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Zil Hijjah / Muharram - 1444 / 1445 H

Dr. Afroz becomes
the first Muslim woman
Gastroenterologist
in India



Staff Writer

Aurangabad: Dr Shaikh Muna Afroz has become the first Muslim female Gastroenterologist (GI) surgeon in India, who has joined the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and probably According to ANI, Dr Afroz hails from Maharashtra's Aurangabad and bagged the All India Rank (AIR) third in MCh GI-HPB Surgery in the INI-SS 2023 and she also secured an All India Rank (AIR) - 10 for the Minimal Invasive Surgery Fellowship in 2021. She earned the 93rd spot in the CET-UG and graduated from GMC Aurangabad with an MBBS in 2017. She earned a Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS) in Edinburgh, United

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AISHE survey reveals the unprecedented decline of Muslim Students' ratio in Higher Education



Abdul Bari
Masoud

New Delhi: Shiksha Samvad '23, an effort that launched on June 20, stated that there is an urgent need for government action to stop the decline in the enrollment of Muslims in higher education institutions considering the recently released All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21. It also demanded that the government set up an inquiry into the causes that led to the steepest dropout rate of Muslim students in higher education. Additionally, the government needs to move quickly to set up

Staff Writer

Jeddah: On June 20th each year, the world celebrates World Refugee Day, as declared by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2000. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Secretary General, Hissein Brahim Taha, voiced his solidarity and support for refugees. He emphasized the



Shiksha Samvad urges government to immediately intervene in addressing disparities faced by the community

universities in minority-concentrated districts (MCDs), like Kishanganj in Bihar and

Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh. The goal of the Shiksha Samvad is to eliminate inequities and

promote equal opportunities in the sphere of education. The Students Islamic Organisation (SIO) and the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) jointly launched it.

In addition, it demanded that anti-discrimination policies in educational institutions be strictly enforced, that the saffronization of education be prevented, and that successful enrollment-boosting method be put in place for the Muslim population.

It blamed Islamophobia and growing insecurity among minorities as the major reasons behind the sharpest decline in enrollment of Muslim students.

The survey made the startling

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OIC Celebrates World Refugee Day most Refugees are from Islamic Nations

significance of giving this vulnerable group's humanitarian needs top priority since they have been compelled to flee their homes because of wars, conflicts, and natural disasters. He said the OIC's humanitarian agenda acknowledges the unique circumstances of refugees and

tries to give them the support they need.

According to the UN estimate, 89.3 million people have had to leave their homes in the world. Nearly 27.1 million of them are refugees, with about 41% of them being under the age of 18. Iran is host to 840,000 refugees,

820,000 of whom come from Afghanistan, and Ethiopia hosts over 867,000 refugees.

In Bangladesh, all of the 929,000 refugees are stateless Rohingya, who began seeking asylum en masse in 2017 after violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine State. In that time, the city of Cox's Bazar has become home to the world's largest refugee camp.

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revelation that the enrollment of Muslim students dropped by 8 percent from 2019–20, that is, by 1,79,147 students, which is an unprecedented decline and has never happened in the recent past for any group in India.

Briefing the media about the steep decline of Muslim students in enrollment in higher education at the Press Club of India, SIO and CERT office-bearers said the Shiksha Samvad '23 programme aimed to address the declining enrollment rate of Muslims and bridge the gap through this initiative.

Noted social scientist and JUN Professor Nivedita Menon said the survey report contains deeply disturbing information that revealed that enrollment rates have increased in other socio-religious groups, but the Muslim group's rate of enrollment has fallen to 8 percent. Prof. Menon attributed the Muslim enrollment downturn to the policies and actions of the Union government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The JUN Professor underlined that "Education, as a transformative process that fosters rational thinking and unlocks opportunities, should be accessible to all individuals. However, the recent AISHE Survey 2020–21 has exposed a disheartening reality. While the enrollment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in higher education has shown improvement at 4.2%, 11.9%, and 4%, respectively, the enrollment of Muslim students has witnessed an alarming 8% drop, equivalent

to approximately 180,000 students, compared to the previous year."

It cannot be coincidence and cannot be seen in isolation; it is the success of the "Hindu supremacist state," which wants to make Muslims second-class citizens, she said while recalling the CAA and NRC and other actions (such as banning hijab in educational institutions, unilateral abrogation of Article 370) of the Modi regime.

She also mentioned that the previous UPA government had passed the Equal Opportunities Commission Bill, but it has never seen the light of day.

She also emphasized the underlying causes of this concerning decline, stating, "The biased labour market, as revealed by the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy report, reflects discriminatory practices that result in lower employment rates among Muslims. Furthermore, the increasing violence faced by the community has severely restricted their mobility, leading to a process of ghettoization, hindering their access to quality education."

Prof. Menon praised the SIO for starting the Shiksha Samvad but added that the country's ongoing climate of violence and intimidation was also a factor in the historically low enrollment of Muslim students.

Similar worries were expressed by Fawaz Shaheen, a researcher affiliated with the Quill Foundation, who claimed that the country had become more

Islamophobic as a result. This, he claimed, has caused the Muslim population to feel more insecure.

He invoked the Tablighi Jamaat incident during the COVID-19 outbreak and attacks on Jamia Millia Islamia students as evidence for his claim that the entire community was being targeted.

Shaheen also highlighted that the findings of the AISHE survey showed that Muslim teachers are underrepresented in higher education institutions, which further exacerbates the problem.

"While teachers from the General Category comprise 56% of the total, OBC, SC, and ST teachers account for 32%, 9%, and 2.5%, respectively, with only 5.6% representing the Muslim community. Gender disparity is also evident, with 75 women teachers for every 100 male teachers, whereas female representation among Muslim teachers stands at only 59 women per 100 male Muslim teachers. Non-teaching staff also exhibit significant gender imbalances, with the Muslim community having the lowest female-to-male ratio at 34 females per 100 males," the young researcher explained.

In his address, Dr. Roshan Mohiddin, Director of CERT, said Shiksha Samvad has undertaken a wide range of activities to overcome these educational gaps, according to

"From round table meets and career guidance programmes to skill development workshops, scholarship assistance, and

mentorship programmes, the event strives to create a supportive ecosystem that empowers students and bridges the existing gaps."

