do with the issue of wearing or not wearing a Hijab in social and private life. It is limited to the validity of the Government Order giving power to the Management of the public-funded schools to prescribe dress

codes. Trying to create any rift or mistrust in the citizens by misinterpreting court judgments is not good."

Husaini said, "We are highly concerned that this order may exclude Muslim women from education. It goes against the government's stated policy of including all communities and social groups in the path of progress and development. Education is a crucial national priority, and its cause demands a conducive atmosphere where everyone could pursue their education without being forced to compromise on his faith or conscience."

President of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Maulana Mahmood Asa'd Madani said this verdict would have many negative implications, especially on the education of Muslim girl's students as they would lose their right to choice and their confidence in the present communal atmosphere.

He noted that our country has a very ancient tradition and civilization, especially Indian Muslim women who have a deep attachment to their belief about modesty and veil that can never be erased merely by judicial intervention.

Maulana Madani emphasized that the decision regarding any particular religion should be based on the accepted interpretation of the beliefs by the authoritative scholars and jurists of that religion, and the courts should not take a diverted path in this regard. Maulana Madani urged the state governments and the central government to fulfill their responsibility of protecting the established culture and tradition of a particular community. If the court does not resolve the issue, then in a democratic country Parliament and Assemblies have absolute right to enact a law. Therefore we urge the governments to take action that can serve more extensive national interests.



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Mahbubul Hoque, Chancellor of USTM, and P. A. Inamdar, Founder President, Azam Campus, conferred with Edu Doctor Award

Khanapara, Ri Bhoi, (Meghalaya): Maeshat Media Pvt. Ltd, India's first media outlet dedicated to covering economic activities of minority communities, has given away its 11th edition of business awards at the Golmez Edupreneur Conference held in association with the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) on March 10. Mahbubul Hoque, Chancellor of USTM, and P.A. Inamdar, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune was conferred with Edu Doctor Award-2022 while Dr. Abdul Qadeer, Founder Chairman, Shaheen Group, Karnataka, was conferred with the Edupreneur of the Year Award. The conference's keynote address was delivered by Dr. Frank F Islam, Chairman, and CEO of FI investment group, USA. The conference has been attended by economic experts, business leaders, entrepreneurs, social workers, and professionals from across India.

Addressing the gathering of entrepreneurs, P.A. Inamdar urged, "Let us not talk about anything negative. We have to talk about how much we have achieved and how far we have to achieve for development." Emphasizing imparting spoken English in all vernacular medium schools, he said technology can create a much better environment and contribute to educational progress. He suggested all to think about how to empower small neighbourhood

institutions.

Welcoming the guests, Mahbubul Hoque said that through institution-building, one could change the environment of a particular place and bring progress to the area's people. He thanked all the participants for coming over to the North East and for their desire to contribute to the people's development through the promotion of education.

A magazine of Maeshat Media was released on the occasion by M. Nurul Islam, Founder General Secretary, Al Ameen Mission, Kolkata and other dignitaries. Some of the distinguished participants in the conference include: Waqar Naqvi, Former CEO, Taurus Asset Management Company, Mumbai; Danish Reyaz, Managing Editor, Maeshat Media; Munir uz Zaman Deshmukh, Pearls Academy, Aurangabad; Rashid Nayyar; M Mohammed Tahir Madani, M Burhanuddin Qasmi, Director, MMERC, Mumbai; Moulana Mohammad Ilyas Nadvi, GS, AHAN Islamic Academy; Moulana Mutiur Rahman Madni, Founder, Imam Bukhari University, Kishanganj; M Azizurrahman, Founder, TCIS, Malda, Dr Nazibur Rahman, Principal, Kaliachak College, Malda; M Wajihuddin, Assistant Editor, Times of India, Mumbai; Zaya Ahmed from Delhi; Izhar Khan and Affan Ahmed Kamil from Mumbai. ■

A B Masoud

The first-ever Golmez Edupreneur Conference in India was held on March 10, 2022 at the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, to forge a dynamic relationship between corporate leaders and education entrepreneurs from the minority community.

Frank F. Islam, a prominent business leader from the United States, spoke at the opening session through video conferencing. In his speech, Islam emphasized the importance of taking Muslim education to the next level to aid in creating an edupreneurial revolution, allowing the community to reap the advantages and break free from the endemic cycle of poverty and adversity.

Islam noted the Sachar Committee's conclusions, which highlighted the poor socioeconomic and educational situations of Indian Muslims. He asked Muslims to speak up for themselves to improve their situation.

Developing skills and an entrepreneurial spirit among Muslims, as well as giving higher education a more robust push, is a critical priority for the community's advancement, and it would allow minority youths to become employable while also creating jobs for the community, which is

Higher Education Needs A Stronger Push For Community's Advancement



especially important at a time when traditional job prospects are few, said education experts and activists. They traced the reasons behind the educational backwardness of the community. After partition, Muslims' backwardness grew more evident as the neighborhood fell into a state of inertia in contemporary education. The false notion that Muslims would be excluded from government jobs for religious reasons caused further harm to the community, particularly the poor, who grew uninterested in getting an education.

After a period of stagnation, the community finally realized that until their educational situation improves, they will continue to fall behind in every field of life compared to other communities.

The participants also pointed out that after the 1980s, a true awakening about the importance of education gained momentum. Many community leaders and groups stepped forward to spearhead a number of minority education programmes with little or no aid from the government.

The engagement and deliberation

between various corporate executives and educational entrepreneurs assembled at the event from different parts of the country were among the highlights of the day-long event. They gave Muslim education in India a new direction to make it more employable. The conference offered edupreneurs a fantastic opportunity to showcase their ideas and seek support. At the same time, business leaders have the opportunity to inform them of their expectations, allowing them to create relevant industry-related courses that will equip students with superior abilities to help them excel in today's labour market. The conference's focus was also on laying out a strategy for boosting Muslim access to higher education.

The Gomez Edupreneur Conference, according to one of the organizers Danish Reyaz, would result in increased engagement of corporate firms and homes in the field of Muslim educational entrepreneurship. He believed the outcome would be comparable to the Gomez Conferences, which cleared the path for Indian participation in government during the civil rights movement. Maeshat Media organized the conference in collaboration with the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya. ■

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Milli Council Meeting Demands Minority Protection Bill

adhering to the fundamental provisions of the constitution. It should be mentioned that Assembly elections in Karnataka and Gujarat are scheduled next year and at the end of the year, respectively, and national elections in 2024.

The meeting also stressed the need to pressure the Indian government to introduce a Minority Protection Bill to protect minorities.

The meeting included Dr. Yasin Ali Usmani, Maulana Anis-ur-Rehman Qasmi, Maulana Abdul Aleem Bhatkali Qasmi, Yousuf Hatim Machhala Advocate Mumbai, Hafiz Rashid Ahmed Chaudhry Advocate Guwahati, Maulana Syed Mustafa Rifai Jilani Nadvi Bangalore, Muhammad Asim Seth Feroz Bangalore, Suleiman Khan Bangalore, and others. ■



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Saadi award Ceremony

Sa'adi Taught Humanity in All Facets:
Iran Envoy



Spl Correspondent

New Delhi: The 8th Sheikh Sa'adi Award Ceremony was held in the Iran Culture House to present the Islamic Republic of Iran's prestigious Sa'adi Award to the Indian Persian scholars and university teachers in recognition of their contribution to Persian literature.

The Islamic Republic of Iran ambassador to India, Ali Chegeni, spoke on occasion and shed light on Sheikh Saadi's life and achievements.

According to Ali Chegeni, Saadi is widely regarded as one of the best poets of the classical literary tradition, giving him the moniker "Master of Speech," "The Wordsmith," or simply "Master" among Persian scholars.

According to the Iranian envoy, Saadi taught humanity in all facets of his books and messages. He presented the methods of high-level communication between youths, i.e., between two nations, in his book *Gulistan-e-Bostan*.

Saadi Sh r z , better known by his pen name Saadi, also known as Sadi of Shiraz, was a prominent Persian poet and prose writer of the medieval period. He is recognized for his writings' quality and the depth of his social and moral thoughts.

Dr. Syed Farooq congratulated the Iran culture House for encouraging the literary tradition and the awardees. He claimed that

reading Bustan was a must when he was a kid.

Saadi has been quoted in Western traditions, and Bustan has been ranked as one of the 100 most outstanding books by London's The Guardian, Dr. Farooq said.

Among those who were conferred Sheikh Saadi Award Prof. Mahmood Alam, Prof. Muhammad Mansoor Alam Masoodi, Prof. Muhammad Asif Naeem Siddiqui, Prof. Zakir Sharif, Prof. Akhlaq Ahmad Ahan Ansari, Prof. Syed Mohammad Asad Alayhi, Dr. Syed Kaleem Ather, Prof. Ali Musharraf Khan, Prof. Rajendra Kumar, Dr. Syed Mohammad son of Dr. Mohammad Sajid Khan and Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Wali. Each awardee was honoured with a citation a cash reward of Rs 25,000.

The seventh Sheikh Saadi award ceremony was canceled owing to the Covid-19 outbreak, said Dr. Ali Mohammad Rabbani, Cultural Counsellor of Iran. This was held in conjunction with the 8th ceremony.

Dr. Ehsanullah Shokrullahi, Director, Persian Research Centre Iran Cultural House, read out the profiles of awardees. Prof. Kazim Kehdoi, University of Yezd, Iran, shed light on Sa'adi's poetry and his popularity. Prof. Mortoza Mohseni, Prof. Azarmi Dukht Safavi, and other eminent scholars and dignitaries were also present on occasion. ■

«Page 1 JMI Vice-Chancellor Prof. Najma Akhtar conferred with Padma Shri

quality education in premier educational institutions of the country.

Prof. Akhtar led JMI to bag 6th rank in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of the Ministry of Education (MoE), GoI. Under her leadership, the university also achieved outstanding performance by securing a 95.23 percent score among all central universities in a performance evaluation done by the Ministry of Education for the year 2019-20.

Born on November 13, 1953, Prof. Najma Akhtar received her Ph.D. in Education on "A Comparative Study on Conventional & Distance Education System of Higher Education." A gold medalist in her Master's, she holds M.A. in

Education and M.Sc. in Botany.

She has worked as Professor and was the Head of the Department of Training & Capacity Building in Education at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi. She worked in the Distance Education Programme at IGNOU, New Delhi. She was the Founder Director of the State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT) at erstwhile Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. She has also held the position of Director, Academic Programmes at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), besides the coveted position of Controller of Examinations and Admissions in AMU. ■

Jalaluddin Qasmi pens Sanskrit Urdu Grammar

Staff Writer

Malegaon: "There is no age for learning as Hafiz Jalaluddin Qasmi has built his grip on this language after working hard for five years on a difficult language like Sanskrit," said Sanskrit scholar Pandit Kishore Prashuram Limaye in his presidential address during the launch of "Sanskrit Urdu Grammar" at a function here. It is the first Urdu book on Sanskrit grammar. For people who know Urdu, Limaye continued, such a magnificent and vital work has come to light which is "unimaginable."

Regardless of this book is listed or not listed in the Guinness Book of World Records, it will undoubtedly leave an indelible impression on Indians. Someone has chosen to do



nice things that will significantly help the people of the planet. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the author of this book for his outstanding work, said Mohammad Raza. Reading this book will not only familiarise us with the Sanskrit language but also with our Urdu language to a large extent, he added.

Malegaon's prestige and status in the worlds of literature and

science have risen due to the release of this book, according to journalist Imtiaz Khalil. Despite the difficulties, Qasmi was able to fulfill this mission. Of course, it will be recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records, and this work will be admired by people worldwide.

Prof. Khairnar also appreciated the book's author and regarded this work as magnificent and noble.

The author, Hafiz Jalaluddin Qasmi, introduced the book. "Languages meet civilizations," he said, explaining why the book was written. "I hope that this endeavour will help the two major communities of India to come closer together." ■

Needs Quran translation in Academic and Idiomatic English

New Delhi: Prof A R Kidwai, speaking at the Shah Waliullah Memorial Lecture on 'English Translations of the Quran: Trends and Issues' at JNU's Centre for Arabic and African Studies, stated a need for a Quran translation in academic and idiomatic English.

Prof Kidwai, Honorary Director, K A Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), examined several translations of the Holy Quran and preliminary rules for

comparing and analyzing the discourse structure in his lecture. He discussed and analyzed the basic features, techniques, and methodology of English translations of the Quran from 1649 until 2022.

Speaking on the translations by scholars of various religious sects and Orientalists, he discussed the spurt in the translations, particularly Western Muslim scholars.

He regretted the persistence of the Orientalist misperceptions and

misconceptions in the latest versions by Alan Jones and A J Droge.

"The forays by Thomas Cleary and David Hungerford stand out as earnest and sincere attempts to relate the Quranic message," he said.

Prof Kidwai also spoke highly of the cogent interpretations by Ahmad Zaki Hammad, Tarif Khalidi, and Mustafa Khattab and emphasized the need for a translation in academic and idiomatic English. ■

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Urdu Journalism Completes 200 Years of Existence; Played Major Role in Freedom Movement

New Delhi/ Aligarh: The Urdu press played a pivotal role in the freedom movement. It was the national press of the Indian subcontinent in those days, and it also fostered the Urdu language and literature. Experts and professors highlighted these points at a national seminar organized by the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) to mark the bicentennial of Urdu journalism as it completed 200 years of its existence in March 2022. They also expressed concern that Urdu journalism is losing its charm due to a lack of training for journalists and reporters and wrong translation.

The 2-day National Seminar on 'Urdu Sahafat: Zaban kay Badaltay Pas-e-Manzar kay Hawaly Say' was held on March 5-6. "Urdu newspapers used emotive language to inform people from 1857-1947. However, nowadays, the media is presenting fact-free information in a mixed language,

even though people know what fact is and what media is presenting underlines Prof Shafey Kidwai.

Echoing his thoughts, Prof. Syed Mohammad Hashim also stated that the bicentennial celebrations of Urdu journalism are significant since the Urdu press played an essential part in the independence movement and promoted language and literature. He underlined that youngsters should be taught Urdu with proper pronunciation and script.

Prof M J Warsi mentioned Sir Syed, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, and others for their contributions to Urdu journalism and old Urdu newspapers like *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* and others.

In his remarks Prof Mohd. Ali Jauhar said Urdu newspapers play a crucial role in developing language. Earlier, Urdu journalism

was very informative, and words were selected carefully, particularly during the times of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Abdul Majid Daryabadi, etc. Urdu journalism is losing its charm due to various factors like lack of training for journalists and reporters and wrong translation.

For this, Prof Ehtesham A Khan, MANUU, Hyderabad, suggested that content and scriptwriting training with a linguistic focus should be part of the journalism curriculum. He pointed out that journalism and mass communication students learn the technical aspects of news and scriptwriting in universities and colleges. Still, there is little emphasis on improving their language skills.

There is no right and wrong use of language; however, in Urdu journalism, one may choose a

better lexicon and better translation because sometimes there is meaning-loss in translation, said Prof Kidwai. He also discussed the regional variation of Urdu and how regional languages have impacted Urdu.

"The interplay of media and language is the key reference point for linguistic studies. Urdu journalistic language and idiom have evolved and undergone changes- a natural linguistic phenomenon," underlined Prof Warsi.

In his presidential remarks, Prof Quamrul Hooda Faridi said "we become a little worried when non-standard language is used in newspapers. However, change in language is a natural phenomenon because if it does not change it will die with time".

In his address, Prof Arif Nazir said, "language should be easy and

informative in journalism. Language should be chosen very consciously in newspapers because it represents the culture and traditions of the society. The Urdu language is gaining worldwide popularity because it borrows many words from Persian, Arabic, Hindi, and English". Illustrating with examples, he recited several couplets of renowned Urdu and Hindi poets.

According to Prof Warsi (Chairman, Department of Linguistics and Seminar Director), the seminar coincides with the bicentennial commemoration of Urdu print media. In the near future, he said, the department will strive to organize a workshop to teach Urdu journalists in partnership with the Department of Urdu, the Department of Mass Communication, and NCPUL, New Delhi.

"India has great linguistic diversity, and Urdu is the language

» Page 9



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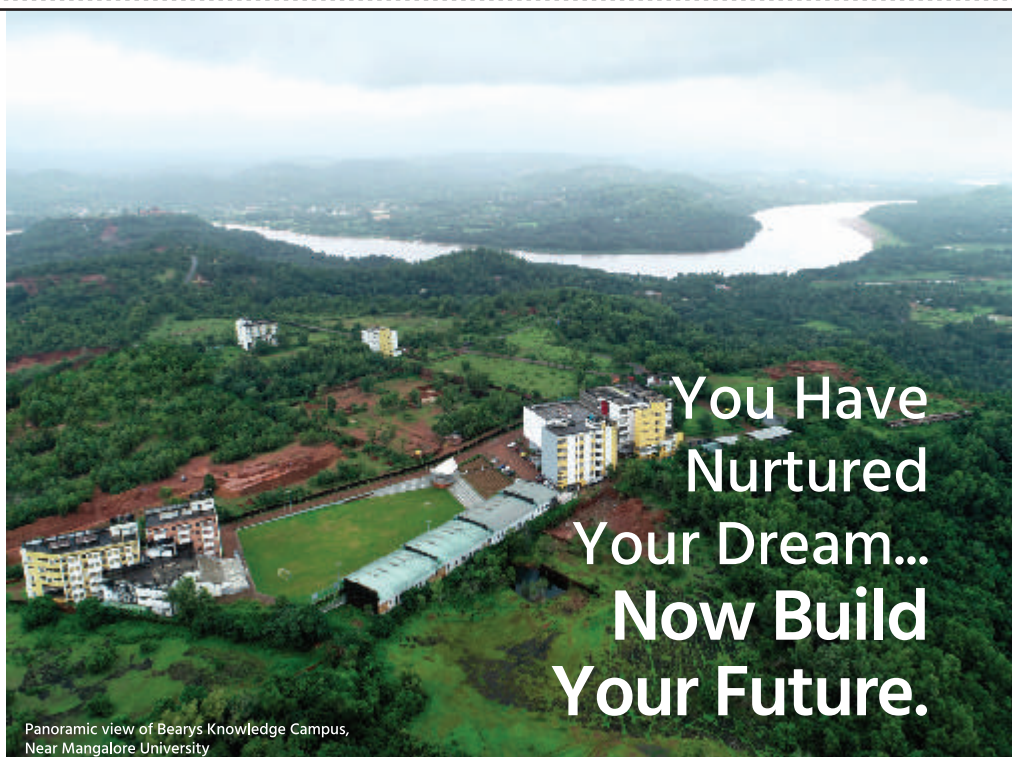
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Zeena Akhtar

Muslim Women Activists Demand Safety to Girl Students



New Delhi: The Karnataka High Court's judgment on the hijab prohibition in schools and colleges sparked outrage among Muslim women activists. They stated that the contentious verdict has far-reaching implications for the community because it failed to address their fundamental right to religious freedom and failed to mention the stalking, harassment, and assault of Muslim women by ultra Hindutva vigilante groups and members of the college administration since the interim order was issued. Activists also pointed out that the ruling creates a false equivalence between wearing a saffron scarf and wearing the hijab, allowing the mob more power to harass Muslim women.

They held a press conference at the Press Club of India on March 15 to express their concerns after the verdict saying Muslim women are likely to experience increasing prejudice in public areas after the court ruling.

"We are deeply distressed by this judgment and believe that not only is it setting a bad precedent in constitutional law, but also that it enables outright discrimination against Muslim women in public institutions in Karnataka, and creates an unsafe atmosphere overall for hijab-wearing women, rendering them vulnerable in a time of increased mob violence and repression."

They also warned that the hijab

ban would jeopardize Muslim women's efforts to gain access to education and work.

Hiba, a Jamia Millia Islamia student, echoed similar thoughts when she expressed alarm about the judgment, which she believes may allow Muslim women to be excluded from educational institutions.

Khalida Praveen, a social activist from Hyderabad, said Muslim women were disappointed and furious with the court's decision. Still, they have not given up hope and will continue fighting justice. "We're going to the Supreme Court," she stated emphatically. She blasted Hindutva influenced the mainstream media and social media for demonizing Muslim women by attacking the headscarf.

Echoing her sentiments, Nabiya

Khan, a Delhi-based activist, and poet, said discrimination against Muslim women who wear the hijab is nothing new. Still, the court's decision has "legitimized" their harassment.

"Under the garb of 'uniformity' and maintaining a homogenous culture - which the Indian society is not - the line that the judgment has taken is a clear case of discrimination against Muslim women and violates their right to education."

According to Huma Masih, a student and activist, the verdict's consequences would be felt by other marginalized and minority religious, cultural, and ethnic groups in the future. She lamented the fact that the ruling dismissed Muslim women's agency.

Masih expressed her dissatisfaction with women's

rights organizations, claiming that they were not sincere about the hijab problem. While National Women's Commission chief Rekha Sharma praised the ruling, she stayed silent when Muslim women were publicly compelled to remove their hijab.

She believes that society should begin addressing the uniform's discriminatory aspect and its inclusion.

Another student, Simra Ansari, said that Muslim women's discrimination based on their identity and dress is systematic. "We will maintain our identity through hijab while seeking education," she said, adding, "We will not choose one, but go for both."

In light of the ramifications of the prohibition order and the court ruling, the activists issued a list of demands on behalf of the aggrieved Muslim students. These areas follow:

- The state government must amend the Education Act to ensure that uniforms mandated by the relevant authorities are inclusive and respectful of cultural and religious diversity. CDCs of different colleges must also ensure that their dress code is similarly inclusive and non-discriminatory.

- Relief for students whose academic years are impacted by the court's ruling; students who missed their exams must be allowed to give them now, and in

the immediate instance, girls should be allowed to write their exams wearing hijab. The high court order nowhere prohibits wearing hijab while writing exams; it only allows the prescription of uniforms by CDCs that bar hijab. If colleges are introducing any new dress code for writing exams, it should not be implemented in the current year.

- In unavoidable circumstances, if a student faces a year's loss due to this issue, they must not be made to pay the fees again for the following year.

- Ensure that further intimidation and harassment of Muslim students and their families do not occur in implementing the order.

- Immediate registration of FIR against anyone intimidating or harassing Muslim women students or their families.

- Withdrawal of cases mischievously filed against the students for participating in protests or even turning up to colleges wearing a hijab.

- Educational institutions must provide institutional mental healthcare support to all affected Muslim women students.

- All media houses are urged to follow journalistic ethics in their reportage and take due care to maintain the confidentiality of Muslim women students who are vulnerable to different forms of violence due to irresponsible media coverage. Especially minor students, many of whom have been hounded and harassed by media persons.

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20-year-old Autistic Indian student gets UAE golden Visa



Abu Dhabi: A 20-year-old United Arab Emirates (UAE) based Indian student is the latest recipient to be honoured with a UAE golden visa.

Aman Maqbool, BSc information science and technology student Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Dubai, received the golden visa for his exceptional academic performance since his high school days.

Aman is a student with high-functioning autism and has been breaking academic records.

Aman has first made headlines after scoring an impressive 94.2 percent in his Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Grade 10 examination.

"Aman is very passionate about studies, and he loves going to campus and loves learning and studying," Aman's mother told

Khaleej Times.

"What's important for Aman is that he has a never-give-up attitude and is extremely hard working. We are sure he will reach much greater heights," said his parents.

The UAE government created the golden visa in 2019, which allows foreigners to live, work and study in the country without the need of a national sponsor and with 100 percent ownership of their business on the UAE mainland.

These visas are issued for 5 or 10 years and are automatically renewed.

The visa is open to investors, entrepreneurs, extraordinary talents, researchers in many disciplines of technology and knowledge, and intelligent students.

Managers, CEOs, and experts in research, engineering, health, education, business management, and technology are eligible for the golden visa. Furthermore, obtaining long-term residence has been simplified for highly trained and specialized residents, investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, trailblazers, top students, and graduates. ■

Arab league announces "Arab Talented" initiative results



Arab League. (ROL)

Jakarta (ANTARA) - The King Abdul Aziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) announced the results of the first edition "Arab Talented" initiative recently.

The statement, released by the Union of OIC News Agencies (UNA-OIC) and received here, said that the names of 230 Arab talents, who had obtained the highest scores in the 2021 Arab Talented 2021 initiative, had been revealed.

The participants, representing 12 Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya, were divided into three categories -- 'Exceptional Talent', 'Talented', and 'Promising Talent'.

"The identification of talented

Arabs and the development of their capabilities reflects the interest in the scientific, social and cultural challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)," said Director-General of ALECSO Hani bin Moqbel Al-Moqbel.

He further said that it serves as a stimulus to ensure a better future for the emerging Arab generations in light of global trends to achieve sustainable development, within the investment in human capital, talent and creativity.

Meanwhile, the Mawhiba's Secretary-General, Dr Saud bin Saeed Al-Mathami, stated that the foundation will be providing the talents with a number of in-person and remote care programs.

They include the "Excellence Program for Enrollment in Prestigious Universities", consisting of guidance provision, as well as consultancy and leadership training, in addition to the Mawhiba Global Enrichment Program and the Mawhiba Academic Enrichment Program. The "Arab Talented" initiative was launched in April 2021, under the partnership between Mawhiba Foundation and ALECSO.

<https://en.antaranews.com/news/212505/arab-league-announces-arab-talented-initiative-results> ■

2023 Mustafa Prize Award Ceremony to Be Held in October

TEHRAN: The 2023 Mustafa (PBUH) Award Ceremony will be held in October 2023, and the winner of the fifth round of the Mustafa (PBUH) Prize has been opened.

The Mustafa (PBUH) Prize is awarded in four categories: Information and Communication Science and Technology, Life and Medical Science and Technology, Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, and Basic and Engineering Sciences.

In this round of the Mustafa (PBUH) Prize, a Prize is also awarded to scientists residing in Islamic countries regardless of their religion to develop Science and technology in these countries. The nominees can only be nominated by renowned scientists and/or one of the following scientific institutions: universities and research centers, Science and technology associations and centers of excellence, academies



of sciences, and science and technology parks.

The Prize includes The Mustafa (PBUH) Medal, the Prize Certificate, and a special cash gift that is provided from the endowment of Science and technology, and so far more than 400 benefactors from different countries as members of the Khadem Al-Mustafa (PBUH) community have supported this scientific-cultural movement.

The deadline for nominations is August 31, 2022.

For more information about the criteria and submit a nomination, visit Mustafa (PBUH) Prize

website.

In order to appreciate prominent scientists and provide the ground for scientific cooperation and development worldwide, the Mustafa Prize was established in 2012 as a symbol of scientific excellence at the international level.

The Mustafa Prize, a top science and technology award, is granted biennially to the leading researchers and scientists of the Islamic world in four named categories.

The Prize is granted to works deemed to have improved human life, have made tangible and cutting-edge innovations on the boundaries of Science, or have presented new scientific methodology.

(Source: <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2022/03/12/2681096/2023-mustafa-prize-award-ceremony-to-be-held-in-october>) ■

Now you can send your name to the moon

NASA has invited the public to send their names to the moon.

The United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), has invited the public to send their names to their database that will be leaving for the moon as early as May, NASA announced in their blog post.

Artemis I will be the first-ever, uncrewed space flight test of the Space Launch System and the Orion spacecraft. The mighty rocket is going to have a trip around the moon and may create a path for the first-ever lunar trip with a woman and a person of colour by 2025.

Once you submit your name, NASA will create a virtual boarding pass for you as well. The flash drive of all the names will orbit the moon for more than three weeks.



AFP despatched several journalists to cover the exploit, which was broadcast live from the Moon's Sea of Tranquility to NASA's Johnson Space Center and on to televisions around the world.(AFP)

On March 17, NASA will hold a wet dress rehearsal, rolling out the combination of the spaceship and rocket to the launch pad of NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The data from the rehearsal will decide the actual date of the launch after judging the

equipment and procedures.

"All eyes will be on the historic Launch Complex 39B when Orion and the Space Launch System (SLS) lift off for the first time from NASA's modernized Kennedy Space Center in Florida," the space agency said.

NASA has long-term goals where they plan to send Artemis II by 2024 if Artemis I proves to be successful. Artemis II is expected to have a team of astronauts orbit around the moon. Artemis III is planned next to be executed as well at the success of Artemis II.

If all goes well, by 2027, humans might be landing on the surface of the moon for the first time after 1972.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/940816-now-you-can-send-your-name-to-the-moon> ■

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Abu Zaeem

OIC Report: Islamophobia is on the rise in many parts of the World

New Delhi: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) General Secretariat has presented its **Islamophobia Observatory periodic report** to the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held in Islamabad on March 22-23. According to the report, India is one of the countries where Islamophobia-related activity is on the rise. It also made special notice of India's ongoing Hijab controversy. The Islamophobia Observatory report pointed out that Covid-19 was identified as one of the primary elements that contributed to the rise of Islamophobia internationally in 2021, along with the extreme right's agenda, the immigrant and refugee crisis, attacks by extremist and terrorist groups, and hate speech used by

some media. The report concluded that Islamophobia would persist, especially given evidence that it had risen over the previous five years. It also noted that the increase appeared to have remained constant over the fourteen months from late 2020 to early 2022, with the exception of a noticeable disproportional decrease in 2021. When it came to determining the scope of the phenomena, the study revealed that Europe came out on top, followed by Asia and then North America. According to the Observatory, France and the United Kingdom had the greatest rates of activities linked to Islamophobia, owing to government policies that appeared to serve more Far-right tendencies. The Observatory report also noted a similar pattern in Asia, especially

India and Sri Lanka. The phenomenon has intensified due to existing tensions with Buddhist monks in Myanmar and the tension with the Rohingya Muslims. The report indicated that attacks and incidents usually committed by far-right elements have receded in the American region. It also specified that different regions of the World witnessed an increase in Islamophobia during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In an oblique reference to India, the report underlined that some social media sites blamed Muslims for spreading the virus, claiming that some insisted on performing congregational prayers or deliberately spreading the epidemic. This, and other false stories, resulted in many attacks against Muslims. According to the report, there has been a shift in negative stereotypes

directed at Muslims, as evidenced by a decrease in the volume of offensive stereotypes of Muslims and their transformation into government policies and political pressures exerted on governments by far-right movements and pressure groups.

The report said that there was a decline in incidents of attacks on mosques and copies of the Holy Qur'an and incitement to social media or insults directed against the Holy Prophet; may Allah's peace and blessings be on him.

Hijab issue

According to the report, the severity of rejecting the hijab or burqa (face veil) decreased in 2020 due to the widespread use of protective medical masks inspired by Covid-19. However, once the pandemic subsided, the problem resurfaced. Hijab was outlawed in government offices, universities,

and schools in France, Switzerland, India, and Austria, among other countries. Other nations with less stringent anti-hijab regulations include Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Bulgaria, Latvia, Kosovo, and Sri Lanka.

International Efforts to promote harmony

However, the report did highlight certain global efforts to promote peace and tolerance. In addition, at both the UN and the EU, measures to support Muslim communities have been implemented. The report also highlighted initiatives in the United States, Brazil, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia to combat far-right organizations. The United Nations began implementing its Hate Speech Strategy and Plan of Action. The UN General Assembly declared every year on March 15th as International Day Against Islamophobia. ■

College of Sharia at Qatar University holds International forum on Islamic Culture

Doha: The College of Shariah and Islamic Studies at Qatar University (QU), in collaboration with Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, organized an international forum entitled "Islamic Culture as a University: Contemporary Challenges and Prospects of Development," with the participation of leading academic speakers from various Arab and Islamic universities. The forum consisted of three sessions, each addressing a specific topic. The first session centered on the place of the course of Islamic Culture in Islamic colleges and universities. The second focused on the cultural challenges that the course encounters, its decisions, and teaching techniques. The third session was devoted to applied and

practical discussions about the course; hence the expert speakers shared their valuable experiences in teaching the course of Islamic Culture. The forum was organized on the occasion of a more significant cultural event, "Doha, Capital of Culture in the Islamic World 2021," which Qatar hosts from March 2021 to March 2022 under the auspices of the Islamic World Organization for Education, Education, and Science (Doha). With this forum, the College contributes, along with other state institutions, to an amalgam of distinguished cultural events in a historical period as Doha shows the world the bright image of Islamic multiculturalism. (Source: <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article>) ■

Ulema Back Education, Inheritance Rights for Women: Ashrafi

Islamabad: Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman, Special Representative to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said Ulema-Mashaykh of different religious schools of thought have given unanimous 'Fatwa' that women should be given the right to education and inheritance.

"The religious leadership of all the religious sects have also agreed that daughters should not be deprived of education, he said while addressing a Three-Day *Paigham-e-Pakistan* Training workshop here.

Among notable Ulema-Mashaykh and religious leadership present on this occasion include Dr Ziaul Haq, Dr Masoom Yaseenzai,

Mufti Muhammad Noman, Mufti Zubair Ashraf and other scholars. PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that no one can give greater rights to women than those given by Shariat.

(Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/941103-ulema-back-education-inheritance-rights-for-women-ashrafi>) ■

» Page 6

Urdu Journalism Completes 200 Years of Existence; Played Major Role in Freedom Movement

of all communities, symbolizing our composite culture. There is a need to popularize Urdu, particularly in North India", said Prof Tariq Mansoor, Vice-Chancellor AMU, inaugurated the seminar organized by AMU's Department of Linguistics.

Prof Mansoor stated that "mother tongues have special relevance in the lives of communities" and that "Urdu-speakers must concentrate on disseminating their mother tongue, primarily by teaching the language and its script to their children."

Scholars from universities around the country, including the University of Kashmir, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Madras University, Assam University, Punjabi University, Patiala, and many others, presented 30 papers. ■

Pakistan, Turkey to jointly develop 'Fifth-Generation Fighter Jet'



Pakistan and Turkey have been involved in a number of defense projects, including the purchase of helicopters and the development of drone technology. AFP

The two countries headed by Imran Khan and Recep Tayyip Erdogan said they would be jointly developing a fifth-generation fighter jet, most likely replacing their existing fighters fleet. The two countries plan to develop a prototype in 2023 and conduct the aircraft's maiden flight in 2026.

The TF-X (Turkish Fighter-Experimental) is a stealthy twin-engine fighter jet that Turkey wants to replace its vast fleet of F-16 fighters. The project was launched in 2011. Turkish Aerospace Industries will lead the program and employ engineers from Pakistan. Kotil said the TF-X is "like F-35". Interestingly, Kotil has previously referred to the TF-X as the "first big fighter jet of the Muslims." *Defense Turkey*, a Turkish defense website, has estimated it would cost around \$21 billion to develop and produce the TF-X fighter, including \$7.3 billion for development alone. (<https://www.firstpost.com/world/pakistan-turkey-to-jointly-develop-islamic-world-fighter-jet-what-you-need-to-know-10425891.html>) ■



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Google And Malian Teams Save Manuscripts Rescued From Islamists Online

London: Google has finished the mammoth project of digitizing 40,000 Malian manuscripts smuggled to safety from Timbuktu, preserving the historical documents and making their knowledge publicly available.

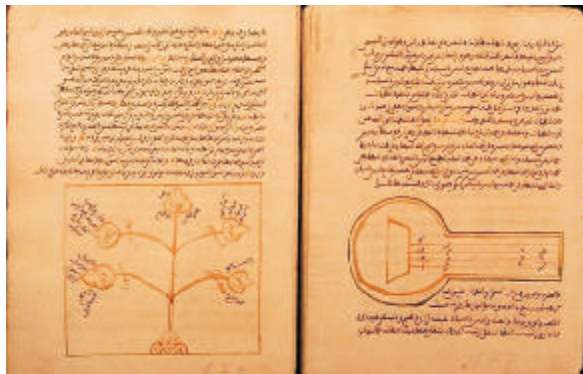
The priceless manuscripts dating back to the 11th century and were rescued after Islamist militant groups took control of large areas of northern Mali in 2012.

Once a center of academia, culture, and Islamic thought, Timbuktu now faces a continuing threat from violent insurgents.

The city hosted a library with contacts across the Middle East and the Mediterranean, with texts covering mathematics, medicine, astronomy, Islamic anti-war polemics, and scripts written in Hebrew.

The manuscripts are written on a range of parchment, from Italian paper to goat, sheep, and even fish skin. In a sign of the country's central role in the gold trade, some are adorned with gold leaf.

After completing the nine-year digital project, the manuscripts have been uploaded to the website



Mali Magic and can be viewed by anyone.

Insurgents briefly held Timbuktu in 2016, and the extremists have posed a constant threat to Mali's cultural heritage since the onset of their terrorist campaign.

The International Council of Museums declared an archaeological emergency in 2016 after reports that vast quantities of Malian treasures, including manuscripts, terracotta statues from the Niger valley, and jewelry, were being looted by jihadists and sold on the black market.

Google assisted librarians in Timbuktu to digitize the texts once the city was made safe and they were returned there.

Just a few hundred of the tens of thousands of texts were lost to a

fire started by the insurgents, according to Abdel Kader Haidara, the librarian behind the smuggling operation.

"Central to the heritage of Mali, they represent the long legacy of written knowledge and academic excellence in Africa and hold potential to inspire global learning from the actions of the past in

confronting modern-day issues," he said.

"It's been said that all the history of Africa is oral. We have more than 400,000 manuscripts here written uniquely by the hands of Africans, and it's a true Renaissance."

Chance Coughenour, program manager and digital archaeologist at Google Arts and Culture told The Times: "We are honored to support our partners with the technology to make their work accessible to people worldwide."

Islamists aligned with Al-Qaeda have fought a bloody insurgency in Mali and the surrounding region. Thousands of people have died, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced during the conflict. ■

Saudi Arabia Lifts Almost All Coronavirus-Related Restrictions



JEDDAH: In view of the declining trend in the number of fresh COVID-19 infections, Saudi Arabia on recently scrapped almost all the virus-related restrictions in the country, including following social distance and wearing masks outdoor.

The country has also abolished the conditions of PCR test and mandatory quarantine for the passengers arriving in the kingdom. The new decisions were announced by an official source at the ministry of interior and it will come into force from Saturday (March 5), *Saudi Gazette* reported.

"The country will no longer require travellers to undergo mandatory COVID-19 quarantine upon arrival to the kingdom. Passengers will also no longer need to provide a PCR test upon their arrival," said the publication. Instead of the PCR Test and mandatory quarantine, all the arrivals to the Kingdom on visit

visas are now required to get the insurance that covers the costs of treatment from coronavirus infection.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Authorities have lifted the suspension of direct flights and arrival to the Kingdom from the following countries: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Malawi, Mauritius, Zambia, Madagascar, Angola, Seychelles, United Republic of Comoros, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan.