According to the AISHE survey, UP accounts for 36 percent of that total decline followed by Jammu and Kashmir, which accounts for 26 percent, then Maharashtra (8.5 percent), Tamil Nadu (8.1 percent), Gujarat (6.1 percent), Bihar (5.7 percent) and Karnataka (3.7 percent).

Smaller states exhibit similar trends, however, the states with the highest proportion of Muslims account for the majority of the reduction. For instance, Delhi lost roughly 20% of its Muslim students between 2019–20 and 2020–21, while J&K lost nearly 36%.

The PLFS data supports this tendency if we narrow our focus to the age range of 18 to 23. Muslims perform worse than Adivasis and Dalits. This source claims that just roughly 19 percent of the population is currently enrolled in higher education, compared to 21 percent of Adivasis, 26 percent of Dalits, 34 percent of Hindu OBCs, and 45 percent of Hindu upper castes.

The only states where Muslims performed better than Dalits in 2020–21 were Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Delhi. In numerous places, including Rajasthan, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, Adivasis fare better than Muslims.

In light of these findings, we have

presented five key demands that must be fulfilled right away, Dr. Roshan Mohiddin said.

First, the restoration of the Maulana Azad National Fellowship (MANF) that was abolished on a false pretext, an inquiry into the declining enrollment rate of Muslims, and the establishment of universities in Minority Concentrated Districts (MCDs) such as Kishanganj, Sambhal, etc.

Furthermore, strict enforcement of anti-discrimination measures in educational institutions, Prevention of the saffronization of education, and implementation of effective strategies to promote enrollment rates among the Muslim community.

Roshan said the government should address these demands immediately in order to arrest the decline of the Muslim ratio in higher education.

Abdullah Faiz, National Secretary of SIO, emphasized the urgent need for prompt action by drawing attention to the Sachar Committee Report, which was presented in 2006 and highlighted the educational status of Muslims as being comparable to, if not worse than, that of the nation's most disadvantaged communities.

According to him, "The current dropout rate of Muslim students stands at 23.1%, surpassing the national average, necessitating focused policies and programmes to uplift and support Muslim students in their pursuit of higher education."

It should be a matter of deep concern to the government as it would impact not only the Muslim community but also the whole country, he stated. ■

AISHE survey reveals the unprecedented decline of Muslim Students' ratio in Higher Education

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Of the 1.21 million refugees currently living in Poland, 1.20 million are from Ukraine. Pakistan's refugee population of 1,539,554 million refugees is almost entirely from Afghanistan: 1,539,046. Many have lived in the country for decades, initially fleeing the decade-long Soviet-Afghan War. Over 3.67 million refugees are currently being hosted in Türkiye. The majority 3.64 million are "Syrians under temporary protection."

He expressed his appreciation and respect for the OIC Member States for their humanitarian efforts in helping those who were displaced find refuge. He emphasized that, in accordance with Islamic teachings, the OIC Charter, and pertinent national and international regulations, assisting and protecting refugees is both a humanitarian and Islamic duty. The Secretary-General emphasized the value of creating equitable cooperation and pleaded with the international community to assist these Member States. He also

OIC Celebrates World Refugee Day most Refugees are from Islamic Nations



Rohingya refugees walk to attend a ceremony organised to remember the first anniversary of a military crackdown that prompted a massive exodus of people from Myanmar to Bangladesh, at the Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhia. (AFP file photo)

stated that OIC Member States currently hosts more than half of the world's refugees, making them responsible for the largest proportion of the global refugee burden. The Secretary-General recognized that some of these Member States might serve as a

refugee-producing country, a hub for refuge.

To properly aid this vulnerable group, Brahim Taha emphasized the significance of tackling the root causes of the refugee issue in the Islamic world. He recognized the General Secretariat's ongoing

efforts, along with those of partners and organizations from around the world, including the UNHCR, to find long-term solutions and facilitate the voluntary, safe, and respectable return of refugees in accordance with established international conventions and protocols.

The Secretary-General expressed great admiration for the crucial and significant contributions made by the UN

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in bringing relief to the Palestinian refugees. The Secretary-General further urged the international community, the UN, and the OIC Member States to keep supporting the UNRWA in its mission to provide essential services to the Palestinian refugees until their right to return is achieved by the resolutions of international legitimacy. ■

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Dr. Afroz becomes the first Muslim woman Gastroenterologist in India

Kingdom, in 2022. Dr. Muna presently holds a license to practice medicine in India, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom after passing the licensing exam from the Dubai Health Authority (UAE) in 2022.

Intending to become an academic surgeon, she struck an optimum balance between patient care, teaching, and research. She has authored more than five indexed research publications.

Dr. Muna has presented her research papers at numerous conferences and won many accolades. Her inspiration is her grandfather, who is a General Surgeon and has been serving the community since 1967.

In a message to the youth, Dr. Muna says, "Perseverance and determination are the keys to success. I have experienced that my consistent efforts have enabled me to surmount every obstacle on my path to success." ■

Mumbai based Markazul Ma'arif Education to launch online English Medium Madrasa

Staff Writer

Mumbai: Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Center (MMERC), Mumbai has launched Markaz Online (English Medium) Madrasa (MOM) project. The decision was taken at an international online meeting held on June 3, here in which 50 Islamic scholars and intellectuals from India and abroad participated. The participants were members of the International MMERC Alumni Network (IMAN) who gathered to discuss and finalize the Online (English Medium) Madrasa issue which was conceptualized by MMERC.

Maulana Muhammad Burhanuddin Qasmi, Director of MMERC and Editor of Eastern Crescent presented the MOM concept at the outset and stated that this project has been in the works for several years.

"The aim of this academic endeavor is to provide necessary as well as advanced level Islamic theological education to the non-madrasa attending youths and professionals, both males and females, from across the world, in an online mode like that of IGNOU and NIOS in India," he said. The complete course will



consist of a 3+2 year duration, up to graduation in Islamic Studies (Alimiyat). That is the course will have a total of four stages – (1) Certificate Course in Islamic Studies, 1st Year, (2) Diploma in Islamic Studies, 2nd Year, (3) Advanced Diploma in Islamic Studies, 3rd Year, and (4) Graduation in Islamic Theology, 4th and 5th year, for above 15 year age group.