It is pertinent to mention here that it is not mandatory to wear masks at open places, however, wearing mask is still mandatory indoors. The Saudi Gazette said that "It will also end social distancing in the Two Holy Mosques and all mosques in the Kingdom but worshippers still have to wear masks."

(<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/939169-saudi-arabia-lifts-almost-all-coronavirus-related-restrictions>) ■

BAZM - E - NISWAN CHARITABLE TRUST An Appeal

Bazm-e-Niswan wishes you all a very happy Ramazan - Mubarak. This is the month in which Allah's bounty, Mercy Grace & Forgiveness showers abundantly on the Ummah. Let us pray to ALLAH Swt to bestow us the will, the heart, the health and the means to fulfill our obligations of Salath, Fastings, Zakath & performing good deeds during this month. Allah's rewards are multiplied many times on these good deeds in Ramazan as per several hadiths.

Your generous donations, encouragement and support have given us the strength and motivation to accomplish all these programmes. We request your continued support, valuable guidance in all our endeavour. The main source of funds for our services is from Zakath, Sadaqath & Donations from large philanthropists like you.

Bazm is doing your work to wipe a tear, to reduce the pain, to care for the destitute, to educate a girl, to feed a mouth, to help a poor bride and to serve humanity in general. Therefore, we appeal to you to extend your whole hearted support and contributions. Our volunteers may come to meet you. You can also contact us or send a cheque or DD in favour of BAZM-E-NISWAN CHARITABLE TRUST to our address. All donations to us are exempted from Income Tax under section 80G.

A brief overview of BAZM - E - NISWAN 's activities

Bazm-e-Niswan has been actively engaged in aiding & empowering several thousand women of all ages, especially those from the weaker sections of society for the last 47 years. With a firm belief that everyone deserves a helping hand and the right to live in dignity. Bazm has launched many initiatives, all designed to make women self sufficient by boosting their self confidence and providing them opportunities to be socially relevant. Some of these projects are :

*Bazm's signature project, the scholarship grant programme, since it's inception in 1974, more than over 70,000 girl students have been benefited from this scheme. They have qualified as Doctors, Engineers and Graduates in different fields. Some of these qualified doctors and engineers are working abroad.

*Care for the elderly is a major program of Bazm. Nearly 250 Men and Women are given a monthly allowance of Rs. 150/- in cash and food grains worth Rs. 450/- In addition, they are provided with four sets of clothing, Blankets, Bedsheets, Shawls and Sweaters besides Medicines, Spectacles and Medical Treatment.

*Assistance for the marriage of poor girls. This scheme provides essential bridals items for the marriage of poor girls to reduce their burden. Yearly around 300 girls will be benefited. So far more than 10000 girls have been benefited. From 1992, Medical Aid is offered by providing financial assistance to patients undergoing treatment for serious diseases.

*The Sahara self help program is another initiative of Bazm aimed at empowering women for economic self-reliance thro' self help program & vocational training.

*Among other schemes being implemented by Bazm are to adopt Govt schools to improve the standard, infrastructure and academic excellence. *Bazm support students in specialized coaching for PUC and CET aspirants.

*IQRA - A play home for kidswith a difference. IQRA offers a beautiful and creative headstart for your child aiming to provide quality education. We also encourage children to learn the foundation of Islam and Islamic knowledge, which includes Islamic rhymes, Kalimas and Duas.

*DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION OF ISLAM - Bazm also conducts meetings. Daras programs & Lectures on Islam to educate its members on the right perspective of Islam and to help them live a life which harmoniously blend spirituality with world life. To further encourage this, Ijtema is being conducted at Dar-us-Salam, Queens Road, Bangalore on every first Wednesday of each month.

This year for 2021-22 BAZM-E-NISWAN has distributed its Annual Scholarship of Rs. 1.32 Crores for around 3613 deserving under-privileged girl students from PUC to Master Degree courses. Scholarship has been paid through online due to the pandemic crisis.

Husna Ziaulla Sheriff, President.

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Indonesia's NU Welcomes Women to Top Leadership



Alissa Wahid is the daughter of late Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur, who led NU for a decade before heading into politics

Jakarta, Indonesia – Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world's largest Islamic organization, has welcomed women into its top leadership roles for the first time since it was founded nearly 100 years ago.

NU inaugurated more than 150 members, including 11 women, to its central board for a five-year term.

Among the women appointed to the most senior roles in February was Alissa Wahid, who told *Al Jazeera* that while the change was "about time and inevitable," it was also the result of a continuous process and discussion on women's roles within NU, which has some 90 million members.

Joining 48-year-old Alissa is

incumbent East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa.

The two women will input the movement's policy in their new roles.

"I'm delighted with this change," said Alissa, the daughter of Indonesia's late President Abdurrahman Wahid, better known as Gus Dur, NU's leader for ten years, before turning to politics. "Until now, NU has been giving more room for women in public spaces [in the organization], but now for the first time in history, it gives room for women at a higher leadership level."

The appointments indicate how NU Secretary-General Yahya Cholil Staquf, elected last December, plans to modernize an organization founded in 1926 and has long been seen as a champion of religious tolerance in the archipelago.

"We are all in the same boat on earth searching for a new form of civilization better for all mankind," he said.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about increasing religious conservatism and the appeal of hardline groups in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country.

(Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/19/about-time-indonesias-nu-welcomes-women-to-top-leadership>). ■

Muslim Women Professionals to Guide Poor Girls in Innovative Work

Lucknow: With 'Rising beyond the Ceiling' (RBTC) launched its free mentorship programme on International Women's Day here on March 8, Muslim women professionals announced that they would now mentor girls from socially poorer areas in an innovative endeavor.

Sabiha Ahmad, RBTC Uttar Pradesh coordinator and UP Sunni Waqf Board member, said its wrong notion prevailing in the society that burqa-wearing women are illiterates.

"Why is a Muslim woman wearing a burqa or niqaab deemed illiterate?" She is capable of achieving everything she wishes

if given a chance. "This is an opportunity that we will present to young girls from socially disadvantaged backgrounds," said Sabiha.

Explaining further, she said that RBTC is not just helping break the stereotype about the Muslim women but also contributing to nation-building.

"Mentoring women from many fields, such as women in uniform, academics, the arts, media, and other fields, helps young girls establish self-confidence and provides wings to their goals," she said.

"The organization isn't just for Muslim women; the doors are

open to everyone.

"Any woman who desires to work in any sector, regardless of religion, can contact the organization for whatever assistance is needed." The mentorship is free, and we've begun accepting applications for it in addition to the current mentees who are being mentored," Sabiha noted.

RBTC is a group of 100 Muslim women who have been honoured on a national level and another 100 who have been honoured on a state level. These women will now provide professional, educational, emotional, and financial guidance to young women. ■

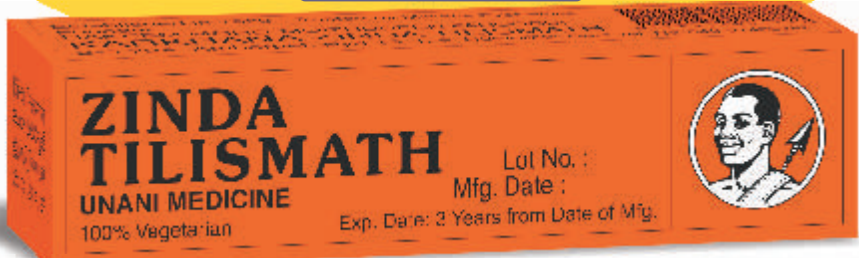


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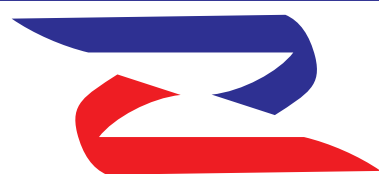
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Bushra Mateen Set a New Record by Winning 16 Gold Medals in Civil Engineering Exam

Bushra is aspiring for civil service. She has begun the process of preparing for civil service. Due to the same reason, she did not show up for the placement drive. She claims she wants to join the UPSC because it gives her a "larger canvas" on which to serve

the country.

Bushra's mother is a bachelor of arts, and her father is a junior civil engineer. "He has a civil engineering diploma." Bushra said, "I accomplished his dream of acquiring a bachelor's degree in civil engineering."



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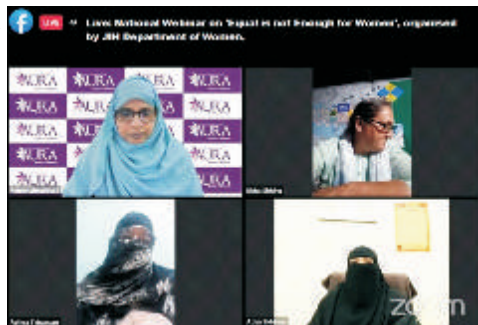
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Zeena Akhtar

Equal is not enough for women

New Delhi: To mark International Women's Day, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) Women's Wing organized a national webinar on March 7, 2022. Noted women speakers have asserted that equality isn't enough for them; they also require justice, equity, access, and dignity. In her opening remarks, JIH Women's Wing Secretary Mrs. Atiya Siddiqua emphasized the importance of moving beyond equality to a paradigm of justice. Professor Poornima Pattanshetty, an educationalist, Ms. Noor Mahvish, a law student; Ms. Jaya Dwivedi, a social activist, Dr. Sufiya Fatima, a member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Clinical Psychologist, Dr. A Ramlath, a Psychologist, and Ms. Nisha Siddhu, NFIW, were among the distinguished female speakers. The latter focused on practical issues of women's dignity and



more abstract ideals like equality, equity, access, and dignity in their speeches.

Young speakers delivered emotional testimonies on how the distinction between boys and girls is created at a very young age in families and how femininity becomes an insult in colloquial talks.

Speakers from the sphere of social activism discussed how difficult it has been to explain women's injustice from the ground up. The need to not gloss over the fact that women face exceptional problems

and have different biological, mental, emotional, and social requirements was a common thread that ran through all presenters. The presenters also discussed the legal implications.

Putting together a summary of the various speakers' points of view, Mrs. Rahamathunnissa, Secretary of the JIH Women's Wing, has also proved that the statement "can women do it all?" is false. Instead, he contended that women could achieve things that men are not. She claimed that they did not compete with mankind because the Creator created them differently in form and needs. However, she did agree that for women, the need to establish themselves and gain acceptance was a double burden. She emphasized the importance of continuing education for all beings, regardless of gender, from cradle to tomb. ■

Hamida Bano donates huge sum for regular publication journal Ma'arif

Azamgarh: Darul Musnafin's monthly organ Ma'arif will no longer experience financial difficulties as a large sum has been endowed by Hamida Bano, a devoted Urdu language lover based in the United States.

Ms. Hamida Bano, who lives in Orlando, California, has established a lump sum endowment through her trust Imdad for the publication of Ma'arif. According to Imdad and Darul Musnafin, this sum will be invested as a permanent endowment, with the annual profit being utilized to cover Ma'arif's expenses. A generous donor donated the money was donated to the authors by a generous donor and is being put in a suitable fund. "Ma'arif" will endure indefinitely

due to this, God willing. Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy was conceived by Maulana Shibli Nomani and established by his disciples headed by Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi on November 21, 1914, three days after his death. It publishes monthly journal Ma'arif since inception.

Donor Hamida Bano has a passion for Urdu language and literature. She holds an M.A. in Philosophy from Rajasthan University. And she has got the certificate of perfect writer from Jamia Urdu Aligarh. She has taught at the University of California, Berkeley in the United States and the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Gujarat in India. She has also been volunteering and promoting the Urdu language

in the United States and has presented her dissertations at international conferences and seminars.

It's also worth noting that when she moved to Gandhinagar, Gujarat, she began teaching Urdu language and literature around a decade ago. Finally, in February, she established a chair at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, in the name of Imam-ul-Hind Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, where Urdu language and literature will be taught in perpetuity. She has also recently produced a new periodical understanding version of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's Tafseer, Surah Al-Fatiha, with Mubashir Ahsan Nadvi's assistance. ■

A New Cookbook!



(From left) Dr. Awatif Alkeneibit, Jacqueline Jackaman and Sahar Jamal during the signing of the book Wednesday at the Diriyah Biennial on Wednesday. (AN Photo/Basheer Saleh)

A new cookbook focusing on traditional meals titled "*Cooking Her Heritage, Saudi Arabia*" was launched last month at the Diriyah Art Biennale Foundation.

Five women prepared the book: Dr. Awatif Alkeneibit, Sahar Jamal, Begoña Mateos, Jacqueline Jackaman, and Cristina Sanchez.

Jackaman said: "We are proud that Cooking Her Heritage, Saudi Arabia is a book that presents traditional Saudi dishes from across many regions and displays through its photography the beauty this amazing country has to offer."

Jamal, a chef, explained: "The book is a cultural masterpiece combining ancient and time-honored recipes with breathtaking original photographs of people, food, natural landscape, and monuments."

It is divided into five sections, incorporating specific recipes from the Kingdom's regions. It highlights the most classic and

iconic Saudi dishes, revealing the cooking secrets and culinary practices handed down over many years in the nation's homes.

The book is published in hardcover and is ideal for the coffee table with its exquisite colors, super-luxury paper and mouthwatering descriptions of salads, soups, breads, main dishes, desserts, and drinks. It comes in Arabic and English.

The authors indicated that they had gained access to many recipes because several Saudi women had welcomed them into their homes and revealed the family histories behind the dishes.

"We hope the pages of this book will (ensure) its readers discover the origins of Saudi cuisine and the warmth of the Saudi people, as we did during our trips throughout the provinces of the Kingdom," Alkeneibit said.

She said the book was another "clear example" of how Saudi women were showing their professional competence in various professions. ■

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Deema Al-Khudair

New Personal Status Law Reforms Marriage Rules According to Islamic Principles

Jeddah: Following the Saudi Cabinet's approval of the personal status law after its review by the Shoura Council, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said it is the second of four laws within the legal reforms system announced on Feb. 8, 2021.

Those remaining are the civil transactions law and the penal code for discretionary sanctions.

The crown prince noted that the personal status draft was drawn from the provisions of Islamic Shariah, and took into account the latest legal trends and modern international judicial practices, keeping abreast of developments and changes.

He added that it would contribute to preserving families and ensuring their stability as the basic component of society, work to improve the status of the family and the child, and control the judge's discretionary power to limit the discrepancy of judicial rulings in this regard.

The crown prince stressed that the introduction of the personal status law reflects the leadership's commitment to reform, especially since this law constitutes a qualitative leap to protect human rights, preserve family stability and empower women.

He explained that the law comprehensively addresses all the problems that families and women are experiencing and carefully



organized personal status issues in detail, noting that it will enter into force 90 days after publication in the Official Gazette.

The crown prince extended his thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman, for his care in developing the legislative system in Saudi Arabia and raising the efficiency of judicial work to guarantee and preserve rights contributes to achieving prompt justice.

When the law of evidence was issued on Dec. 28, 2021, the crown prince made it clear that the personal status law would be issued during the first quarter of 2022.

The personal status law was adopted following efforts led and directly supervised by the crown prince to create and reform systems that preserve rights, establish principles of justice and transparency and achieve comprehensive development within the system of legislative reforms that the Kingdom is

embracing under the supervision and guidance of the king and crown prince.

Arab News spoke to Saudi lawyer Khalid Al-Mihmadi, who highlighted conclusions from the new announcement: The legal guardian does not have the right to prevent a woman from marrying someone who is equal to her; if one of the spouses does not fulfill a condition they have agreed on, they may request the annulment of the marriage contract, and it shall be without compensation for the husband, and with compensation not exceeding the dowry for the wife.

"The dowry belongs to the wife and she is not obligated to dispose of it to anyone," he told *Arab News*.

"What the suitor offers during the courtship period is considered a gift unless he declares that it is part of the dowry," he added.

If the suitor retracts from the marriage, he shall recover the dowry he paid.

"A man's qualifications are considered to be religious competence only," Al-Mihmadi said.

He said that the personal status system constitutes a major qualitative leap in efforts to preserve and protect human rights, family stability, empower women and enhance the rights guaranteed in the system.

"The adoption of the personal status system comes as a practical translation of the efforts led and personally supervised by the crown prince in creating and reforming systems that preserve rights, establish principles of justice and transparency, and achieve comprehensive development," he said.

Al-Mihmadi said the new law introduces a system of personal status that reflects the leadership's commitment to development and reform, taking into account the latest legal trends and modern international judicial practices.

"The personal status law, which will enter into force 90 days after its publication, will work to control the discretionary power of judges in accordance with the latest international theories and practices in this regard and to limit the differences in judicial rulings."

Saudi lawyer Waleed Malhan said the personal status system was

derived from the provisions and purposes of Islamic Shariah, and the latest legal trends and modern international judicial practices were taken into account in its preparation.

"It keeps pace with the latest developments and changes in reality, and the marital relationship," he told *Arab News*.

The system also preserves the bloodline of offspring and regulates marriage from engagement to divorce and khula (divorce request from the wife).

It regulates alimony and custody, which explicitly states that custody is for the mother in essence, and this was not mentioned in the system previously.

"The system also specified the disputes of proving birth and marriage impediments. It also did not neglect the regulation of the marriage of the mentally minor (the insane) and the marriage of those who have not completed (18) years, provided that the legal court accepted," he explained.

"It shows us the comprehensiveness of the personal status system for all aspects of marriage and its disputes with what was stated in the Qur'an and the authentic hadiths of the Prophet, and it ended the suffering of many lawyers in the past due to the dispute in judgments between the personal court departments," he added.

(Source: <https://arab.news/cpvmq>)



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Prof. Jalees
Ahmed Tareen

Have the Ulema, the Imams, Political leadership thought of a unanimous strategy?

Much has been convincingly spoken, discussed, argued in the courts and outside the courts and on social media defending Hijab and its justification from a religious perspective. Everyone, including a majority of non-Muslim women, agrees to the spirit of Hijab in Islam and safeguarding women's modesty and chastity. Dozens of "WhatsApp" messages have successfully incited and emotionally charged the community.

The Muslims of India is today at a crossroads. They long to hear from the community leaders, religious leaders, and political leaders on one platform debating

Will Hijab Controversy Impact Muslim Women's Education?



on a common strategy for the community and Muslim girls to keep the education continued at all levels irrespective of the supreme court's verdict. We have failed the community with divided voices. We have so far failed to see the religious leaders of different schools and Maslaks and Fiqh coming on the same platform to

debate and give a uniform and practical opinion and direction to the community that should encourage Muslim girls to continue their education in the schools, colleges, universities and professional courses. We should recognize the consequences of Muslim women staying away from formal and

professional education in preference to a particular attire and style of Hijab. It would be too late when we realize the gradual disappearance of Muslim women as doctors in hospitals, as officers in the offices and public places, as teachers and professors in schools and colleges, as lawyers in courts, as scientists in research organizations, as techies in multinational companies, and many more places, you would be longing to see them and would be sad to see the vacuum. We should also recognize the limitation of Hijab and Burqa during specific practical professional training for certain professional careers for women. Above all, if Muslim women distance themselves from formal education, 50% of the community remains uncompetitive with the women of other communities and fail to stand shoulder to shoulder and

speak with the same level of competence and confidence. In fact, an uneducated woman secludes herself from the rest of the women. Twenty-first century is a century for the youth, where men and women make their careers through global competition as global citizens. A community with enlightened women will nurture and raise enlightened children. A Quranic and religious training can always go hand in hand with formal and modern education.

Collective leadership and spelling out explicit strategies for the entire community with unanimity is the sole responsibility of the Ulema, the Imams, and the political leadership. There are only two threats facing Muslims in India. A continued and consistent effort to poison the hearts and minds of the majority community against Muslims and isolate them from the system.

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APPEAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters

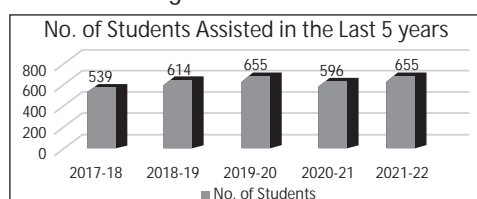
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

On behalf of Maymar Charitable Trust (MCT), we would like to convey our heartiest greetings for the Blessed month of Ramazan to our entire brotherhood. May this blessed month of Ramazan bring you and your loved one's good health, happiness, and prosperity. The auspicious month of Ramazan highlights the significance of giving Sadaqa and Zakat, which will multiply in seventy folds and much more.

With your continuous help and support, MCT serves the poor and less privileged sections of the community at our operational areas/centers across Bengaluru: DJ Halli, Avalahalli, Padarayanapura, Nayandanahalli and Bada Makaan (Off: Siddaiah Road) for the last 29 years by providing the following services:

Education:

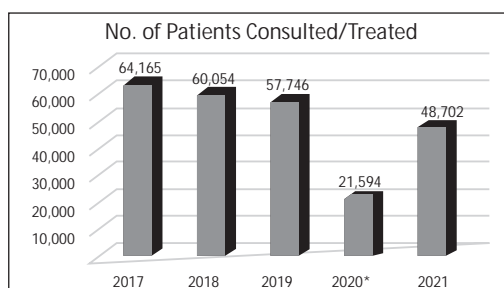
Providing financial assistance and guidance to more than 650 students ranging from middle school to university students, including those enrolled in professional courses, like engineering, medical, para medical, technology, and business management.



We also have CSR Registration

Out-Patient Clinics:

Providing free medical care and free medicines to women and children at the aforementioned operational locations. On an average, 60,000 patients are treated per year. Additionally, financial assistance is provided to patients with chronic medical conditions and ailments, such as heart disease, kidney problems and cancer.



NOTE: *2020: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Clinics were closed from March 15 to Oct 31, 2020

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- Providing Computer Training: Currently operating at our DJ Halli and Avalahalli centers, with plans to expand to other areas. We provide basic MS Office and Tally courses. So far around 300 students have graduated and are able to find jobs.

- Providing Tailoring Training: Currently operating at our DJ Halli, Avalahalli and Nayandanahalli centers, with plans of expanding to other areas. So far, over 1,500 women have graduated after successfully completing 3-months hand-on comprehensive tailoring training. This training ensures that they become independent entrepreneurs and can earn their livelihood.

- Working towards upliftment of Downtrodden areas (as listed above)

MCT services are just a drop of water in the ocean. Sadly, the community needs much more assistance and services in each aspect of their day to day life!

In this regard, we sincerely thank and appreciate your generous contributions by way of donation, support, and participation in this noble task. We humbly request your continuous help, support, and assistance to bring a "smile" on the faces of the needy families in this blessed month of Ramazan.

Once again, our sincere prayers and duwas to you all; may Allah SWT bless and reward you abundantly and give AJR-E-AZEEM to you and your loved ones in this world and in the hereafter. Ameen, Summa Ameen.

SINCERELY: MCT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS

Requesting your generous Contributions, Donations, Zakat and Sadaqa for helping the Needy

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KELLER, Texas Several current and former ambassadors joined hundreds of representative leaders from the three Abrahamic faiths, including well-known Muslim imams, Jewish rabbis, and Evangelical pastors to gather together in Dallas, TX and Kansas City, Missouri, this week for the Global Faith Forum, hosted by the Multi-Faith Neighbors Network. Themed "Unlikely," co-founders and co-hosts, Pastor Bob Roberts and Imam Mohamad Magid, noted the events were designed to cultivate multi-faith relationships and guide the next generation to a more inclusive future.

"This type of gathering has never happened before, especially in the heart of the Bible Belt, but we believe it will be the starting point for change," said Roberts, who served as a program host and convener at Northwood Church in the Dallas suburb of Keller. "Historically, Evangelicals have not been in this conversation. When Jesus said, 'Blessed are the Peacemakers,' that doesn't mean just in our group; He was talking about the public square. Our hope and prayer are this Forum will open dialogue, build relationships and facilitate understanding, peace, and unity."

The night began with songs and prayers from each faith, followed by an address from the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, Ambassador Rashad Hussain.

"Often, faith leaders are more effective in doing this work than the government," Hussain said. "You bring the credibility of knowing your congregations. The most powerful way to build bridges is a collaboration between government and civil society."

H.E. Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), introduced and gave an overview of the groundbreaking Makkah

Global Faith Forum builds bridges of understanding and community among Muslims, Jews and Evangelicals

Unlikely allies gather to address polarization and break down barriers of fear between major faiths

Declaration conceived and created by the MWL in 2019.

Written by a consensus of more than 1,200 respected Muslim scholars, affirmed by over 5,000 Muslim theologians, and approved by Islamic leaders of 139 nations, The Charter of Makkah is considered the most crucial document of modern Islamic history. It encourages peaceful co-existence and ensures religious diversity and human rights for all people.

"The Charter is much more than just a document; it is a roadmap for how we can reconcile our differences, advance peaceful co-existence and create deep and lasting mutual respect," His Excellency Al-Issa said. "We are stronger when we are together, and we are unbeatable when we stand united and resolved to cultivate lasting friendships and understanding regardless of race, ethnicity, faith, gender, or creed."

"From my travels, I've learned that we share many of the same values whether I am meeting an evangelical leader or a Jewish person," Al-Issa added. "We have all witnessed the discrimination that many in our communities face. We also share a commitment to a world where intolerance and injustice have no place in our society. We are fostering a more inclusive and equal world where no forms of prejudice or bias exist. "This agreement represents our values-based approach to educate the next generation of leaders and emphasize teaching them how to engage in constructive dialogue," Al-Issa concluded. "It sets a new course for the future of humanity and ensures lasting peace and



prosperity for all."

Following Al-Issa's comments, six leaders responded, including Rabbi David Saperstein, former Ambassador of International Religious Freedom and co-founder of Multi-Faith Neighbors Network; Ambassador Sam Brownback, former Ambassador of International Religious Freedom; Walter Kim, President of the National Evangelical Association; Zeenat Rahman, director of the Executive Director, University of Chicago Institute of Politics; Christine Caine, author and founder of Propel Women & The A21 Campaign; and Ambassador David Beasley, executive director of U.N. World Food Programme and winner of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize. Many leaders spoke about the

importance of working together to solve global issues beyond religion, from human trafficking to world hunger.

Another key participant included Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, who experienced proof of concept of the importance of multi-faith relationships and the religious responsibility that comes with religious freedom in the midst of crisis and tragedy. When he and several congregants were held hostage by a Palestinian gunman at nearby Congregation Beth Israel in January, Pastor Bob Roberts joined another local imam and rabbi to work with hostage negotiators and support and care for family members of the hostages.

"We could have experienced no love and no support, but our community and world showed up," Rabbi Charlie said. "Building relationships is the foundation to understanding the dignity and beauty of our lives."

"We have to move from isolation to collaboration, based on covenant," Roberts said, emphasizing that multi-faith

means not having to compromise their theology or identity. "The work of God is more important than our platform. What we need is legitimate, God-fearing, moral, prophetic religious leaders, focused on building meaningful bridges with one another."

At The Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City on March 9, host Pastor Adam Hamilton opined, "Many of us don't know members of other faiths, and we fear people who are different from ourselves. For Christians, it starts with loving our neighbor, whom Jesus defined as 'someone different from you.'"

"We don't have to agree on everything to say to one another, 'We are fellow human beings, and my faith enables me to love you,'" Hamilton added. "Many times, when I engage in a conversation with a person of another faith, I come away from a better Christian."

Prior to the first two events, Muslim and evangelical volunteers joined together to pack approximately 10,000 meals for the underserved in the surrounding DFW community and another 10,000 meals for distribution to the needy throughout greater Kansas City. Recognizing the significant

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Thank You for Your Support!

Islamic Voice Flies Again!

April 2020. I can never forget the year. As I gazed out of my window, it was summertime, sunny and bright outside. Birds were chirping, and the clouds were clear blue, but inside my heart was a storm, a sadness, turmoil, and confusion. The Covid 19 had enveloped the world, and the globe was in lockdown.

Stuck in my house, I stared blankly at my computer screen in my office room. All my staff, too, were in their homes under lockdown. I had a tough decision to take. The advertising revenues were not coming in to sustain *Islamic Voice*, and the lockdown added to the woes further.

Launched in 1987, *Islamic Voice* shone like a bright sky in the media skies, thanks to support received from advertisers, readers, well-wishers, writers, and Not to forget the biggest support from Almighty Allah! There were ups and downs on the way, but God's support helped in overcoming them all.

In 2020, most institutions, organizations, and individuals all suffered a downhill, the after-effects of the pandemic. I, too, had no option but to suspend the publication of *Islamic Voice* after 33 years! Writing this decision to our beloved readers and subscribers was indeed a challenging task; my heart must have broken a million times.

Crisis brings patience, and time is spent in prayer. I accepted the reality first, let it soak into me, and allowed the mud to settle at the bottom of the river of turmoil.

As the year passed by and 2021 set in, rays of hope began peeping in. Our very old subscribers and readers wrote about how they were missing *Islamic Voice*, and they wanted to see it all over again. Our financial situation was still very fluid.

In the summer of February and March 2021, as the encouragement from readers to re-start *Islamic Voice* gathered momentum, I once again, with Allah's support, slowly set about preparing for it. The edition with a few pages saw the light of the day in April 2021. The paper was like a baby taking its steps after falling!

I must confess Allah has been super kind to us, so many other organizations could not open their doors again due to the pandemic effects. Yet *Islamic Voice* rose again, though not as glamorous as its old self in 40 pages, but more petite.

I feel incredibly grateful to Almighty Allah first for this favor of helping *Islamic Voice* stand up again. I want to say a big Thank You to all our readers, subscribers, advertisers, and well-wishers for their unflinching support throughout. *Islamic Voice* wouldn't be shining again in the media skies without you all.

I wish each of you a peaceful month of Ramadan ahead. May Allah accept all your prayers and worship!

Together let us strive to help humanity through our deeds, words, and actions positively work with different faith communities to make the world a better place for future generations.

There are some beautiful lessons that we can draw from this single verse in the Qur'an – Surah Talaq, ayah 3 – relating to Tawakkal (trust in Allah) and Rida (contentment):

"And He (Allah) will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah; then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose, and indeed Allah has set a measure for all things."

Editor

READERS RESPONSE

Sir,

"*The Caged Bird Sings*," Sarah Fatima wrote a poem, has adorned the pages of IV, the March issue 2022. A young budding writer-Poetess.

I congratulate her; she dared to tread this off the norm path. I hope she will motivate other youths to follow their passions in different fields.

Now, when it comes to the poem, she gets into the cruelty of the human, who has caged the beautiful bird for his desires and fancies. He has clipped the wings of freedom. He has seized the moments of happiness the bird can sing and enjoy flying freely to its pleasure.

The Poet has captured the feelings of pain, agony, and helplessness of a free bird being imprisoned in a cage, held behind bars against her will, which this young Poet very well describes. Bird's singing in happiness has transformed into wailing and pleading for freedom. Moving forward, Sarah has adapted the analogy of reversed roles very well when the Pandemic hit the world. The humans were forced to be imprisoned within their premises. It was the loneliness and the



segregation that had snuffed the life of human beings. Longing for freedom and to roam around at will had become a mirage.

The man's plight had become very similar to the plight of the caged bird.

The Poet laments, only if the hard-hearted people could listen to the silent cries of the "Bird in the cage" and how mercilessly the life and dreams of the bird, born to fly free, were shattered by the cruelty of a human being.

I hope she will continue to contribute in IV regularly, and we get the chance to enjoy more of her creative writings.

Qazi Minhaj Azher

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Note: It is appealed from the respected persons of the community to have the attention to make orphan boys admitted in the institution. Lead them. I shall be grateful to you for this.

ATTENTION PLEASE: THE INSTITUTION IS IN THE FINANCIAL CRISIS DUE TO THE LOCKDOWN IN THE COUNTRY HAVING DECREASED THE INCOME HAS BECOME LESS THAN HALF THIS YEAR IT HAS BECOME THE QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH FOR THE RELIGIOUS (DEENI) INSTITUTION OF THE COUNTRY.

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● **NOTE:** See the documentary film NAZR-E-ENAYAT on the Internet "YOUTUBE" in which there is a brief history of both orphanages

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Md. Mekail Ahmed

Islam Never Supports Religious Intolerance

As human beings, we all belong to one nation, be they Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, or Buddhists. All human beings have equal rights and dignity to Allah, the Creator, as Adam (AS) and Hawa-Eve (AS) children. No religion supports any coercion against anyone, and the ideal of Islam is to preserve sublime communal harmony. The attitude and mentality of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) towards non-Muslims is very clear.

Islam has ensured the freedom of all religions. No one can stop anyone from practicing his religion. In this exhausting coronavirus pandemic, people did not hesitate to wear masks, gloves, PPE to save their lives. Not only doctors, nurses, but service workers are also wearing these; people of any profession, men and women, are all wearing them. The sole purpose is to ensure their safety from the corona's terrible clutches. One and a half thousand years ago, the religion of peace, Islam, instructed to make a full veil for women's safety. Islam has given dignity to women as

mothers. Verses have been revealed in the Qur'an to the effect that no mockery can be made of other religions. Allah says: *'Do not insult those whom they call upon besides Allah. Then they will transgress the limits and blaspheme Allah out of ignorance.'* (Surat an-An'am: 106)

If the neighbor is a non-Muslim, then the Muslim needs to respect the rights of his non-Muslim neighbor. This is also the neighbor's *Haq* (right). Allah declares in the Holy Qur'an: *'Allah does not forbid you from dealing justly and kindly with those who did not fight against you in the matter of religion nor drove you out of your land. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice (those who deal with equity).'* (Surah Mumtahina: verse 8)

The announcement of the Farewell Hajj in the voice of the Prophet (pbuh) is evident from that historic speech: *'O mankind! Your God is one and unique, and your father is one. An Arab is by no means superior to a non-Arab. Similarly, a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab. A white*

man is not better than a black man, and black is not better than white. In order to evaluate the superiority, it will be a matter of judging who has attained taqwa, that is, how far Allah and the servant have attained. Through this, the one who has the highest honor in the sight of Allah is the most pious.' (Bayhaqi)

So human dignity cannot be evaluated by social status, clan status, racism, capitalism, etc. The division of race, religion, caste, etc., is only to get to know each other so that they can benefit from their character and mental qualities. In this case, Allah the Almighty has said- *'O mankind! I created you from male and female. And We have divided you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.'* (Surah Al-Hujurat: verse 13)

The main sources of Islam, the Qur'an, and the Hadith say that people of other religions should be respected and honored more than their own religion. History has shown that many of the relatives of the last Prophet, Hazrat Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam), were fierce opponents of Islam. Even then, the Prophet (pbuh) never raised a verbal complaint against them, let alone persecuted them. On the contrary, Hazrat Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to see an opponent when he was ill. Fascinated by the sincerity of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), those opponents were gradually forced to take refuge under the banner of Islam. When this is the character of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) of the Muslims, then how can they oppress people of other religions? A true Muslim can't think of torturing people of other religions, let alone persecuting them.

The Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), said, *'Those who call people to sectarianism, fight for sectarianism, and sacrifice their lives are not part of our party.'* (Sunan Abu Dawood: 5123)

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah has strongly warned against sectarianism. *"There is no compulsion in religion,"* He said. The erroneous opinion and the

path have been separated from the correct opinion and the path. (Surat al-Baqara: 256) Allah also says: *"Your religion is for you, our religion is for us."* (Surah Kafirun: 5)

According to a hadith, Hazrat Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "If a Muslim violates the rights of the followers of different religions or oppresses them, then on the Day of Resurrection, Muhammad will fight against that Muslim in the court of Allah." (Sunan Abu Dawood: 3052)

The Prophet (pbuh) further said, *'Whoever kills a non-Muslim unjustly will not get the fragrance of Paradise. But that scent can be found from a distance of forty years.'* (Sahih Bukhari: 316)

Finally, Islam is the religion of peace. We should not violate or overstep the boundaries of our religion. According to another narration, *'Whoever kills a non-Muslim unjustly, Allah will forbid Paradise for him.'* (Sunan Nasai: 4648)

(The author is a Researcher and Article writer ICMA, Dhaka, Bangladesh Email: mekailahmed117@gmail.com)

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Global Faith Forum builds bridges of understanding and community among Muslims, Jews and Evangelicals

momentum created by the Global Faith Forum discussions in Dallas and Kansas City, the **Multi-Faith Neighbors Network**, will hold an additional conference in

Washington, D.C., on Sunday, March 13.

"We believe it is vital to continue this important dialogue in communities worldwide," said

Magid, Executive Imam of All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center in Sterling, Virginia, and co-host of these events. "These conversations are

critical in building bridges that will stop hate, make peace and facilitate lasting relationships." For more information, visit globalfaithforum.com.

(Source: <https://allarab.news/global-faith-forum-builds-bridges-of-understanding-and-community-among-muslims-jews-and-evangelicals/>)

AN APPEAL

DARUL ULOOM SAYEEDIYAH & SAYEEDIYA YATHEEM KHANA

Alhamdulillah, The **Darul Uloom Sayeediyah Trust** established in the year 1988, is maintaining a Madrasa, a Masjid and an Orphanage - '**Sayeediya Yatheem Khana**' - (for boys). The Orphanage was established with the aim of providing free care and education to the deserving orphan students of our community. Hundreds of orphans are deprived of the privilege to study and it is our responsibility to take care of such children and provide them education. According to Ahadith one who takes care of an orphan is rewarded with heaven by Almighty Allah. **Darul Uloom Sayeediyah** requests assistance from all welfare minded persons by way of sponsorship contributions or donations. They can help deserving Orphan students with sponsorship contributions - of Rs.18,000/- per year @ Rs.1,500/- per student per month from their Zakath / Sadaqaat or for 'Eisal-e-Sawab' of their deceased relatives. All the students are being provided free education with boarding and hostel facilities. The source of income for the institution is donations from welfare minded persons of our community.

All are requested to encourage the Management with their assistance specially during the holy month of Ramazan which is a month of Charity. It is hoped that your assistance to these deprived children will protect them from getting their lives destroyed and will, Insha Allah, make them educated responsible citizens of the Society.

SAHRI and IFTAR : Since there is no holiday in the institution during Ramazan students stay at the institution and observe fasts throughout the holy month of Ramazan. SAHRI and IFTAR arrangements are made for the students and staff at the institution. Donors are requested to contribute for this arrangement or provide food grains etc. for this purpose.

May Allah grant acceptance to the noble acts of our donors who help the needy with the intention of obeying His commands and earning His pleasure and reward them highly. Aameen.

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Moin Qazi

At no stage in modern Indian history have Muslims been put to such a stern test. Every action was viewed through a suspicious lens, and even good work was viewed negatively or was deftly airbrushed. The mainstream narrative continues to be orchestrated to pigeonhole the entire community into stereotypical templates of fanatical, undisciplined, conspiratorial, and unpatriotic Muslims.