He added that students from Indian and international colleges and institutions as well as working men and women who desire to study Shariah in-depth and systematically through academic means may join in these courses. Since these courses will be taught in English, it will be required that the candidate meet certain language proficiency requirements.

The courses will eventually cover topics including Arabic language (reading, writing, and speaking), Qur'anic translation and Tafseer, Hadith, Aqaid (beliefs), Seerat

(biography of the Prophet (saws), Islamic history, Islamic sociology, and comparative studies of religions, among others.

The MOM syllabus will be created by a 12-member team of professionals that are knowledgeable in curriculum design and are connected to several educational institutions. The course will begin at the end of this year 2023 after this committee presents the comprehensive draft by the end of June. The attendees were acknowledged and listed as the founding members of MOM under MMERC, Mumbai.

It should be noted that all of the participants were former students of the Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Center's (MMERC) post-madrasa two-year Diploma in English Language & Literature (DELL) course. They are now employed as professionals in India and abroad and provide valuable educational services to madrasas, schools, colleges, and universities. In 1994, Lok Sabha Member and CEO of Ajmal CSR Maulana Badruddin Ajmal Al-Qasimi founded the MMERC, a post-madrasa educational school. ■

AMU Prof (Dr) Ayesha Ahmad gets prestigious Fellowship of The Royal College of Physicians (FRCP), London

Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University's Professor Dr. Ayesha Ahmad was awarded the coveted Fellowship of The Royal College of Physicians (FRCP), London. She teaches in the Department of Pediatrics, JN Medical College of AMU. It is to mention that the honour of using the FRCP post-nominal is granted to eminent consultants or SAS doctors who are Fellows of the RCP.

In addition to her membership in the Royal College of Pediatrics and



Child Health (MRCPCH), which she qualified for in 2015, she will receive this accolade during the fellowship conferment

ceremony in 2023.

It is to be noted that earlier Dr Ayesha Ahmad was awarded the European Society for Pediatric Endocrinology Fellowship (ESPE)

in 2016 for working in Pediatric Endocrinology in the United Kingdom. Currently, she is involved in developing the Pediatric Endocrinology division in the department, which will address the ever-increasing cases of Type 1 diabetes, thyroid, growth disorders, and other endocrine issues of the pediatric age group. Her main thrust in research and publications covers the fields of Pediatric Endocrinology and General Pediatrics. ■

Kerala Women's Commission recommends making premarital counseling mandatory for marriage registration

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Women's Commission has recommended making premarital counseling mandatory to register marriages. Though the commission has been offering counseling for couples, no certificates were issued after the session. The certificates will be issued if the government approves the request of the commission.

The certificate will become mandatory for registration. The commission has not clarified whether certificates issued by religious organizations or other institutions are equivalent.

The women's commission has requested to reduce the maximum gift for the bride to 10 sovereigns of gold and Rs 1 lakh. The net worth of other gift shall not exceed Rs

25,000. The draft order prepared in 2021 to curb dowry is under consideration by the government.

The commission demanded to make counseling for parents be mandatory and issued guidelines to limit the show of luxury and the number of invitees at the function. (Source : <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/news/>) ■

Rise After Every Fall

Had God wanted, our entire prayer would be bowing in prostration, but He did not want that for us. The greater part of it is standing, not bowing. Over and over again in the Qur'an, God says, "Stand in prayer". Far fewer times does He say, "Bow" or "Prostrate"... But here's the thing: Even in that most humbled state,

when you are emptying your heart and soul before God, He wants you to stand on your feet and not stay on your knees. We start our prayer by standing, we bend, we fall to our knees and plaster our faces to the ground, only to rise up and stand on our feet once again. Do you see it? God didn't just command a formula for prayer. In

it, He showed you how to live. You will stand, you will fall and you will rise again. Not only does this represent overcoming challenges in life, but it represents the human journey itself in living, dying, and being resurrected in the Hereafter. Next time you pray, be inspired that your Lord wants you to rise after every fall. ■

His hands and feet were amputated, but he pretended to be an IS officer!

Naqi Ahmed Nadwi

A young college student in Delhi was going back to his village. The train was moving towards Lucknow very fast, seeing the world outside the window passing quickly, the thoughts in his heart were also changing rapidly, sometimes he was immersed in the thought of his bright future and sometimes he was thinking of his past. I would get lost, meanwhile, the train had an accident. Both his legs were amputated, and one hand was also amputated. He was rushed to the hospital. When his eyes opened after the operation, he discovered that he had lost both his legs. One hand is only half saved. There was darkness before his eyes. Family members loved ones and relatives were all around his bedside who were trying to comfort him, but their sympathetic voices were not reaching his ears. Because he was lost in the dark paths of his dark future. This accident happened in his life on January 29, 2017, which changed his life. After months of treatment, he finally recovered and returned home. Now there were two options before him, either lose the game of life, adopt a life of disability, and get lost in dark paths, or try again to find the brilliance of his future in the circumstances. He chose



another path.

He resumed his studies, and after graduation, he started MA in Russian from JNU, meanwhile, he started preparing for UPSC, after preparing during Corona when he took the exam. He failed the interview. He prepared again and finally passed the Civil Services Examination of 2022 with a good rank.

His name is Suraj Tiwari, a resident of Kiswa Karoli, a village in Manipur, UP. Accidents keep happening in human life. But victory comes to those who accept accidents as challenges rather than obstacles in their lives. When a person accepts a challenge in his life, a new spirit, new energy, and a new soul are born in him. Then he performs such feats, which a common man finds impossible.

If you too have given up on your life. So, turn your difficulties into opportunities and make a fresh start. ■

Khalid Saifullah Rahmani elected 5th President of Muslim Personal Law Board



Vice President:

1. Syed Sadatullah Husaini (Ameere Jamaate Islami Hind)
2. Dr. Syed Shah Khusro, Gulgarba (Sajjada Nasheen, Dargah Gulbarga Shareef.