Over a thousand years of rivalry and conflict, from the crusades to the Suez crisis and beyond, have created a widespread unease towards anything to do with Arabs or Muslims. The marvelous spread of this religion is a mystery that never ceases to stimulate the mind to new inquiry. How was it that in the short space of a century, the Arab tribes, before always at war among themselves, should have been united into an irresistible power and have conquered Syria, Persia, the whole of Northern Africa, and Spain? And with this religious outbreak, this great

revival of Monotheism in Asia, there also came as remarkable a renaissance of learning, which made the Arabs the teachers of philosophy and art to Europe during a long period. Arab Spain was a focus of light while Christian Europe lay in mediæval darkness.

The struggle exists because the West has mastered the problem of reconciling religion and freedom, while several Middle Eastern nations have not. The story of that mastery and that failure occupies several centuries of human history, in which one dominant culture, the world of Islam, was displaced by a new culture, that of the West.

Reconciling religion and freedom has been the most difficult political task most nations have faced. It is not hard to see why. People who believe that there is one set of moral rules superior to all others, laid down by God and sometimes enforced by the fear of eternal punishment, will understandably expect their nation to observe and impose

these rules; to do otherwise would be to repudiate deeply held convictions, offend a divine being, and corrupt society.

In furtherance of these views, Queen Mary executed 300 Protestants, England and France expelled Jews, Ferdinand and Isabella expelled from Spain both Moors and Jews, the Spanish Inquisition tortured and executed a few thousand alleged heretics, and books were destroyed. Scholars threatened for advancing theologically incorrect theories.

Islam was a vast empire stretching from western Africa into Indian empire that valued learning, prized scholars, maintained great libraries and preserved the works of many ancient writers. But within three centuries, this greatest civilization on the face of the earth was in retreat, and the West was rising to produce a civilization renowned for its commitment to personal liberty, scientific expertise, political democracy, and free markets.

Freedom of conscience has made the difference. In an old world where the knowledge came from libraries and scientific experiments were rare, space would not be so important. But in the new world, knowledge and all that it can produce come from the sharp challenge of competing ideas tested by standards of

objective evidence. In Istanbul, Muslims printed no book until 1729, only occasionally after that. By contrast, the West became a world in which books were published three centuries earlier and where doubt and self-criticism were important. Of course, doubt and self-criticism can become, as William Bennett has observed, a self-destructive fetish, but short of that calamity, they are the source of human progress.

Islamist extremism is today the world's most potent revolutionary political force. It has transmuted in recent decades

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History tells us that politics plays a vicious role when there is a clash between truth. Society has paid a heavy price for allowing politics to have its sway. We should grow wiser from the lessons of history. Let history not repeat itself. Let us not play with precious human lives.



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'ZAKAT PURIFIES YOUR WEALTH'

The Roots of Muslim Rage

but is a tenacious ideology and shows no sign of going away. The Islamist worldview has been transmuting in almost every sphere of life, and the quietists are getting eclipsed. As the French academic Olivier Roy has written, this; has been as much about the Islamisation of radicalism as it was about the radicalization of Islam.

In a climate where we are constantly warned about a 'clash of civilizations' and the West's strategy of perpetual war with Muslim countries, there is a fundamental need to dehumanize the 'enemy.' The overemphasis on the Muslim man's perceived misogyny overshadows the complete lack of scrutiny of the West's oppression against Muslim women. The strategies being pursued by the so-called Western brigade of women's emancipation are a part of the

ideological war that is going on between neo-colonial elements in the West and Islamic societies. The aim is not to emancipate the women from presumed slavery but to reinforce Western imperialism and mobilize consent for the ongoing wars against Muslim countries. The West appears to have gone too far in its attempt to achieve gender neutrality. While it is politically correct to readdress inequality prevalent in traditional practices, a worldwide gender-neutral society is a dreadful idea fraught with severe consequences. Such an artificially attained sameness between boys and girls can be a dangerous experiment.

We have bared religion of its humanist content, compassion, piety, tolerance, and fairness and reduced it to a rigid set of social codes and practices considered the only valid credentials for

attaining salvation. Fake religious leaders have adopted the responsibility of collective salvation, freeing humanity of its individual moral and spiritual accountability.

We need to understand Islam from its primary scriptures and not from secondary sources, which are unfortunately prone to misinterpretations or represent a school of thought. Religion has truly been denuded of its humanist content and reduced to a rigid set of social codes. Fake religious leaders have appropriated the responsibility for collective salvation, freeing individuals of moral and spiritual accountability. but those who their scriptures have rightly guided understand that such extraneous ideas can never be accepted as substitutes. The sanctity of the original noble ideas will continue.

The only lasting solution will be

to liberate society from man-made religion and return to the pristine message of the scriptures. These scriptures had a simple, straightforward, and plain-speaking message for all humanity, which got distorted at the hands of the modern tools of so-called intellectual sophistry and sterile polemics. We need to sanitize not just our bodies and our environment but also our mind and intellect.

We have bared religion of its humanist content, compassion, piety, tolerance, and fairness and reduced it to a rigid set of social codes and practices considered the only valid credentials for attaining salvation. Fake religious leaders have adopted the responsibility of collective salvation, freeing humanity of its own individual moral and spiritual accountability. We need to think and act at our level and abandon this trend of

seeking salvation in herds if we want to achieve our moral redemption. This is the distilled essence of all divine revelations.

History tells us that politics plays a vicious role when there is a clash between truth. Society has paid a heavy price for allowing politics to have its sway. We should grow wiser from the lessons of history. Let history not repeat itself. Let us not play with precious human lives.

The Divine books are the work of an infallible God, but human-mandated practices that have shrouded the original divine message are products of the minds of fallible human beings. This is the root cause of misunderstanding about religions and the wrong beliefs that abound in adherents, most illiterate or intellectually incapable of comprehending the scriptures. ■

Will Hijab Controversy Impact Muslim Women's Education?

Secondly, to keep the community engaged in unproductive emotional issues to distract them from educational and economic progression. Education is the ultimate solution to attain equality and prosperity in the country, keeping our identity intact through good conduct and character. With a vengeance, Muslims need to spearhead "Mission Education", particularly to girls.

One shortsighted action or wrong and divided opinion can impact the lives of generations. For instance, a handful of persons who fought for decades for an abandoned controversial Babri mosque only helped the political disposition to polarize most moderate non-Muslims of India, ultimately to come to power with an unchallengeable majority. We know the consequence of an absolute majority in a democracy. The majority of Muslims were indifferent to the issue or wanted the land to be gifted as a goodwill gesture. This advice came from many farsighted personalities but was not listened to. An act of voluntarily granting the Babri land would have given unfathomable goodwill to the Hindu brothers and sisters. The shortsighted leadership failed us. Have we not learned a lesson from this blunder? We still continue

with cynical arguments of a few other demands of Hindus, not realizing the consequence of isolation, discrimination, and bias the Muslim community is facing at every level and everywhere in the country, which now includes educational Institutions.

The solution to the miseries of Indian Muslims is

1. Hijab or (no-Hijab) is an aggressive policy of propagating education, particularly for our women. This should come in one voice from the entire religious and political leadership.

2. The opposite of hate is love. Consistent efforts to counter the hate propaganda through untiring efforts to enhance our friendship improve personal relations; win the goodwill of non-Muslim neighborhoods.

3. Stay away from deliberate emotional distractions spread through social media and WhatsApp messages.

If the community leaders across the board do not unite to guide the Muslims in one voice to the progressive path through education, the disaster that would engulf future generations would undoubtedly seek answers from us, and I am afraid it may be too late.

(The author is the former Vice-Chancellor, welcome comments, and reactions : tareenjak@yahoo.co.in)

If the community leaders across the board do not unite to guide the Muslims in one voice to the progressive path through education, the disaster that would engulf future generations would undoubtedly seek answers from us, and I am afraid it may be too late.



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Moqheeta

Uzma Azmi

Ramadhan is approaching. Alhumdulillah for that. And we, as mothers, are already super excited at the thought of grabbing more and more rewards, but our excitement is accompanied by worry as well. The fear of not being able to extract most of the blessed month because of so many other chores, which we sometimes think are 'distractions.' And we feel these distractions come in the guise of children, husband, household duties, etc. which start filling us with guilt and negative vibes.

The disappointment further escalates when we see men reciting Qur'an and going for Taraweeh, or other women doing extra worship with ease as their children are old enough to take care of themselves, or young unmarried girls rushing to do ibadah. And then there is this regular whispering of shaytan,

who continuously tries to make us a pessimist, making us jump on the wrong track by becoming hopeless.

Therefore it is essential to plan our Ramadan to keep our hopes alive. Always remember, if we fail to plan, we plan to fail. So mothers, let's kickstart our motorcycles to ride the month of Ramadan with our super planning.

1) Analyse your heart and renew your intention for every act/deed you do. Purity and sincerity of intention (to seek Allah's pleasure) will earn us multiple rewards in sha Allah.

2) Time management is a skill and to stick to it requires even more skill. Make a chart list down what you would want to finish each day or each week, depending on your schedule.

3) Pray as much nawafil as possible

4) Keep your tongue moist with Dhikr

5) Revive a sunnah, like using miswak, showing compassion and mercy, smiling, helping others, doing other family members'

Ramadan for Mothers



tasks. Do the small good things.

6) Trying to exceed in generosity by giving food/money/or needful things more than you do in the usual month.

7) Connecting to relatives either through phone calls or personal meetings.

8) Listening to Qur'an is also very rewarding, and it brings tranquillity to our hearts. You can listen to it while continuing with your household chores.

9) Visiting neighbours (both Muslims and non-Muslims),

inviting them for small iftar gatherings, and giving flyers or booklets about Islam for the purpose of dawah to the non-Muslims.

10) Introduce and explain 2/3 names of Allah to your children and ask them to call Allah with His beautiful names.

11) Make sure not to spend much time cooking, and at the same time remind others that overeating will only destroy the purpose of fasts. The spiritual rejuvenation will be felt if we feed our souls and not our bodies.

12) Fix a day for narrating a life story of any sahabi to your children and engaging them in this healthy conversation to inculcate the love for the companions of our Prophet (pbuh).

13) Feeding stray animals.

14) Learn small duas and include them in the dua list after salah.

15) Try to avoid situations that enrage you, and if you sense that you are getting angry, then leave that place and start to channel your anger into something positive. Difficult it is undoubtedly, but

with the high level of Allah's consciousness, it becomes possible with ease. You can write the word 'taqwa' on a piece of paper and stick it on the wall to cast your eyes on it often as a reminder.

16) Read surahs with meaning so that you can introspect to get closer to Allah.

And last but not least, it is none other than Allah who has given us the responsibility of a wife and a mother, and when we play our roles intending to derive Allah's pleasure, we are getting highly rewarded for that.

We should never think of our responsibilities as distractions; they are not keeping us away from worshipping our Creator; in fact, we are involved in worshipping Him when we are performing our duties.

Let us discard all the negativity and embrace ourselves with energy to celebrate this blessed month. The right approach is the first step towards achieving our goals.

May Allah make us reach Ramadan and extract the most of it.

Aameen ■

Gratitude (Shukr)

Alaisa Sehrish

Allah Almighty says, **"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you in favour."** (14:7)

What is gratitude?

What does it mean to be grateful?

When we are grateful, we appreciate something, denoting thankfulness. Thankfulness to Allah swt and His creation.

Gratitude is the heart and the essence of Islam; it's also the key to attracting prosperity, peace, success, Contentment, and abundance.

As humans, we go through the highs and the lows in our lives. Gratitude, or being grateful, has proven to increase our feel-good emotions and make us feel peaceful when we are sad.

Showing Gratitude to the One who created you is a mighty thing, and it gives you a sense of balance and draws good into your life.

Better relationship with Allah:

Being Grateful is one of the most

beloved characteristics of Allah Almighty. By Shukr, we invoke His mercy and love upon us, and it is the key to Allah's pleasure.

When we are thankful to Allah for even the smallest of things -like the clothes you are wearing, the food on your plate, for the comfy bed you sleep in, for the ability to read, for your breath- we feel Sakeena (i.e., Contentment)

Speaking of Gratitude always reminds me of the stories of the prophets and mainly the story of Prophet Ayyub (AlaihisSalam).

The Prophet Ayyub (A.S) was a man who had everything; health, wealth, children, livestock, and a good wife.

Allah swt sent trials upon trials.

Ayyub AS lost all his children, wealth, and health. He became ill and had terrible sores all over his body.

Once his wife asked him, "How long will we suffer?" And to that,

Ayyub (A.S) said, "How long did Allah bless us for?"

Even in such a condition, he managed to remain grateful to Allah. He never complained; he would thank Allah swt for everything in his life. Subhanallah!

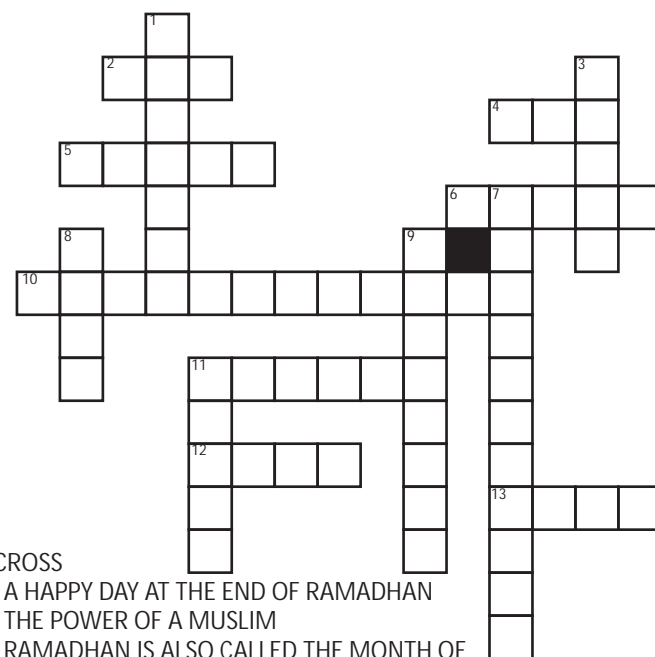
And how quickly we get upset and lose our sense of all the things we still have.

We focus on the thing we lost instead of focusing on all the other things we have, the things Allah has blessed us with. Whenever we are tested with something small, we forget about the times Allah has blessed us.

Change your focus. Whenever you focus on the problem, all you get is more problems; all you see are solutions whenever you focus on solving the issue.

Now, think about your blessings, as many as you can number, and say Alhamdulillah! ■

RAMADHAN PUZZLE



ACROSS

2. A HAPPY DAY AT THE END OF RAMADHAN
4. THE POWER OF A MUSLIM
5. RAMADHAN IS ALSO CALLED THE MONTH OF
6. A MEAL TO BREAK THE DAY LONG FAST
10. THE NIGHT OF POWER
11. ANY GOOD GIVEN IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
12. THE CAVE WHERE PROPHET SAW USED TO SPEND TIME
13. MOUNTAIN NEAR MECCA WHERE FIRST REVELATION WAS SENT DOWN
1. THE ANGEL WHO BROUGHT QURAN TO THE PROPHET SAW
3. THE 2.5 PERCENT WEALTH GIVEN TO POOR
7. YOU GET THIS WHEN YOU SAY ASTAGFAR
8. THE FOURTH PILLAR OF ISLAM
9. THE SPECIAL NIGHT PRAYERS IN RAMADHAN
11. THE FIRST MEAL DURING FASTING ■

ANSWERS

- DOWN
1. THE ANGEL WHO BROUGHT QURAN TO THE PROPHET SAW - JIBREEL
 3. THE 2.5 PERCENT WEALTH GIVEN TO POOR - ZAKAT
 7. YOU GET THIS WHEN YOU SAY ASTAGFAR - FORGIVENESS
 8. THE FOURTH PILLAR OF ISLAM - SAMM
 9. THE SPECIAL NIGHT PRAYERS IN RAMADHAN - TARAWEEH
 11. THE FIRST MEAL DURING FASTING - SEHER
- ACROSS
2. A HAPPY DAY AT THE END OF RAMADHAN - EID
 4. THE POWER OF A MUSLIM - DUA
 5. RAMADHAN IS ALSO CALLED THE MONTH OF - QURAN
 6. A MEAL TO BREAK THE DAY LONG FAST - IFTAR
 10. THE NIGHT OF POWER - LAYLATULQADR
 11. ANY GOOD GIVEN IN THE NAME OF ALLAH - SADQA
 12. THE CAVE WHERE PROPHET SAW USED TO SPEND TIME - HIRA
 13. MOUNTAIN NEAR MECCA WHERE FIRST REVELATION WAS SENT - NOOR

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Adil Salahi

Fasting: The Ultimate Worship

Muslims are encouraged to be more charitable in Ramadan to follow the Prophet's lead, which his Companions described as "the most generous of all people." (Bukhari)

Fasting the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars upon which the structure of Islam is built. The other four are the declaration of one's belief in God's oneness and the message of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), regular attendance to Prayers, payment of zakah (obligatory charity), and the pilgrimage.

Let's examine these five pillars, taking into account that Islam aims to improve the quality of human life at both the individual and social levels. We find that the first of these five pillars concerns beliefs that influence one's conduct.

The second, Prayer, provides a constant reminder of one's bond with God. Almsgiving, the third pillar, is a social obligation that reduces the rich and poor gap. At the same time, the fifth, which is the pilgrimage, has a universal aspect that unites the Muslim community throughout the world.

Fasting in Ramadan, the fourth of these pillars has exceptionally high importance, derived from its very personal nature as an act of worship. Although it is challenging for anyone to defy public feelings by showing that one is not fasting in a Muslim country, there is nothing to stop anyone from privately violating

God's commandment of fasting if one chooses to do so.

This means that although fasting is obligatory, its observance is purely voluntary. The fact is that a hypocrite cannot use fasting to persuade others of one's devotion to God. If a person claims to be a Muslim, they are expected to fast in Ramadan.

"Proper" Fasting

This explains why the reward God gives for proper fasting is so generous. In a hadith Qudsi (divine hadith), the Prophet quotes God as saying: **"All actions done by a human being are his own except fasting, which belongs to Me and I reward it accordingly."** (Bukhari)

This is a mark of extraordinary generosity since Islam teaches that God gives a reward equivalent to at least ten times its values on every excellent action. Sometimes He multiplies this reward to seven hundred times the value of the act concerned, and even more.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught that the reward for proper fasting is admittance into heaven.

It may be noted that the qualified fasting that earns such great reward must be "proper."

This is because all Muslims are required to make their worship perfect. Perfection of fasting can be achieved by restraining one's feelings and emotions.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that people should not allow themselves to be drawn into a quarrel or "slanging" match when fasting. He taught that: *On a day of fasting, let no one of you indulge in any obscenity or enter into a slanging match. Should someone abuse or fight him, let him respond by saying: "I am fasting! I am fasting!"* (Muslim)

This high self-restraint fits in well with fasting, which is, in essence, an act of self-discipline. Islam requires Muslims to couple patience with voluntary abstention from indulgence in physical desire. This is indeed the purpose of fasting, and it helps people attain a standard of sublimity, which is very rare in the practical world. In other words, this standard is achieved by every Muslim who knows the purpose of fasting and strives to fulfill it.

Fasting has another unique aspect, and it makes all people share in the feelings of hunger and thirst. In normal circumstances, people with decent income may go from one year's end to another without experiencing the pangs of hunger that a poor person may feel every day of their life.