General Secretary:

1. Ml. Maulana Mohd. Fazlur Raheem Mujaddidi

Secretaries:

1. Ml. S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadvi (Nazim Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow)
2. Ml. S. Ahmad Wali Faisal Rahmani (Ameer e Shariat, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand)
3. Ml. Dr. Yaseen Ali Usmani Budaun, U.P.

The President has also appointed Dr. S. Q. R. Ilyas as the spokesperson of the Board. Jb Kamal Faruqi will assist him.

Earlier a condolence resolution on the tragic train accident in Odisha was passed, which says, "We the members of All India Muslim Personal Law Board are shocked by the tragic & horrific train accident in Balasore, Odisha which resulted in the death of 288 innocent passengers and around 1000 passengers were seriously injured. Board has extended sincere condolences to the aggrieved families and prayed for the early recovery of those injured. ■

Staff Writer

Indore: Noted Islamic scholar Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani has been elected as the fifth President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) during a two-day executive meeting held at Mhow in Indore on June 3 and 4.

This election was necessitated due to the sudden death of the Board's President Moulana S. Mohd. Rabey Hasani Nadvi. According to the Board's statement issued after the two-day meeting, Maulana Fazlur Raheem Mujaddidi was appointed the new General Secretary of AIMPLB, replacing the Board's previous General Secretary Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani.

The newly elected President of the Board after consulting with the Working Committee has filled the vacancies of office bearers, which are as follows;

A B Masoud

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind unveils 4-year plan; focuses on dispelling misunderstandings about Islam



New Delhi: On June 14 at the JIH headquarters, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind's (JIH) President Syed Sadatullah Husaini unveiled the policy and programme for the term 2023-2027. Apart from the areas of education, economics, and health, it will focus on clearing up misconceptions about Islam and enhancing relations between religious communities. The next term's plan was approved by the JIH Central Advisory Council (Markazi Majlis-e-Shura) in a meeting held on June 13.

Addressing a press conference JIH President Syed Sadatullah Husaini said misunderstandings regarding Islam and Islamic teachings should be dispelled. In the next four plans, the president said utmost importance has been given to bringing about a positive change in the country's public opinion. Noting that the teachings of Islam are not for any particular sect or community, however, he explained that the well-being of all human beings, their worldly welfare, their salvation in the Hereafter, and delivering justice and fairness to all, are the salient features of Islamic teachings. "The JIH wants to spell this out

before the people of the country," he added.

In the prevailing hatred-filled atmosphere in the country, the JIH leader emphasized the necessity of fostering an environment of communication and discussion in order to eradicate prejudice while pointing out that mending relations amongst the nation's diverse religious communities has been accorded top priority in the four-year plan. He further stated that numerous initiatives and campaigns would be implemented in support of this at the national, state, and municipal levels, as well as the promotion of platforms for discourse and discussion at various levels.

He stated that an atmosphere of

working together would be fostered for achieving welfare and justice for all while platforms would be created among intellectuals, religious leaders, common people, civil society, youth, and women, through which different religious groups would be brought closer to each other.

Giving details of the programmes, the JIH leader held that regular campaigns would be conducted against the common vices found in the country such as casteism, bigotry, violation of women's rights, feticide, dowry, drugs, corruption, etc.

He vowed that the Islamic perspective would be presented regarding the environmental crisis while different types of

special measures would be taken in different cities to solve ecological challenges,

Focusing on reforms within the Muslim community, Husaini affirmed that special focus would be given to those aspects of Islam in the programme, to which the reformist movements had not paid much attention. "For example, marriage should be easy, the ritual of dowry should be abolished, women should be given a share in inheritance, women's rights should be paid, honesty in trade and financial matters should be implemented, cleanliness be observed, and good behaviour towards Muslim and non-Muslim neighbours must be practiced - such Islamic teachings will be emphasized and efforts will be made to harmonize the attitude of Muslims in their daily lives with the teachings of Islam," he added.

Highlighting the main priorities of the JIH, regarding education, he emphasized encouraging an inclusive education system, free from the dominance of a particular culture, based on moral values, and easily accessible to all citizens.

Asserting that the Jamaat will try to increase the ratio of education among Muslims and other backward groups, he announced the establishment of new educational institutions in various regions of the country.

He also announced that an important component of the new plan was the economic empowerment of the Muslim community and other backward groups and also improvement in various other domains.

Making efforts for institutionalizing microfinance as a movement and provide interest-free loans to the poor, focusing on the public health and the healthcare industry along with the various works of social service, drawing the government's attention toward recovering, development, and proper utilization of Waqf (endowment) properties, collective efforts with justice-loving people and classes of the country to establish peace and justice in the country, struggle against discrimination, fear and terror to make the society free from evils like all kinds of cruelty, injustice, sedition, corruption, and hatred are some of the highlights of JIH's new plan, according to him. ■

A movie made to defame Dargah Ajmer Sharif should be Banned

Spl Correspondent

New Delhi: Now the communal forces are using film medium in a big way to achieve their nefarious agenda. After 'The Kerala Story' the forthcoming movie "Ajmer 92" will be added to this genre of films. Community organizations and secular circulars have strongly objected to such films.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind (M) urged the union government to ban this movie and discourage those who are trying to divide society into communal lines. It warned that the movie "Ajmer 92" will create a divide and rift in society.

Jamiat (M) president Maulana Mahmood Madani said Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri on whose the film is based is a revered figure for Muslims as well as for Hindus. He described Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri as a living example of Hindu-Muslim unity and a 'true Sultan' who ruled over the hearts of millions of people. For almost the last one thousand years, he is an iconic figure in this country. "He is popularly known as a messenger of peace and harmony in the country. Those who tried to insult or disparage his pious personality had disgraced themselves", Maulana Madani added.

According to Maulana Madani, multiple tactics are currently being used to split society along religious lines. Social media and films are being utilized to associate criminal activity with a specific religion, which will undoubtedly hurt our common history.

He claimed that the manner in which criminal incidences in Ajmer City are reported is a horrifying act committed against the entire population. Regardless of religion or identity, a common fight against such acts is necessary. In our society, an effort is being made to lessen the severity of the crimes by giving them a socially unacceptable hue. I, therefore, ask the central government to outlaw this film and deter those who want to split society along racial or religious lines.