Such an experience helps to draw the rich nearer to the poor. Indeed, Muslims are encouraged to be more charitable in Ramadan to follow the Prophet's lead, which his Companions described as *"the most generous of all people."* (Bukhari)

Yet he achieved in Ramadan an even higher degree of generosity. His Companions say of him that he was in Ramadan *"more generous and charitable than unrestrained wind."* (Bukhari)

Fasting also has a universal or communal aspect. As Muslims worldwide share in this blessed act of worship, they feel their unity and equality. Their sense of unity is enhanced by the fact that every Muslim individual joins voluntarily to fulfill this divine commandment.

The unity of Muslims is far from

superficial, and it is a unity of action and purpose since they all fast to be better human beings. As people restrain themselves from the things they desire most, in the hope that they will earn God's pleasure, self-discipline and sacrifice become part of their nature. They learn to give generously for a good cause.

The month of Ramadan is aptly described as a *"festive season of worship"*. Fasting is the central aspect of worship this month, but people are more attentive to their Prayers in Ramadan than in the rest of the year.

They are also more generous and charitable. Thus, their devotion is more complete, and they feel in Ramadan much happier because they feel themselves to be closer to God. Therefore, they love this month, which is one of their endless benefits and blessings. (Source: www.Arabnews.com)

The Prophet quotes God as saying: "All actions done by a human being are his own except fasting, which belongs to Me and I reward it accordingly." (Bukhari)

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



Syed
Tahsin Ahmed

The holy month of Ramzan is here again, and we are truly blessed. Ramzan elevates our thoughts and actions to a higher spiritual level. The highlight of Ramzan is fasting. The Islamic type of fasting is unique because the person who fasts will not eat or drink anything from dawn to dusk. Men and women who fast resist the pangs of hunger and do not mind being parched with thirst. Having resisted these biological needs with utmost piety and patience the whole day, a little forbearance is also necessary at the time of Iftar.

Iftar In Mosque

When the time to break the fast comes, a big *dastarkhan* is laid out in most of the mosques with fruits, samosas, and sherbets placed neatly for the *rozders*. The *maghrib* prayer is conveniently postponed by a few minutes to give enough time to partake in the stuff. Providing eatables to a person to break his fast is indeed a noble act. Fine. But nobody thinks about the womenfolk left out in this all-male arrangement. On the contrary, if the snacks and food were sent to the houses of the poor, the women and children too could enjoy the same.

The tradition of sending eatables to the mosque appears to have been started to feed the traveller and the poor. This indeed is a noble and virtuous action. But I fail to understand why people who reside in the houses near the mosque have to partake in the *Iftar* in the mosque instead of having it at home with their family. I break the fast with a date at home, drink a little juice or water, and proceed to the mosque to offer *Maghrib* prayers. After the *namaz*, I return home and then eat the goodies thanking Allah for the same.

Iftar Practices



Since evening, the roads leading to the mosques have been bursting with activity, with vendors selling fruits, samosas, faloodas, haleem, and many other eatables. Many of us spend the time between *asar* and *maghrib* in collecting the eatables. Of late, food Melas are being arranged near some mosques, with a variety of foods being sold to swarming crowds. These food Melas continue even after *taraveh* prayers and have become family outings. Unfortunately, all these practices project Ramzan not as a 'fasting' month but as a 'feasting' month.

Iftar of The Prophet (pbuh)

How did Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) break the fast? The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) preferred breaking the fast with dates, and if he did not find any, he would break it with water. Anas Bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "*The Prophet (pbuh) used to break his fast with fresh dates before he prayed. If he did not find fresh dates, then he would use dried dates. If he did not find that, also he drank a few sips of water*" (Ahmed and Abu Dawood).

Iftar Dinner Parties

While speaking about Iftar, how can we avoid speaking about Iftar dinners and parties? Iftar dinners are arranged by some youngsters on the streets with all the

paraphernalia like shamiana, tables, chairs, lights, etc. A few donors generally finance them. Sadly, women are conspicuous by their absence even in these Iftar dinners.

Iftar parties hosted by Ministers and political leaders are more grandiose. Although considerably reduced in recent times, Iftar parties by politicians are still in vogue. Though I avoided such Iftar parties during my government service, sometimes we had to attend them inevitably due to official obligations. In one such Iftar party arranged by our department's Minister, there was such a massive crowd that I preferred to rush back home and have a quiet dinner in the peace and tranquillity of my house. Iftar time is best utilized to seek bounties from Allah with prayers and supplications and not be lost in crowds.

Relatives and friends also arrange Iftar get-togethers. Lavish banquets offering a variety of delicacies and the party atmosphere created when families get together can at times cause a delay in reaching the mosque for *taraveh* prayers. The sumptuous dinner can even make the prayers a bit difficult. These Iftar get-togethers burden the house's women with cooking, the arrangements, and cleaning,

thereby robbing their valuable time which they could have gainfully employed in prayers.

Lailatul Qadr

When the sacred night of *lailatul qadr* arrives, the food stalls around the mosques are kept open late, catering to the faithful, some of whom pursue special dishes rather than focus on *zikr* and prayers of the holy night. Some boys will be on the streets speeding and doing wheeling on their two-wheelers. We often hear about many accidents and deaths happening. Parents should be strict and should not allow their boys to ride their two-wheelers.

The normal practice in our part of the country is that the recitation of the Qur'an in *taraveh* is completed on the 27th night of Ramzan. This is a common practice followed for many years since earlier the *huffaz* used to come from different States and had to get back to their native places before Eid. Now since the local *huffaz* are leading the *taraveh* prayers in many mosques, the completion of the recitation of the Qur'an in *taraveh* prayers (commonly called *Qatmul* Qur'an, which is a misnomer) could be extended by two more days. A few rare mosques do complete the Qur'an on the 29th. But in all the other mosques, the 28th and 29th *taraveh* prayers have a subdued aura since the *taraveh* *namaz* is done with short verses from the Qur'an on

these nights.

Eid-UI-Fitr

Once the *Lailat'ul Qadr* of the 27th night of Ramzan is over, men and women throng to the markets for Eid purchases. In the previous two years, this had become a low-key affair due to Covid restrictions, but now with normalcy returning, we can expect that old habits will die hard! A day before the Eid, women rushes to the commercial places where ladies applying *mehendi* make a fast buck. Of late, even boys are doing this job, and many ladies have no qualms about getting the *Mehendi* (Hina) applied from them. Lastly, coming to the Eid prayers, more and more people are now offering Eid prayers in mosques, a facility provided for older adults. If this trend continues, Eidgahs will become redundant. The Eidgahs have even lesser attendance for *Eid-uz-zaha* (Bakrid) prayers. The common excuse given is that the butcher or *Qassab* (the most important person on this day) has to be arranged at the earliest for the animal sacrifice. While women too offer Eid *namaz* in many countries, in India, generally speaking, only the men attend the Eid prayer congregation. Going back to the topic of iftars, during this hallowed month of Ramzan, let us eat to live and not live to eat.

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



As the beautiful month of Ramadan draws to a close, most of us will be left feeling sad and a little empty. Days spent fasting will have ended, nights spent in worship will vanish, the nightly (*taraweeh*) prayers will be over, and family get-togethers to breakfast will have disappeared. That special feeling in your heart—that one that keeps you going despite your hunger and thirst—will gradually fade. Before you know it, you'll risk falling back into your old routine and habits. But, this doesn't have to be the case. With a bit of dedication and some careful planning, you can keep the Ramadan momentum strong all year round.

Being God-Conscious, Always

Firstly, it's important to remind ourselves that the blessed month of Ramadan provides us with the

Maintaining A Spiritual High After Ramadan

"Poor is he who leaves Ramadan the way he was before."

perfect opportunity and the tools to reboot spiritually and to get closer to Allah (SWT). In fact, Ramadan is supposed to increase your faith and God-consciousness: "*Believers! Fasting has been prescribed for you—as it was prescribed for those before you—so that you may be conscious of God.*" (The Holy Qur'an, 2:183).

But it shouldn't end there. We should strive to be conscious of God at all times, not just during certain times of the year. A simple way you can do this is through *dhikr*, or the remembrance of God through repeated supplications, *du'a*, or Qur'an recitations.

Prioritizing Prayer Over Everything

During the month of Ramadan, many of us spend more time in devotion and prayer. One way to keep your discipline is to start praying on time; if you don't pray regularly, then try sticking to the obligatory five; if you find yourself distracted during prayer, then try being more present when you kneel in devotion to God. Consistency is key.

Fasting Regularly

While we are obligated to fast during the holy month of Ramadan, remember you can fast regularly throughout the year. In fact, Aishah (RA) narrated: "*The*

Prophet used to try to fast on Mondays and Thursdays" [Tirmidhi, Nasai, and Ibn Majah]. Fasting is another act of worship, and its rewards are immense, so don't underestimate the magnitude of what you could gain by following our beloved Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) Sunnah. Plus, it's a great way to improve your overall health. Recent studies have revealed the numerous health benefits of intermittent fasting, including weight loss, detoxification, etc.

Giving Generously

Ramadan is also known as the month of charity; it is narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) was the most

generous during this blessed month. But remember, your generosity and charity don't have to stop at Ramadan. In fact, giving charity holds special significance in Islam, with the Prophet (pbuh) saying: "*The believer's shade on the Day of Judgement will be his charity.*"

As we live in increasingly challenging times and in a world where the level of human suffering is unprecedented, a small amount of charity could go a long way for someone in need. A great way to give to charity all year round is by finding a cause that you're passionate about and setting up a regular monthly donation. That way, not only will you take the hassle out of donating, but you'll be creating long-term change throughout the year.

(Source: Islamicrelief.org)

Adil Salahi

The Best Night of the Year

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

From on high have We bestowed it (i.e. the Qur'an) on the Night of Power. Would that you knew what the Night of Power is! The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. On that night, the angels and the Spirit by their Lord's leave descend with all His decrees. That night is peace, till the break of dawn."

(Surah Al-Qadr: 97: 1-5)

The Qur'an says that it is better than a thousand months and that it is perfect peace. It occurs once a year, but it is certain to take place. Therefore it is an occasion that must not be missed. What night are we talking about? It is the Night of Power for which a short surah is devoted in the Qur'an: "From on high have We bestowed

it (i.e., the Qur'an) on the Night of Power. Would that you knew what the Night of Power is! The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. On that night, the angels and the Spirit descend with all His decrees by their Lord's leave. That night is peace till the break of dawn." (97: 1-5)

It is not possible to determine whether it is the start of the revelation of the Qur'an on this night that gives it its distinction, or that it is originally a blessed night chosen by God for the start of bestowing the Qur'an. Whichever is the case, the night is one of the blessings defined by God in such great terms.

The Prophet (Pbuh), who has taught us all good things, has shown us how to make the best benefit of this night and ensure



that we receive its blessings. He has indicated that spending the night, or most of it, in worship ensures the forgiveness of all of one's past sins. One may alternate between different types of worship: prayer, reciting the Qur'an, glorification of God, and supplication. It extends from the time when the obligatory prayer of Isha has been offered to the time when Fajr prayer is due at dawn. What is important is the sincerity

that must be characteristic of one's action, and it should be in complete devotion to God and seeking His acceptance.

Which night is it? The Prophet tells us that it is one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan, and certain hadiths narrow that to the odd nights in the last third of the month. Yet the Prophet's action shows that he was extra vigilant of his worship in all ten nights of the last third of Ramadan.

Aishah reports: "When it was the (last) third of the month of Ramadan, the Prophet used to strengthen his resolve, spend the nights in worship and wake up his household." (Related by Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet's action clearly indicates that if one does the same, one will not miss out on the Night of Power. The fact that the Prophet kept the night uncertain was not his choice. He was informed of the exact night, and he went to address the people and tell them about it, but it was blurred for him, and he no longer remembered its precise timing. Therefore, he indicated that it is one of the last third of

Ramadan. This is more beneficial because seeking it over ten nights means more devoted, and our worship is extended. This is bound to make our reward even greater.

What is important to remember about the Night of Power is that it was the night when the Qur'an was revealed. That was a great event because it meant that God chose to show man the way to his happiness in this present life and the life to come, providing him with a constitution to implement. This is a way of life that suits all communities, in all generations. It is a great act of divine grace. We feel its benefit because our life is set on a different course from the rest of mankind. It is a course of purity, sincerity, truth, and devotion. It is a course that incorporates every virtue known to man and shuns every evil. It is a course that brings out the best in man, preparing him for a life of pure happiness in the hereafter. We must never lose sight of our duty to bring our lives in line with the Qur'an. When we seek to mark the Night of Power, we acknowledge God's blessing in revealing the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad, the teacher of pure goodness. ■

Ramadan Hijri Dates

Sheik Yusuf al-Qardawi has issued a Fatwa in 1419 or 14 20 AH, that as per Sharia, a Solar Eclipse marks the end of a lunar/Hijri month.

Irshad Sait N. M

ISNA/FCNA, ECFR, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and most countries will start Ramadan 1443, rightly on the correct Day, ie. Saturday (2nd April), in conjunction with Sha'baan, occurs at early hours - at 06:24 UTC on Friday, 1st April 2022.

As you all are aware, a Partial Solar Eclipse will occur on Saturday, 29th Day of Ramadan 1443 (30th April 2022) at 20:28 UTC.

Since the conjunction/Eclipse is at late hours, at 20:28 UTC, almost all countries mentioned above may ignore the Solar Eclipse - a Sign of Allah and may extend their past records Ramdan to 30 days and celebrate Eid only on Monday (2nd May 2022).

Sheik Yusuf al-Qardawi has issued a Fatwa in 1419 or 14 20 AH, that as per Sharia, a Solar Eclipse marks the end of a lunar/Hijri month.

We must also note that Imam Shafi (Ra) has mentioned in his book "Ummh" that Solar Eclipse and Eid will co-occur. He (Ra) referred to such a place where the change of Qibla direction occurs and where some people pray Zuhr of Thursday and others to pray Jummah of Friday, simultaneously. In all likelihood, such a place can only be the present-day International Dateline region.

We can also infer a rule from his observations that the new month starts from the very next Day of conjunction/Solar Eclipse.

We all must follow this rule to have a pre-determined error-free, globally applicable single Hijri Calendar, which can be calibrated for thousands of years, forward, and the past.

One may also refer to the explanation for verse 71:16 given in Tafsir Ibn Katheer. It says that the complete veiling/shadowing of the Moon marks the passing of the

month. It is a scientific fact that such a complete veiling of the Moon occurs only on the conjunction Day / Solar Eclipse Day, the Last Day of the month.

In the past, this Sharia Rule was ignored, despite our repeated caution mails sent to all countries mentioned above, which resulted in the starting of Ramdhan and Hajj and Eid falling on the wrong days.

The noble Qur'an at various places admonishes/warns people who ignore the signs of Allah.

As a reminder, firstly for myself and secondly to others, some such verses are 7:133 & 31:32.

But, no one took heed to such Ouranic warnings.

Almighty Allah also describes all those who accept the Signs of Allah as people of understanding, as People of knowledge. verses: 20:128 // 15:75 // 2:164 // 2:118 // 42:33 // 30:21 -24.

May Almighty Allah count us as among those who accept His Signs. Aameen.

Kindly accept and declare the Day of Solar Eclipse (Saturday, 30th April 2022) as the last Day of Ramadan 1443.

We, HCI, once again enlighten all that one of the reasons for errors in their calendars is their misconception that the Day / Yaum in Islam starts at Magrib.

Various verses of the Qur'an and authentic hadiths regarding Witr prayer, starting of and ending of Prophet's (PBUH) I'tikaaf, rituals of Hajj, etc., categorically establish the truth that in Islam, the Yaum / Day (24 hours period) starts at Fajr and not at Magrib.

If Muslims accept this truth, Muslims will not have to fast on Eid Day and not take food during the daylight hours of Ramadan in the future. In sha Allah

Many countries follow the criterion of Sun setting before Moon, locally, on the Day of conjunction,

in order to start the new month on the following Day. This also doesn't seem right.

Since conjunction is a Universal phenomenon, Local Sun-Moon timings have no bearing on starting a new month, and hence, such local timings should not be considered.

As per Astronomical Data, the Moon sets only after the sun at many places in the world, on the Day of Conjunction. So, starting the new month on the following Day, throughout the world, is totally in accordance with Shariah.

We, HCI, request all to ponder the subject more thoroughly and kindly enlighten Muslims through various media, websites, and correspondence about the error in their starting of Yaum, which results in their erroneous calendars.

If the Day of Solar Eclipse is not considered as the last Day of Ramadan 1443, millions of Muslims will fast on the Feast Day (Eid) and commit sin,

We request all Muslim scholars, rulers, leaders to do the needful so that no one fasts on Eid day i.e. Sunday, 1st May 2022.

(The writer is President of HIJRI COMMITTEE OF INDIA, ARA-18, Azadi Lane, Ernakulam 68204, +91 960 575 7190) ■

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ALLAH SAYS "HELP ONE ANOTHER IN GOOD DEEDS" Al-Quran

Magical Mid-Summer Solace in Delhi!

The Discover Yourself Workshop provided Spiritual Nourishment for a lifetime!

The Discover Yourself Workshop was organized at Anglo Arabic Sr. Secondary School, Ajmiri Gate, Delhi, from 18 to 20 March 2022.

Participants from Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ranchi and Delhi participated. Some of the participants share their Experiences:

- It was superb and much needed for each and every person.
- The workshop is very effective and has practical explanation.
- An eye-opening reminder, It immensely helped for my spiritual nourishment.
- It was simply magical and life-changing.
- It is beneficial, engaging, and I recommend that everyone attends this workshop.
- It helped me to overcome my sufferings.
- Earlier with no direction in life, I totally changed my approach to life.
- A very beneficial and thought-provoking workshop. Totally new concept and way of looking at life.
- It is a life-changing workshop that cannot be missed.
- To control your anger, techniques how to distinguish between, Qareen and Allah's will and differentiate between mind and heart.

POONAM: Before the workshop, I felt alone, single-handedly facing my life's problems. There was war in my mind. Now I have no questions, and I can feel the state of 'LA' – nothingness. I experience peace in my mind. I accept reality and live a life of submission. I willingly accept my daughter and my husband unconditionally.

AYUB: It was really transformative to me. I appreciate

the effort you invest in those souls. Keep rocking. Keep continuing the work, don't leave a single stone unturned. Steams and springs are hidden there. It is my pleasure to become a tool for the cause of transformation. Once again, many, many thanks for the event in Delhi.

SAMEENA: Being a science and maths teacher, I believed that everything in the world had some logic and reasoning or

permutations combination. I never realized when I converted my life into equations, actions, and reaction theory. This three-day experience gave me a new perspective to view my problem and come out with a solution, rather than finding the logic and reason behind them. I am committed to applying whatever I have learned in this workshop.

RASHID: The workshop was really an eye-opener. It created a shift and imbibed positive energy in me and my family's lives. I am giving up my ego, willingly accepting reality, and living in the present.

NAZAN: It was easier for me to let go of my past after the workshop. Lately, I have been living with too many negativities. Now, I feel much lighter after letting go of the baggage that caused obstacles in my connection with Allah. It helped me to come out of my self-deception and focus on aligning my internal with the external so that I can accept reality.