Under the cover of free speech, the Jamiat chief stated, beliefs and ideas that harm the country cannot be supported or accepted. The way that films, documentaries, and other media are used to attack adherents of various religions goes against the spirit of free expression and threatens the integrity and unity of our country. ■

How a mosque in Mumbai is helping students choosing career paths

Recent aptitude tests conducted by the center witnessed the participation of over 200 students



In a unique initiative, a mosque in Mumbai is playing a key role in helping students in choosing suitable career paths. The Family First Guidance Center which is located within the premises of the Juma Masjid of Bombay has been organizing counseling sessions and aptitude tests to guide students. The approach is proving to be immensely beneficial for the student.

The Family First Guidance Center conducts aptitude tests for students who have recently cleared their SSC (Secondary School Certificate) and HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examinations. These tests serve as an important evaluation tool to gauge students' abilities and potential in different areas. Based on the test results, experienced career counselors at the center provide guidance to students,

aiding them in making informed decisions about their career paths, TOI reported.

The recent aptitude tests conducted by the center witnessed the participation of over 200 students.

The test at the center evaluates students based on six essential characteristics: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. By assessing these traits, the counselors gain insights into the student's aptitudes, strengths, and interests.

In addition to the aptitude tests and career counseling, the Family First Guidance Center also provides motivational speeches to inspire students.

<https://www.siasat.com/how-a-mosque-in-mumbai-helping-students-in-choosing-career-paths-2612132/> ■

Jalna mechanic's daughter cracks NEET with 633 marks



Misbah Khan is from the Jalna district, her father's name is Anwar Khan. He earns his living at a roadside bicycle repair shop.

According to a *Times of India* report, she says (Due to limited income, my father could neither afford tuition fees nor buy books. Ankush sir coached me for free. My Urdu teachers from college provided me with books and guided me. Education was the only way out of poverty. So, I worked hard day and night and put all my strength into net preparation.

Misbah's hard work paid off and she scored 633 out of 720 in the NEET exam. ■

Day of Arfah

The Day of Arafah serves as an opportunity for Muslims to engage in self-reflection, introspection, and spiritual purification as Muslims strive to rectify their mistakes, seek forgiveness from Allah and renew their commitment to living a righteous life. It is a day to rekindle one's faith, strengthen one's connection with Allah and rejuvenate one's spiritual journey. ■

Muslims in Meghalaya Demands 4 Percent Quota in Govt Jobs

Staff Writer

Shillong: The Muslim minority in Meghalaya, a state in northeast India, has called for 4% reservation in state government positions.

'Desi' Muslims who live in the plains of the Garo Hills region are represented by a local outfit called the Anti-Corruption League (ACL), which has written to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma asking for 4% reservations in government posts for Muslims in the state, which is predominantly Christian.

According to a news agency, the ACL letter was delivered to the Chief Minister on the same day the Meghalayan government created a committee to develop a strategy for implementing the state reservation policy and the roster system for reservations.

When Meghalaya was separated from Assam in 1972, the non-tribal population of the state was 20%, according to a representative for ACL.

"Despite being a part of Assam and the Assamese culture for centuries, 'Desi' Muslims extended their support for a separate hill state with high hopes that their rights and socio-economic aspirations will be protected and accommodated in the new state," the ACL said.

It further underlined that "In the historic tripartite meeting among the Central government representatives, the non-tribal leadership led by then member of District Council Akramuz Zaman and the tribal leadership led by Captain Williamson A. Sangma (Meghalaya's first Chief Minister), the non-tribals were assured of equal opportunities and fair play by the tribal leaders."

"It was also promised that our

rights and aspirations, our growth, and our development would be given equal priority and importance as those of the tribal people of Meghalaya. But the assurances were never fulfilled," the letter underscored.

The ACL made the point that Meghalaya's current reservation system not only denies the deserving, but also produces a group of people who are vulnerable to unfairness and pervasive inequality.

Three matrilineal communities—the Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia—are given an 80 percent quota under Meghalaya's 51-year-old policy regarding job reservations. The Khasi-Jaintia people collectively and the Garos receive an equal share of the quota.

15% is set aside for those in the unreserved categories, with another 5% designated for members of other minor tribes.

Since they are less numerous and have less advanced educational levels than the Khasi-Jaintia people, the 40% reservation has scarcely been fully utilized by the Garo tribal population.

Christians make up 74.59 percent of Meghalaya's 29.67 lakh population, according to the 2011 Census, while Muslims and Hindus make up 4.40 percent and 11.53 percent, respectively.

Z.R. Marak had previously filed a complaint with the Meghalaya High Court, alleging that other communities were abusing the applicable rules by using up the quota allotted for the Garo people. On the high court on April 21 asked the state government to implement a roster system that would only apply to entry-level positions. ■

Following Karnataka Elections, What Should be the Strategy for the Upcoming Elections



Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam

In a democracy, people are the mightiest. Who will hold the supreme authority, and which party will form the government are the decisions people make, but practically this is demonstrated when people exercise their intellect, they are awakened, and they know their rights and the power of their vote. When people understand the power of their vote, they exercise it judiciously and entrust power to a party that shows concern for the welfare of the people, ensures peace in the country, and respects the rights of the people. On the other hand, when people don't realize what rights they have and what is the importance of their vote, this power is misused. Consequently, authority passes over to incompetent and communal people who ruin the whole country and the state. People then suffer on account of their erroneous decisions and find themselves in trouble and great difficulties. However, the best thing in democracy is that after every five years, people get an opportunity to rectify their mistakes. People in Karnataka took benefit from this opportunity by rectifying the mistakes they committed in the past, and showing the party the exit door.