ATIF: Before attending the workshop, life was topsy-turvy. Now it has started falling in line. It will take time. Responses from the family members were overwhelming. I will give up procrastination and will honour my word. ■



ZAHIR AHMED, USA

Moon Sighting

Here is the first crescent of the month, visible and apparent. Isn't it romantic? This is called **Hilal** in the Noble Quran. The Moon moves around the earth in orbit. The TIME for one complete orbit of the Moon around the planet earth is defined as a lunar month, and the time duration for 12 such orbits is known as a Lunar Year; as the Moon advances its position, the **Hilal** or the Crescent increases in its thickness till it becomes Full Moon. After that, the bright part of the Moon decreases till it becomes totally dark towards the end of the month.

In this position, the Moon has completed a revolution around the earth, and now it is ready to start the next orbit. As the Moon enters the next orbit at a specific position with respect to the earth and the Sun, the Moon reflects the Sun's light to the earth in the form of a thin bright crescent and this is known as the First Crescent [**HILAL**], thereby communicating to the human eye on earth that the first day of the month has started. The first crescent is absolute, and it is the same for all the people of the earth regardless of where they are located on the Globe. It may be noted that the earth rotates around its axis. The TIME for ONE complete rotation of the earth is defined as a Day which is further divided into 24 equal intervals of time known as hours. The Moon

does not rotate around its axis. The Moon is a round body whose far side cannot be seen from the earth. At the time of the first crescent, [**HILAL**], some countries may be facing the Sun. For them, it is the bright day. They may or may not be able to see the crescent. For example, if the USA happens to be facing the Sun, we may not be able to see the crescent visually due to the bright daylight, even though the crescent is there. It is also possible that people on certain locations on the Globe may be totally blocked from seeing the crescent due to the geometry of the Globe, relative positions of the Moon and the earth. Please note that the earth is continuously rotating around its axis in addition to moving along the orbit around the Sun. In contrast, the Moon continuously moves along its orbit around the earth.

These dynamics of motions by the earth and the Moon play a significant role in the visibility or non-visibility of the crescent for the people of the earth. While there will be people who will not be able to see the crescent due to the above-stated reasons, there will be people in the other countries who will be moving towards the evening, where the sun light will be decreasing and the darkness of the night will be taking over.

These people will be able to see the

first crescent with their eyes. Those people who saw the crescent could testify to the whole World that they saw the first crescent, [**HILAL**]. Please note that the first crescent [**HILAL**] is only ONE for the entire World. The **Hilal** is the first crescent that appears to the naked eye due to the relative positions of the Moon, the Sun, and the Earth.

THE MOON SIGHTING IN ISLAM IS THE VISUAL CONFIRMATION OF THE FIRST CRESCENT [HILAL] TO START THE MONTH.

Allah, the ONE and ONLY ONE, WHO is the Creator of the Universe, has ordered the Muslims to use the lunar calendar.

SURA 2, Ayah 189 (partial).

They (the people) ask you (the Prophet) concerning the new moons.

SAY: "They are only SIGNS to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for Hajj (Pilgrimage)".....

SURA 9, Ayah 36

The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year), so ordained by Him. The day he created the heavens and the earth, four are sacred: That is the straight usage.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) delivered the message of Allah

exactly in Allah's Words, the Noble Quran. During the 23 years of his prophethood, he proved the practicality of Islam by leading a life per the Orders of Allah. He also delivered his own sayings called the Hadith, and his actions and sayings are known as-Sunnah.

The Muslim depends on both the Noble Quran and the Sunnah for guidance.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that Muslims must sight the first crescent [**HILAL**] to start the month and sight the next first crescent [**HILAL**] to start the next month and end the previous month. Let us read the following Hadith, which is taken from Al-Bukhari.

vol 3, hadith 130. Sahih Al - Bukhari.

Narrated Abu Huraira : The Prophet or Abu-Qasim Said, "Start Fasting on Seeing the Crescent (of Ramadan), and Give Up Fasting on Seeing The Crescent (of Shawwal), And If The Sky is Overcast (And You Can Not See it), Complete Thirty Days of Shaban."

The rejection of the correct Hadith will result in the rejection of Sunnah. Rejection of Sunnah is not allowed in the true Islamic life.

The bottom line is that the Muslim or Muslims must see the first crescent [**HILAL**] to start or finish the month of Ramadan or any

month. Muslims are spread all over the Globe, approximately ONE BILLION and 300 millions in number. They live in USA, Canada, Mexico, South America, England, Germany, Bosnia, and all of North Africa. West Africa, some parts of Central Africa, South Africa, Arabia, Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Southern Russia, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Siberia, Singapore, and soon.

All these groups cannot see the first crescent due to their different locations on the Globe. The first crescent [**HILAL**] forms only once, regardless of who is located on earth, as it was stated previously that only a few groups might be able to see the crescent [**Hilal**]. Now the question is this?.

Those who could not see the Moon, what will they do?

The answer to this question has been implied in the Noble Quran.

SURA 21, Ayah 92.

Verily, this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and NO other).

From the above Ayah, it is evident that Allah orders that Muslims are ONE. [Wahed]

BROTHERHOOD, regardless of



Dr. Yaseen Maswood

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may have Taqwa” (2:183)

Allah has ordained Muslims to observe fasting during the blessed month of Ramadhan because fasting purifies the souls and cleanses them from the evil that might mix with them and their ill behaviour. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer) As Allah tells us in Quran, the objective of fasting is to develop Taqwa, i.e., being conscious of Allah at all points of time. Taqwa is to be observant of the commandments of Allah and His prohibitions so that one does only what is permissible in the sight of Allah and abstains from all that He has forbidden. This perspective of Taqwa should not be limited only to those acts of ritual worship in Islam. Rather, this should encompass all activities of our day-to-day life, which is what perfecting our character is all about. While most of us are conscious of our efforts in Ramadan to execute acts of worship through optional prayers, recitation of the Holy Quran, being charitable, etc., we do not pay the same attention concerning

moulding our character during Ramadan.

Our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was sent to perfect our morals, attached a lot of importance to character building, especially during the days of fasting. By limiting the definition of Taqwa to mean merely acts of rites and rituals, one hijacks the universality of his blessed teachings. This is why we find that our Prophet (pbuh) not only was the best version of himself during the blessed days of Ramadan but also encouraged us to train our body and soul to imbibe such values during the month of Ramadan to lead the rest of our lives by perfecting our character. Although fasting from dawn to dusk during Ramadan means abstinence from food, drink, and sexual act, he (pbuh) also warned us that the rewards of Ramadan fasts will be nullified if one does not take care of his/her character during that time.

He (pbuh) said: *“Whoever does not give up evil and ignorant speech and acting in accordance with it, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and his drink (Ibn Majah).”* The word used in this hadith to denote evil speech, Qawlaz Zoor, also appears in the Quran thus: *“Avoid false statement”*. (22:30). According to

Tafseer Ma'ariful Quran, the phrase Qawlaz Zoor means lies. Anything contrary to truth is a lie and false, whether it is corrupt beliefs and practices or false evidence. This hadith clearly warns about the non-acceptance of the virtuous deed of fasting because of indulging in sayings and actions of evil, even though one would have abstained from food and drink during fasting. Merely depriving oneself of food and drink without paying heed to the spirit of the command of fasting would only result in hunger and thirst. Another similar hadith goes, thus: “There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray during the night get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night. (Ibn Majah)” Allah's protection is sought from such an ignominy!

Exercising caution while uttering words truly reflects our level of Eeman, as the Prophet (pbuh) said: *“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent (Bukhari)”*. Cursing others and usage of obscene, vulgar and abusive language are not something that is befitting a Muslim. Allah commands that people speak good words with politeness when He states: *“And*

say to My servants that they should say those best words.(17:53)” If this is the general precept, then what about the days of fasting? Another hadith that not only underlines the importance of tongue-control during fasting but also teaches us how to react to such a behaviour goes thus: Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anhu) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (swt) said: *“When any one of you is fasting, let him not utter evil or ignorant speech. If anyone speaks to him in an ignorant manner, let him say: I am fasting.”* (Ibn Majah). Yet another authentic hadith states: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: *“Fast is a shield. When one of you is fasting, he should neither behave in an obscene manner nor foolishly. If a man fights or abuses him, he should say: I am fasting, I am fasting”*. (Abu Dawood).

If these narrations depict the gravity of the sin of misuse of tongue, then what about indulging in quarrelsome behaviour? This evil trait made this Ummah pay a heavy price by losing out on the knowledge of the exact night of Lailathul Qadr. Right from the local or global sighting of the moon to the number of raka'ah of Taraweeh prayers, this nation

cannot stop quarreling, bickering, and being at each others' throats even during Ramadan. At the same time, these matters are given to valid differences of opinion among the scholars. Allah's help is sought! We need to realize that these are issues over which the Ummah has had intellectual differences in the interpretation of the texts and, hence, is bound to have had differences of opinion in the past and will continue to do so in the future. These differences should never give rise to divisions within the Ummah.

What can be more devastating than having observed fasting during Ramadan only to find it being nullified of its rewards in the Hereafter on not paying attention to its character-molding aspect? This is why the past scholars used to be concerned about their fasts and asked Allah for the acceptance of their fasts of Ramadan for about six months after Ramadan, despite taking meticulous care not to indulge in any such act that will nullify its rewards. May Allah bless us all with witnessing the beautiful month of Ramadan and ensuring that we do not nullify its rewards by our ignorant and foolish behaviour. May He bless each of us to spend every split-second of it in a manner worthy of His Grace and Forgiveness. Ameen. (The author can be reached at maswood@gmail.com) ■

Sweet Memories of Ramadan

Shabana

My earliest memories of Ramadan are the feeling of excitement in the household. My Ammi handed out the special Ramadan-related items to the domestic helper – Kala chana, kabuli chana, and various dals for pakodas, vadas and phulkas. The milkman would be instructed to bring extra milk for sehri and Rooh Afza drinks, custard, and puddings. As soon as the Ramadan moon was sighted, my Abbu would show extra energy and enthusiasm for prayers and Taraweeh. My mother would ensure that his Kurta Pyjama was neatly laid out before the Isha Azaan. My sisters and I had to lay the mat with *dastarkhwan* with all the Ramadan snacks and fruits. As the time for Maghrib azaan drew, nearer, the family would sit together and wait for the Azaan. My father would remind us of the special time for dua every day just before the azaan. Some of us would fill our stomachs while others would eat little, get up for prayer, and come back to eat later.



sisters had turned to get up and prepare khaja - doodh for abbu and ammi. If neighbors miss the alarm, one amongst the neighbors will wake them up by calling out their names. (Back then, the phone was a luxury) There would be almost a competition to see whose voice would wake up the sleeping neighbour. And if we were late, then the rush to eat something before the azaan was also an event to remember. I also have fond remembrances of

My mother ensured that the daughters were standing for Taraweeh in their own time. We would wait for Abbu to come back from Taraweeh, and all of us would have dinner together.

Early in the morning, the sehri-announcers would travel from mohalla to mohalla with a duff singing:

“Gul-e-gulshan ka chamka sitara

Aya Ramzan piyara humara”

That would not make us leave the bed, but the alarm was set, and

Lailathul Qadar nights. A big *chaadar* would be spread out in the living room where the whole family would be engaged in *Ibadath*.

At that time, there were no Islamic studies or workshops for children to imbibe Islamic values. My parents taught us the Islamic culture by living in Islam every day. There were no lectures or teaching, but they successfully created a love for Ramadan by their behaviour and letting us feel that Ramadan was a special month. ■

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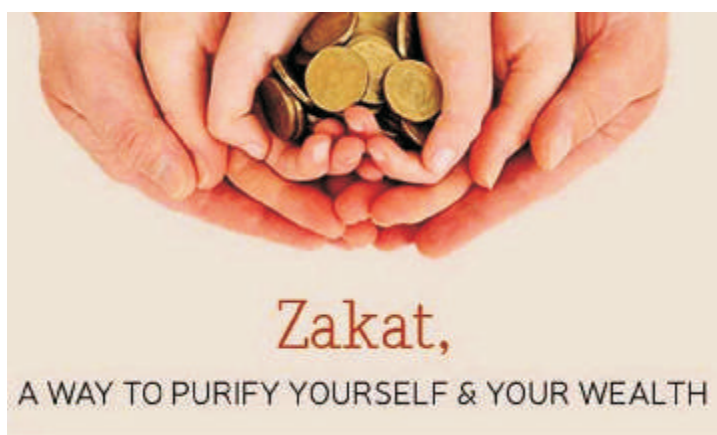
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Moin Qazi

Zakat: The Giving Spirit Of Islam



The idea that helping others is part of a meaningful life has been around for several years. For Muslims, charity is a central aspect of faith and practice. The tradition of humanitarian stewardship and egalitarian values is the foundation of Islamic beliefs. Governed by a worldview in which all things come from God and finally return to Him, Muslims are taught to live as trustees of God's blessings and spend their wealth accordingly. Islam is a complete way of life, and one important facet is that there is a duty to serve those less privileged than us. Ramadan is the focal point of philanthropy: People's obligation to give to the poor intensifies during this month. Arab societies have elaborate and nuanced social codes that demand excessive generosity and hospitality towards visitors and strangers. This is embedded in the ancient Arab proverb: "A guest is greeted like a prince, held like a captive [to your generosity] and departs like a poet [to sing your praises]."

The *Quran* provides both a spiritual framework for the possession of wealth and practical guidelines for its dispensation. Frugality with self and generosity

with others underpins the *Quranic* message of charity.

Muslims give in the form of either *zakat*, a mandatory condition of charity ordained by God, or *Sadaqa*, which is voluntary and meant to go beyond mere religious obligations. *Zakat* is the third pillar of Islam and is more of a social contract between rich and poor societies wherein Muslims pledge a determinate portion of specified categories of their lawful financial assets to benefit the poor and other enumerated classes. In the *Quran*, *zakat's* significance appears equal to prayer as an expression of faith. The two are often mentioned simultaneously in the symmetrical rhythm of the holy book's verses. *Zakat* means

purification and comes from the Arabic verb *zaka*, which also signifies "to thrive," "to be pure," and "to be wholesome." Muslims "purify" their wealth by giving a portion of it every year in charity. This Islamic practice is one way of learning self-discipline, freeing oneself from the love of possessions and greed. In a way, the man, who spends his wealth, affirms the truth that nothing is dearer to him in life than the love of God and that he is prepared to sacrifice everything for his sake.

The Islamic duty of *zakat* is binding on all Muslims who meet the necessary wealth criteria: It's limited, in a way, by your ability. According to the rules of the *Quran*, all Muslims, on whom *zakat* is mandatory, must donate at

least 2.5 percent of the total value of the financial assets based on the minimum wealth criteria (known as the *niqab*) each year for the benefit of the poor, destitute and others, classified as *mustahik*. The 2.5 percent rate only applies to cash, gold and silver, and commercial items. There are other rates for farm and mining produce and animals. *Zakat* is levied on five categories of property: food grains; fruit; camels, cattle, sheep and goats; gold and silver; and movable goods and is payable each year after one year's possession. *Zakat* is not simply a means to manage poverty but is inherently focussed on building dignity, honor, and self-sufficiency in the broader community. This is reflected in the diversity of categories of genuine *zakat* recipients.

The eight heads of distributing "*Zakat*" are defined in chapter 9, verse 60 of the Holy *Quran*. These are (i) the poor, (ii) the needy, (iii) those employed to administer the funds, (iv) those whose hearts have been recently reconciled to the "Truth," (v) those in bondage (literally and figuratively), (vi) those who are in debt, (vii) in the cause of God and (viii) for the stranded traveler. Such deserving persons are identified and helped by an individual or organized

effort.

However, a deeper understanding of the *Quran* reveals a broader methodology of the circulatory mechanism of society's wealth. As against "*Zakat*," the term "*Sadaqa*" has a more far-reaching connotation. In the above-referred verse 9.60 also, the term used to indicate charity is "*Sadaqa*," though, according to the consensus, this specific verse has been accepted the world over as the divine instruction for "*Zakat*" heads. On the other hand, "*Sadaqa*" is ordinarily considered optional charity, and most Muslims - though erroneously - do not attach much importance to it except sporadically giving away minimal amounts (much less than one percent) of their financial holdings.

In this context, we must appreciate that if the economically higher-ranked 15-20 percent of the community contributes only 2.5 percent of its wealth and savings, that will not suffice to lift the remaining 80-85 percent of the people to a higher economic status in the vicinity of the one enjoyed by the top 15-20 percent. That is why God has emphasized the significance of voluntary charity that Muslims broadly refer to as "*Sadaqa*."

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Ibrahim B. Syed

Muslims derive therapeutic and spiritual benefits starting from the Wudu to the physical movements in the *Salat - Takbir, Qiyam, Ruku, Sajda, Jalsa, and Tasleems*. Muslims perform five daily contact prayers (*Salat*) and voluntary prayers (*Sunnah, Nafl*) throughout the year and Taraweeh prayers during the month of Ramadan. This results in moderate physical exercise, particularly to every muscle in the body. Some muscles contract isometrically (same length), and some contract in approximation or isotonicity (same tension). The energy needed for the muscle during exercise is met by a process known as glycogenolysis. The rate of muscle metabolism increases during the performance of *Salat*, resulting in a relative deficiency of oxygen and muscle nutrients. In turn, this deficiency causes vasodilation - an increase in the calibre of blood vessels - thereby allowing blood to flow easily back to the heart. The temporarily increased load on the heart strengthens the heart muscle and improves the circulation within the heart muscle.

During the month of Ramadan, additional prayers are performed after *salatul Isha*, called Taraweeh prayers which vary from 8 rakat (unit of prayer) to 20 rakat with a few minutes break after every 4 rakat for chanting and extolling the Majesty of Allah. After *Iftar* (breaking of fast), the blood glucose level continues to rise from the food ingested. Just before the *Iftar* meals, the blood glucose and insulin levels are at their lowest level. After an hour or so after the *Iftar* meal, blood glucose and plasma insulin begin to rise. The liver and the muscles take up the circulating glucose. The blood sugar reaches high levels in an

The Medical Benefits of Taraweeh Prayers

hour or two, and the benefits of Taraweeh prayers come into effect. The circulating glucose is metabolized into carbon dioxide and water during the Taraweeh prayers.

Hence the Taraweeh prayers help in expanding the extra calories and improve flexibility coordination, reduce stress-related autonomic responses in healthy persons, and relieve anxiety and depression.

exercise. In addition to the health-boosting qualities of the *Salat*, the *Namazi* will be trained to be ever ready for any unexpected physical exertion such as the sudden lifting of children, chairs, or catching a public vehicle. The elderly will accomplish this more securely and efficiently. Hence this is an advantage for the elderly to maintain their physical fitness for a more extended period. It has been observed that those who fast

these are combined in the Taraweeh prayer, an ideal condition for "relaxation response." It combines repeated muscular activity with repetition of *Salat*, chanting of words of glorification of Allah, and of supplications. The Taraweeh prayer puts the mind in a relaxed state. This calm state of mind may be partly due to the release of encephalins, beta-endorphins (endogenous morphine), and others into the blood circulation. Endorphins are any neuropeptides composed of many amino acids, elaborated by the pituitary gland and acting on the central and peripheral nervous systems to reduce pain. Endorphins are categorized as alpha-endorphin, beta-endorphin, and gamma-endorphin, producing pharmacologic effects similar to morphine. Beta-endorphin found in the brain and GI (gastrointestinal) tract is the most potent endorphins and is a powerful analgesic (pain killer) in humans and animals. For example, during childbirth many women release endorphins reducing a woman's pain sensation. The release of endorphins is associated with euphoria. During delivery, women who give birth with little or no medication sometimes label this euphoria a "birth climax."