Karnataka Assembly Elections was a milestone. On the one hand, politics was being directed by communalism; religion was being invoked to garner support, and hatred towards Muslims was being generated to win elections; the ban on *hijab* was imposed in the hope of

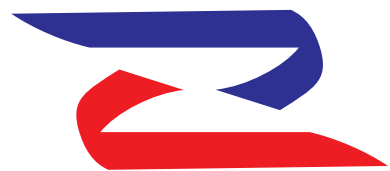
getting votes in the election; *masjids* and *awqaf* properties were seized to pave the way for electoral victory. This mala fide strategy didn't work since the people of Karnataka acted with responsibility and showed great vision; they rejected the politics of polarization on the ground of religion. They rejected the plea to cast their votes on the ground of hate towards Muslims and voted for the party which entered the election fray with a secular agenda, promising employment to the people, getting rid of inflation, discarding communalism, and moving forward along with all others. This sensibility, electoral understanding, and the resultant responsible voting altogether present an ideal strategy for which the people of Karnataka deserve accolades. The most grievous issues, such as communalism, Islamophobia, inflation, unemployment, harassment of women, and trampling of human rights confront not only Karnataka but the whole country. In these circumstances, people should take a lesson from the recently held Karnataka Assembly Elections. When it comes to elections, there is a need to rise above religion, sectarianism, and caste; it is only then the path of progress of the state and the country can be paved smoothly. The people of Karnataka have sent a message that those who seek votes in the name of religion, divide people; they are not concerned with the development of the state; they only spread hatred between Hindus and Muslims to get votes. Such people should not stay in power because the problems of the people are inflation, unemployment, restoration of peace, harmony, mutual friendship, fraternity, opportunities to have access to education, and restoration

of women's rights, etc.

With great zeal and strong passion, the people of Karnataka have voted the Congress to power, getting a victory more than expected. Now, this is the responsibility of the ruling party and the Chief Minister to ensure that the promises made to the people are fulfilled. Restoration of peace and harmony should be taken as their priority; strict action should be taken against the troublemakers; the police department should be instructed to keep a constant vigil on communalism and provocative speeches and actions; Action should be initiated against those who promote Islamophobia, hatred and vitiate general environment; restrictions should be imposed on such anti-social elements.

Karnataka is the most important state of South India where people have once again reposed confidence in Congress and have voted it to power. In the next few months, many states including Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh will go for Assembly Elections, followed by the General Elections in 2024. In view of this, the Congress shall have to frame its policy. The strategy Congress developed for Karnataka can be replicated across the country and this will be an ideal position for the Congress. By fulfilling the promises made to the Karnataka people, the grand old party can gain an advantage in both Assembly and General Elections. However, if the Congress shows negligence and becomes lethargic after the phenomenal Karnataka victory and fails to deliver on the promises made to the people, it will ruin the prospects of returning to power in states and at the centre; parties opposing the Congress may then launch a no-

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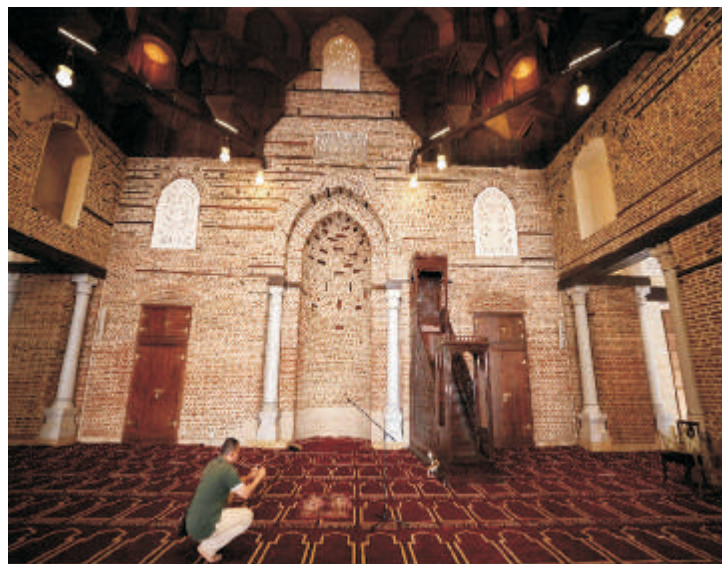
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Egypt Reopens Historic Mosque After a Long Restoration



A man takes a photo of a cat inside the historic Mosque of al-Zahir Baybars, that was built in 1268 by the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Baybars al-Bunduqdari, as Egypt reopens it after the completion of renovation work, in Cairo, Egypt, June 5, 2023. REUTERS/Mohamed Abd El Ghany

Cairo | Reuters

A 13th century mosque that fell into disrepair after being used over the years as a soap factory, a slaughterhouse, and a fort reopened in Cairo recently after undergoing a long restoration. The mosque of Al-Zahir Baybars, built under Mamluk rule in 1268, spans an area of three acres just north of central Cairo, making it Egypt's third-largest mosque. The mosque underwent mechanical and chemical restoration to bring it back to its original condition, said Tarek Mohamed El-Behairy, who supervised the restoration. "Some parts were destroyed, some parts have been dismantled because they were structurally unsuitable to remain in the mosque," he said. "But we were very keen, even in

the reconstruction process, to work according to the correct archaeological style." The restoration, which cost \$7.68 million, was co-funded with Kazakhstan and began in 2007. For 225 years, the mosque was either closed, abandoned, or operated for non-religious purposes which contributed to its disrepair. During Napoleon's campaign in Egypt it was used as a military fort, then under Ottoman rule in the 19th century as a soap factory. Later, when the British invaded Egypt in 1882, it was used as a slaughterhouse. Al-Zahir Baybars was a prominent figure in Egypt's history credited with cementing Mamluk rule in Egypt which spanned three centuries up to 1517. ■

UK-based Islamic charities donate \$24.4bn a year to Good Causes



Islamic charitable organizations based in the UK have made \$24.4 billion worth of charitable contributions to local and international causes in 2022. (File Photo/Charlene Edwards)

LONDON: Islamic charitable groups in the UK donated £20.2 billion (\$24.4 billion) to local and international causes last year, according to an official report. More than 165,000 groups or individuals contributed to the total, according to the study by the National Council for Voluntary Organizations, reported by

Kuwait News Agency on 31 May. According to a separate study by the Muslim Charities Forum, 600 organizations had now met the requirements and regulations set by the UK government for charitable work, up from around 25 at the turn of the century. The initial Muslim-oriented charitable organizations were

established in the early 1980s and mostly contributed to humanitarian causes in Africa and Eastern Europe, the study said. MCF's CEO Fadi Itani said his group's study had shown that 150 Islamic charities geared toward international causes contributed £500 million (around \$625 million) annually. Forty-seven organizations have the capacity to gather £1 million to £20 million annually, said Itani. Approximately 30 more raised about £500,000 (\$620,000) a year each, while 450 others contributed more than £150 million a year collectively. The growing benevolence of British Muslims is backed up by a Walnut Social Research 2021 poll that showed they were the most charitable religious group in the country. Walnut found that Muslim individuals donated around £370 annually compared to £165 for donors from other faiths. (SOURCE: <https://arab.news/zszf9>) ■



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Deaf Reach becomes the first programme in the Muslim world to win Hamdan-ICESCO Award



KARACHI: Deaf Reach, a programme of Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF), has become the first Pakistani programme to win the notable Hamdan-ICESCO Prize for Voluntary Development of Education Facilities in the Islamic world. The award recognizes individuals and organizations leading charitable and voluntary efforts in the field of education.

Richard Geary, Founder and Director of the Deaf Reach, received the award during a prestigious ceremony held on June 12, 2023, at the ICESCO Headquarters in Rabat, Morocco. The visionary efforts of Mr. Geary, *Sitara-i-Khidmat*, who has resided in Pakistan for over three decades, have been instrumental in transforming the lives of countless deaf persons in the country. Dr. Salim M. Al Malik, Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), and H.H. Sheikh Rashed bin Hamdan Al Maktoum, Supreme President of the Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance, awarded the prize to FESF along with the other two

winners, from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Deaf Reach is one of the only branch networks of schools for the deaf community in Pakistan to provide education and further empower both urban and rural deaf youth and provide them with a better future. The program's innovative and holistic approach focuses on education and skills training for deaf children and youth, development of teachers and interpreters, Pakistan Sign Language programs for parents and communities, advocacy, job placement, and the creation of educational resources for the deaf. The head of ICESCO noted that past winners hailed from large and wealthy organizations but this time they were particularly impressed with the work of Deaf Reach in Pakistan as it focused on changing people's lives, and not just building institutions. The project stood out due to its people and community-centered approach as having the greatest impact. To know more about Deaf Reach's work, visit: www.deafreach.com

(Source: <https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Jun-2023>)

Weight of Water: Pakistani Billionaire Shahzada Dawood and Son Suleman Among 5 on Board Missing Submersible



A British Pakistani billionaire and his teenage son are among the five people on board the missing submersible, Titan, that disappeared on June 18. The passengers were headed to view the wreckage of the Titanic, 12,500ft beneath the surface of the Atlantic Ocean, 370 miles off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada.

Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his son, Suleman Dawood, 19, were

“on a journey to visit the remnants of the Titanic in the Atlantic Ocean,” the family said in a statement sent to media outlets including the BBC, Daily Mail, CNN, among others.

Other members on board the craft, NBC News reported, include French diver Paul-Henry Nargeolet, who has decades of experience exploring the Titanic. A fifth person has only been identified as the vessel's pilot. According to Ocean Gate Expeditions, which runs the expedition, tickets for the 5-person submarine cost \$250,000 a seat. It said on its website that “the expedition hoped to study the ship's decay.”

(Source: <https://americankahani.com/business/>)

The 36th Meeting of the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) Governing Council Kicks off in Kampala, Uganda

The 36th Meeting of the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), one of the OIC Universities, was held on Friday, 09 June 2023 in Kampala, Uganda.

The meeting was attended by the Council Members from different countries including the Kingdom of Saudi, Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as those representing the Republic of Uganda.

In his remarks to the Council meeting, H.E. Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-General for Science & Technology who represented H. E. the Secretary-General noted that IUIU has made remarkable progress in providing quality education, promoting Islamic values, and fostering an environment of intellectual curiosity and cultural diversity.

He further underscored the need to



focus on advancing academic programs, promoting innovative research, and ensuring the holistic development of the students. He emphasized the need to explore opportunities for strategic collaborations and partnerships that will enable IUIU to expand its global footprint and enhance its contribution to society.

The Head of the Ugandan Government's delegation to the meeting the Rt. Hon. Gen. Moses Ali, First Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of Government Business in Parliament commended the OIC and its institutions for the support and guidance it continues to render to the IUIU.

The meeting adopted a number of resolutions and decisions aimed at improving the administrative and academic performance of the university. The meeting further approved the University's budget estimates for the Financial Year 2023/2024.

IUIU which started off with only 88 students in 1988 now boasts of over 8,000 students with Eight Faculties as opposed to only two Faculties at its inception. IUIU has made further strides in the areas of academic performance, research, and community outreach activities. It has won local and international awards for its quality as a leader in Teaching and Innovation. It is currently constructing the Faculty of Engineering, a state-of-the-art library, and a modern students' hostel.

(SOURCE: https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=39085&t_ref=26466&lan=en)



Ian Linden

Turkey provides a unique example of the interaction between religion and politics. Recep Tayyip Erdogan won the Turkish Presidential election run-off recently with his strong-man appeal to Islamic piety. Kemal Kilicdargoglu with his promise of modern social democracy, won only 44.9% of the vote in the first round, so stood little chance of overtaking Erdogan with 49.5%.

Two highly charged mindsets define Turkey's national identity. Kemal Atatürk, a revolutionary nationalist who, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War, founded the modern Turkish secular state in 1923. He was influenced by French laicite, an ideological commitment to keep religion out of the public domain and achieve its complete separation from the state. For many, this is expressed as a passionate rejection of Islam in favour of Turkey's 1928 secular constitution, traditionally supported by the military. For others there is a no less passionate religious commitment but to a moderate, pious Islamic conservatism.

The US Brookings Institution wrote glowingly in 2002 that the AKP, Erdogan's Justice & Development Party which had just swept to power, “heralds democracy”. It seemed like a “new model” for the Islamic world. A year later, Erdogan became Prime Minister. His development of a modern transport system, political flair, and skillful negotiation of deep nationalist tensions, while maintaining his espousal of Islamic values in the AKP, has enabled him

Erdogan's victory, Turkish democracy and Islam



to increase his power ever since. Erdogan's religious appeal owed much to the

phenomenal success of the Gulen Islamic revival movement that provided him with the cultural and religious credentials of Turkish

Islamic piety and helped to attract pious voters. Inspired by Fethullah Gulen, a scholar and preacher, the movement prioritized modern education, an understanding of science, and a commitment to interfaith dialogue as well as a traditional Islamic practice.