Conclusion

Islam is the only religion where physical movements of *Salat* and Taraweeh prayers are combined with spiritual exercise. When *Salat* and Taraweeh prayers are practiced throughout a person's life, recurring every few hours or so, trains a person to undertake the difficult task of meditation during physical maneuvers of *Salat* and Taraweeh prayers so that the *Namazi* (one who performs the *Salat*) benefits both from spiritual as well as physical exercise. *Salat* and Taraweeh's prayers are unique in that tension builds up in the muscles during physical maneuvers on the one hand. In

contrast, pressure is relieved in the mind due to the spiritual ingredient, on other hand. The following benefits have been noted among those who perform the Taraweeh prayers: burning off calories and losing weight, maintaining muscle tone and body composition, joint flexibility (stiff joints are often the result of disuse, not arthritis), increasing metabolic rate, improving circulation, improving heart and lung function and aerobic capacity, decreasing heart disease risk profile, increasing your sense of self-control, reducing your level of stress, increasing your ability to concentrate, improving your appearance, reducing depression and resistance to depression, helping you sleep better and suppressing your appetite. Evidence is also accumulating that those who perform regular *Salat* and voluntary prayers can conserve and retard the loss of bone mass in the elderly, thus staving off the ravages of osteoporosis that afflicts both men and women. It is also possible to retard the aging process and confer some protection to health in later life. Those who have performed *Salat* (*Fard* and *Wajib*), *Sunnah* and *Nafl* and Taraweeh prayers throughout life get protection and a positive effect in terms of health and longevity. They reverse the life-shortening effects of cigarette smoking and excess body weight. Even people with high blood pressure (a primary heart disease risk) reduced their death rate by one-half, and their risk of dying from any of the major diseases is reduced. They also counter genetic tendencies toward an early death.

Hence *Salat* (*Fard*, *Wajib*), *Sunnah*, *Nafl* and Taraweeh prayers are necessary for Muslims to preserve life and their desirable qualities into old age.

(The writer is the Immediate Past President Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc, Louisville, USA, and can be contacted at islamicresearch@yahoo.com)

Those who have performed *Salat* (*Fard* and *Wajib*), *Sunnah* and *Nafl*, and Taraweeh prayers throughout life get protection and a positive effect on health and longevity.

Physical and Emotional Well-Being

The gentle exercises performed in Taraweeh prayers improve physical fitness emotional well-being, and increase the longevity of the *Namazi* (one who performs the *Salat* or *Namaz*). When a little extra effort is made, as in performing the Taraweeh prayers, there will be a betterment in endurance, stamina, flexibility, and strength, it was noted that the five daily prayers (*Salat*) produce the same physiological changes without any undesirable side effects as those produced by jogging or walking at about three miles per hour. Recent research studies performed on 17,000 Harvard alumni who entered college between 1916-1950 give strong evidence that only moderate aerobic exercise, equivalent to jogging about 3 miles a day, promotes good health and may actually add years to life. Men who expended about 2000 kcal of energy every week (equal to a daily 30-minute walk, run, cycle, swim, etc.) had one-quarter to one-third lower death rates than classmates who did little or no

and perform the Taraweeh prayers report feeling much convalescing and robust.

Mental Health

It is a known fact that exercise improves mood, thought, and behaviour. Exercise improves the quality of life, induces greater sense of well-being and energy, reduces anxiety and depression, influences mood favourably and contributes to self-esteem and an aura of confidence; improves memory in the elderly especially with constant repetition of the *Ayaat* (verses) from the Glorious Quran and other *Ayaat* which exalt His Glory. This constant repetition of the Quranic *Ayaat* would help screen the mind from the incoming thoughts. It has been found by a Harvard University researcher, Dr. Herbert Benson, that repetition of a prayer, *Ayaat* of the Quran or remembrance (*Dhikr*) of Allah or muscular activity coupled with passive disregard of intensive thoughts causes a "relaxation response" that leads to the lowering of Blood Pressure and decreases in oxygen consumption and a reduction in heart and respiratory rates. All

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Zakat: The Giving Spirit Of Islam

But here is a catch. Most of us Muslims are not aware that God has also prescribed a directive principle for us to decide how much we should volunteer to donate as "*Sadaqah*" on top of "*Zakat*." Here comes the principle of "*Qulil Afw*" as indicated in the Quran (2.219). Says God: "*O Prophet (S), they ask you as to how much should they spend in the cause of Allah; say, whatever remains after taking care of yourself and your dependents. Thus, God has minced no words in His prescription. In fact, before closing the conversation, He adds, 'Thus Allah makes clear to*

you the verses of revelation so that you give thought."

In this way, Islam's mechanism of redistributing the community's earnings and wealth begins from "*Zakat*" and completes with "*Sadaqah*."

Deeply embedded in the Islamic concept of *zakat* are notions of welfare, altruism, and justice, which can be seen as harnessing the human potential to resolve insurmountable challenges to human society. Charity and altruism are rooted in the basic concern for the welfare of others, while Islam has added to it the notion of justice, which is seen as

a way of building a just and equitable society. It is the human preference for riches that the Quran cautions against. Yet, it acknowledges that spiritually immature souls may jeopardize their moral standing by indulging in reckless acts of charity that leave them destitute. Some verses speak of maintaining a balance between extravagance and parsimony. This is in recognition of human nature, which has the dual impulses of compassion and an inherent love for wealth. In this way, Islam's legal teachings counsel temperance and prudence, whereas its spiritual

teachings urge selflessness and generosity.

In the Islamic paradigm, voluntary charity is restricted to money or physical goods. Still, it covers all actions based on a simple understanding that what ties an individual to a common humanity is compassion. A well-known saying of the Prophet captures the essence of this concept: "*Charity is due upon every joint of the people for every day upon which the sun rises. Being just between two people is charity. Helping a man with his animal and lifting his luggage upon it is charity. A kind word is a*

charity. Every step that you take towards the mosque is a charity and removing harmful things from the road is charity." The real spirit of giving lies in doing it without tracing oneself. Giving with motives attached nullifies not only one's happiness but also burdens the receiver. After planting your seeds, you should expect nothing in return.

(The author holds PhDs in English and Economics, is a researcher and development professional who has spent four decades in the development sector and can be contacted at moinqazi123@gmail.com)



Sadathullah Khan

"Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent down, as a guide to mankind and clear guidance and the distinction (so that mankind will distinguish from Good and Evil). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you and that you may be grateful to Him." (Q: 2:185)

Allah has ordained fasting once a year in Ramadan for a month. This annual training is obligatory for taking control of the desires of the external faculties, the body, and the mind and connecting to the heart, the internal faculty.

Human beings are the best of creation. "Ashrafu Maqlooth" Indeed Allah has created the human being in the best of forms. [95:4]

Allah has done us a favour by clearly distinguishing and guiding us the way that leads to heaven and hell. Now it is our choice to choose the way to live here 'Now'.... a path of heaven or hell and we alone are responsible and accountable for the choices we make here that leads us to the hereafter life after death.

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their cultures, languages, colors, races, and geographical locations. The Quranic word in this Ayah is WAHED which means ONE. or Single.

Hence all the ONE Billion and 300 million Muslims who live on this planet earth are ONE BROTHERHOOD. Allah said this to all the believers of Islam. This command was not for Arabian Muslims, American Muslims, or any particular group. As brothers of the Muslim Ummah, those who saw the crescent must inform those who did not or could not see it.

In the 21st Century, we have telephones, cell phones, TV, Satellite communications, Internet. We can talk to a person in China within a few minutes. Hence if they saw the first crescent [Hilal] in the USA, they can inform the responsible authorities in other countries within a few minutes. The other countries can do the same by notifying us in the US. This procedure will comply with the concept of Brotherhood that Allah has ordered for Muslims.

For example, if people in India saw the first crescent in the evening time, people in Los Angeles would be approximately 12 hours behind in time. It would be morning in Los Angeles. The Muslims in India

We are the best creation since Allah has granted us one additional faculty than the animals. Animals have the sense and limited rational faculty; in addition to that, human beings are granted, the heart (some refer to the spiritual heart, the heart of the Self), the seat of realization, ethical, intellect, and conscious faculty. With this faculty, man has the ability to distinguish good from evil, Truth from falsehood, beneficial from harmful, and make choices.

"The distinction between good and evil is ingrained in their hearts." (91:8).

The more critical part of your 'person' is your inner Self. This inner Self, the Quran calls the Qalb or the 'heart.' The distinguishing faculty is the heart and not the mind. This is an in-built software (fitra) each individual is born with, and he does not need any external knowledge for this; even a Bedouin has this inbuilt ability.

"O you who believe! if you fear Allah, He will grant you Furqan a criterion (the distinction between Good and Evil)". [8:29]

This innate inner faculty connects man to Allah's (Ruh) spirit, which is blown inside us when he created Adam. "They ask you [O Muhammad (Pbuh)] concerning the Ruh (Spirit). Say: 'It is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given very little.'" (17: 85)

When one's nafs (soul) get connected internally to the Spirit (Ruh) and has control over the two external faculties, the sense and the rational faculty, we are spiritual beings in human form. This is our 'True Self.' When the nafs connects to the heart, it is in the state of nafs e Muthmainnah, a state of Qalb e Saleem, and this heart enters Heaven. We are Being Humane from the perspective of Allah.

"O you Tranquil nafs, return to Your Lord, well pleased, and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among My devotees! Enter you My Paradise." (89:27-30).

"The day when there will not benefit wealth or children, but only one who comes to Allah with a qalb-e-saleem [sound heart]. (26:88-89)

Finally, in reality, it is the way of the heart for which we shall be accountable, and only the one who brings before Allah a sound and sincere heart will deserve to be saved. Fasting is a means to achieve this.

Human Being is at a Loss from the perspective of Allah when humankind is connected to the

"Despite this, your hearts hardened like rocks, or even harder. For there are rocks from which rivers gush out, others

Fasting helps to restrain the desires of the lower self and submit ourselves to be the slaves of Allah (Abdullah). It is a great opportunity to purify the inner self and connect to Allah.

The Ego (Satan) is in control during the day of fasting, but we let it loose immediately after iftar, and he takes over us turning the whole night into a festival. The context of fasting, devotion and purification is completely lost. It has become another external ritual to perform year after year with no internal changes and yet expecting Allah to forgive us and grant paradise.

'Human' part, the body and mind, the two external faculties, and disconnected from the 'Being', the internal faculty of the heart. They are the ones who are dead, in ignorance, darkness, and at a loss. The heart is sealed and becomes harder than rock. The faculty of distinction will be taken away and we become blind.

"And most certainly have We destined for Hell many of the invisible beings (Jinns) and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp (perceive) the Truth, and eyes with which they fail to see (reality), and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle - rather, they are more misguided. It is they who are heedless." (7:179)

"By the time, Indeed mankind is in loss." (103: 1-2)

crack and release gentle streams, and other rocks cringe out of reverence for Allah. Allah is never unaware of anything you do." (2:74).

Once the heart is sealed or blocked, man is no longer a human being. He falls to the lowest of the low and becomes an animal; no, worse than that, he becomes a beast (Satan), sheds blood and makes mischief on Earth, and is doomed. He fails to recognize his true identity and the purpose of creation? He gets engrossed in the external world (duniya) and focuses his entire life on developing and relying on the rational faculty, logic, and reason, and denying the Absolute Truth.

Rivalry for worldly gain distracts you, until you visit your graves. (102:1)

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Moon Sighting

any other weather conditions.

The science of astronomy has been highly developed in the 20th Century. Now it is possible to predict the occurrence of the first crescent through calculations without seeing it. The calculations will predict the date of the first crescent and also will PREDICT from what part of the Globe the crescent will be visible to the naked eye. If we depend on the calculations only and do not attempt to see the crescent, we reject the Hadith, which clearly says "SEE THE CRESCENT" [HILAL]. If we reject this Hadith, we are rejecting the Sunnah, which is not allowed in Islam. However there is no need to reject the Sunnah. We comply with the Hadith and at the same time use the astronomical calculations to help us see the crescent. The calculations will predict the place and time the crescent will appear on the Globe. Now it is a matter of communication to the WORLD MUSLIMS which is easy in this Century and the future. We can arrange a reliable group of Muslims to see the crescent at the predicted place based on our calculations. These people will testify to the visual sighting, and

they are righteous. Their testifying will be communicated to all the responsible groups in the World through telephones or Televisions. It is also possible to televise the HILAL through satellites so that people in different parts of the World can see it in real-time. "Seeing is believing," as they say. The great result of this system of moon sighting is that the Muslim Umma will come together in unity. The concept of SINGLE BROTHERHOOD as ordered by Allah will be practiced at least in moonsighting!!! By using the lunar month, we are in accordance with the Quran, and by visually seeing the crescent, we are respecting and following the Hadith.

Here in the United States, for the past twenty years that I have been experiencing, when the holy month of Ramadan starts, we have chaos!!! Just in Los Angeles. The Muslim Community gets divided, and we end up with three Ramadans ----- each Ramadan displaced by the other one by a day or two. Some leaders state this is O.K because it is a minor thing; this and that. In my opinion, if the community cannot even unite on a minor thing, they will NOT unite on any major issue. Uniting on a minor subject like the moon

sighting is a good exercise to prepare them for major issues later. We end up having three different Lailatu Al-Khaddars, three different Eid Al-Fitters, and so on. Some people end up fasting on EID Day, believing that Eid is on the next day. Fasting on Eid Day is prohibited (Haram).

Anyway, the bottom line is this: From the Islamic Research and the research into the moon phases and the first crescent [Hilal], it can be concluded that there is no difference between the HADITH and the astronomy of the first crescent.

The Muslim Umma has been ordered to sight the Moon by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Allah has ordered the Muslims to be a SINGLE brotherhood, regardless of where the Muslims are living. If these orders are followed, there will be ONE Ramadan in the US and other parts of the World!!! Let us demonstrate ONE [Wahed] Brotherhood by relying on moon-sighting information from a reliable Muslim source regardless of where that source is in the World!!!!

The author can be contacted at Millennium International University (MIU.) Islamic Research & Publications, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275, www.miuusa.org) ■

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Bengaluru: Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan and Mr. M. K. Venu, journalists with noted web portal 'The Wire' from New Delhi visited the office of the newly launched English daily 'News Trail' on Monday, March 28, 2022 and spent two hours with the directors and journalists of the daily. Present at the discussion were directors of the News Trail, Mr. K.

'The Wire' Portal chief in Bangalore



M. Sidhique (MD), M. A. Siraj (Associate Editor); Rehmat Merchant (Features Editor); Mr.

Syed Kabeer (President, Amanath Coop Bank, Bangalore); Mr. Humayun Naseer (industrialist, MD, Indian Designs); Mr. Azeezullah Baig (retired IAS officer, Govt of Karnataka). Addressing a select gathering of citizens of Bangalore a day earlier, Mr. Varadarajan said independent

media was under tremendous pressure just as efforts are being made to undermine the independence of the judiciary. He said 'News Trail' was a bold venture especially during a time when newsprint was extremely expensive and cost of production of physical newspapers was touching new limits. He said 'The Wire' too was facing financial stress. ■

OBITUARY

IUML leader Sayed Hyderali Shihab Thangal, 74, Passes Away



Thiruvananthapuram: The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) Kerala state president Panakkad Hyderali Shihab Thangal, 74, died in Angamalli in Ernakulam district on March 6. He was buried in the burial ground in Panakkad in the Malappuram district. He was also the incumbent president of the Darul Huda Islamic Academy and the Vice President of the EK faction of Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama, one of the Sunni Muslim organizations in Kerala. Thangal began his career as a qazi in Malappuram as the third son of Sayyid Pookoya Thangal, the president of IUML and the Sunni scholars' group Samastha. He was the founder of Sunni Yuvajana Sangam, a Sunni youth organization. He was the party's Malappuram district president for 18 years as an IUML leader. Following the death of his elder brother, Sayed Mohammedali Shihab Thangal, he became the president of IUML in August 2009.

Hyder Ali, a suave politician, carried on the Panakkad family's legacy of encouraging communal tolerance and attempting to maintain the Muslim minority close to mainstream politics under the umbrella of the UDF. He has served as the qazi in a number of mosques in Kerala. Muslims have long knocked on the door of the Panakkad Thangal family's ancestral Kodappanackal house seeking solutions to their troubles. The Palakkad Thangal family's ancestry is tied to Prophet Mohammad. Politicians and leaders of all faiths mourned the death of the IUML head. According to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Hyder Ali has always stood for communal peace. "Kerala lost a tall leader," said Arif Mohammad Khan, governor Kerala. "Thangal stood for harmony," claimed opposition leader VD Satheesan. His death is a loss to the secular world when the country is under assault from fascist and sectarian groups." In a condolence statement, Baselios Mar Thomas Mathews, the head of the Malankara Orthodox Church, said Thangal had held all people close to his heart, regardless of religion. According to the bishop, his death is a loss to Kerala's secular society. ■

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Ramadan: An Annual Training Programme

"...When We brought him down to the lowest of the low." (95:5)
"And if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their own lust. And who is more astray than one who follows his own lust, without guidance from Allah? Verily! Allah guides not the disobedient people." [28:50]
The holy Quran refers to this lower Self (false Self) or ego as "Nafs e Ammarah" This Nafs commands us to sin (urges us towards evil). The Ego (false Self) has pride (Takabbur), greed (Hirs), envy (Hasad), lust (Shahwah), backbiting (Gheebah), stinginess (Bokhl), malice (Keena), and its sole purpose becomes to chase the worldly selfish desires.
"I do not think that I am free from weakness; all human (nufos) souls are susceptible to evil except for those to whom my Lord has granted mercy." (12:53)
"Do not follow your low desires because they will lead you astray from the path of Allah." (38:26)
Nafs e Ammarah is destined to Hell. Fasting helps to restrain the lower Self's desires and submit ourselves to be the slave of Allah (Abdullah). It is an excellent opportunity to purify the inner Self and connect to Allah. The Ego (Satan) is in control during the

day of fasting, but we let it loose immediately after iftar, and he takes over us turning the whole night into a festival. The context of fasting, devotion, and purification is completely lost. It has become another external ritual to perform year after year with no internal changes, yet expecting Allah to forgive us and grant us paradise. "The most honored by Allah amongst you are those best in taqwaa." (49:13)
Allah has done us a favour by clearly distinguishing and guiding us in the way that leads to Heaven and Hell. Now it is our choice to choose the way to live here 'Now'... a path of Heaven or Hell, and we alone are responsible and accountable for the choices we make here that lead us to the hereafter life after death.
"Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower." (3:8)
(The writer is editor, Islamic Voice and hosts Discover Yourself workshops where the participants get the ability to distinguish. They are coached to take control of the external faculties, connect to the heart and purify the inner Self. Email to awskhan@gmail.com & for more details, visit www.discoveryyourself.in) ■

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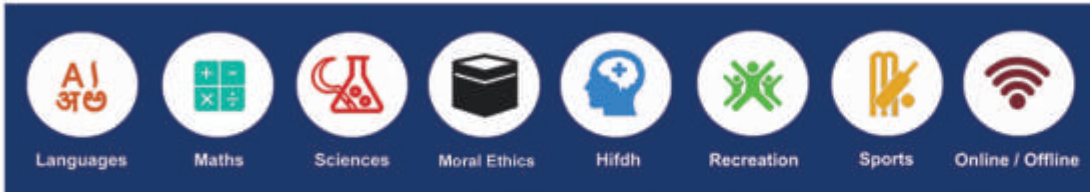
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