(SOURCE: <https://www.thearticle.com/erdogan-victory-turkish-democracy-and-islam>)

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RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman issued on 7 June a royal decree to establish a new institute for the Global Cybersecurity Forum (GCF) in Riyadh, state news agency SPA reported.

The institute aims to harness the potential of cyberspace and support efforts to boost cyber safety on a global scale.

"The GCF Institute will tackle the most challenging cybersecurity issues facing governments, businesses, and individuals. It will be a catalyst for the exchange of ideas, driving thought leadership and developing research to inform policy solutions and action," added SPA.

Through the institute, the annual GCF will convene experts and decision-makers from around the world to meet and discuss protecting the most vulnerable in cyberspace, while maximizing its benefits for everyone.

The establishment of the institute came after "the dialogue among key global cybersecurity

Saudi Arabia to establish an Institute for Global Cybersecurity Forum



The annual GCF will convene experts and decisionmakers from around the world to meet and discuss protecting the most vulnerable in cyberspace. (Twitter: @gcfriyadh))

stakeholders has underscored the need for a new entity that can provide an action-oriented platform, designed to develop

solutions to the most pressing issues in cyberspace," said SPA. Welcoming the move, Mohammed Khurram Khan, a professor of

cybersecurity at the King Saud University in Riyadh, told Arab News: "This great initiative is an indicator that the Saudi government is committed and determined to make the Kingdom a global leader in cybersecurity. It would pave the way to promote global cybersecurity cooperation with other nations around the world.

He added: "This initiative would provide a platform for the global community to exchange knowledge, expertise, and experience to address the most pressing cybersecurity challenges faced by individuals and organizations."

Khan said that since Saudi Arabia has a strong footprint and expertise in cybersecurity, the institution will devote its work and effort to policy, technology, and practical perspectives.

According to the professor, Saudi Arabia has paid great attention to establishing national institutions for capacity and capability building, and some recent establishments, including the National Cybersecurity Center, the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones, and the National Cybersecurity Authority, have helped the Kingdom become a top country in the global cybersecurity index of the International Telecommunication Union.

Headquartered in Riyadh, the GCF Institute will be guided by an international board of trustees, tasked with the responsibility of safeguarding the institution's sustainability and independence.

In addition, the institute will have an advisory council, composed of international experts carefully drawn from the highest echelons of government, academia, think tanks, and the private sector.

(SOURCE: <https://arab.news/mvuw3>)

Metaverse by IBF Net Set to Create Halal Ecosystem

PR Newswire

The blockchain-based platforms launched by the IBF Net Group so far have already made significant strides in revolutionizing various sectors. Its IBFNEX initiative has an ambitious objective to create a miniature Islamic economy on the blockchain. In line with the trichotomy of a halal economy - into philanthropy-driven, not-for-profit, and for-profit sectors, the IBFNEX platforms facilitate seamless donation and volunteering, ensure the preservation and authentication of valuable records (such as endowment deeds) and enable the for-profit exchange of digital assets through NFTs, while providing for leveraged purchases backed by digital collaterals. The NETVERSE represents IBF Net Group's halal metaverse, offering a virtual world for exploration and connection with endless possibilities.

Originally developed on the Algorand protocol by IBF Digilabs - the Singapore-based member of the IBF Net Group, the project made a strategic move



Illustration: The NETVERSE represents IBF Net Group's halal metaverse, offering a virtual world for exploration and connection with endless possibilities. (PRNewsfoto/IBF Net Group)

to Polygon, whereby it aims to further amplify the impact of its platforms and provide enhanced experiences to its users. "The expanded platforms on Polygon will offer users a seamless and efficient experience, enabling them to access a wider range of features and benefits. By leveraging the strengths of both Algorand and Polygon, the IBF Net Group is paving the way for more inclusive and interconnected digital ecosystem," says Mohammed Alim, CEO IBF Net Group. a

more inclusive and interconnected digital ecosystem," says Mohammed Alim, CEO of IBF Net Group.

To power its platforms on Algorand and Polygon, the IBF Net Group has introduced two dedicated crypto tokens - \$IBFX and \$IBFN, respectively. These crypto tokens will serve as the engines driving the functionalities of the platforms, facilitating transactions, incentivizing participation, and enhancing the overall user experience. Further, \$IBFN - the crypto token associated with its platforms on Polygon - is the first to go for an initial offering, with its sale already open to the public. "The utility token is being launched from a country known for its permissive crypto regulatory framework. By integrating our platforms with Polygon-based crypto, we aim to provide a seamless and enhanced experience for our users while broadening our reach and driving innovation in various sectors," adds Mohammed Alim.

(SOURCE: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/metaverse-ibf-net-set-create-135700531.html>)

UAE-based Islamic Coin gains over 1.3mln users, paving the way for Halal Crypto investments.

Dubai: The world of crypto is rife with risky investments. Many new coins and services ask for financial contributions with little guarantee of return, and stories of crypto investors losing large sums make headlines frequently. There is a problem of ethics and reliability in the crypto world that has proven difficult to resolve. The Haqq network, powered by Islamic Coin (\$ISLM), aims to change that trend and cater to over 2 billion Muslims worldwide.

Founded in 2022, the Haqq network is based on the Haqq blockchain: the first Shariah-compliant decentralized ledger specifically designed to follow the rules and traditions of Islamic finance. Islamic Coin has a community of over 1.3M users a feat accomplished in less than six months, demonstrating strong support and interest from global communities.

In a world with growing CSR initiatives, many have taken an interest in Islamic finance products, as they promote mainly CSR businesses and even altruism and economic activity. Compared to other financial models, Islamic finance shares the risks and profits,

meaning that everyone from all income levels can benefit. Islamic finance also has a specific set of industries in which it can operate with full transparency, making it an attractive financial option for Muslims and non-Muslims.

Islamic Coin is the native coin of the Haqq blockchain. When a new ISLM coin is minted, 10% of the issued amount is deposited into a special Evergreen DAO for further investments into community-centric projects or charities. This devotion to charitable endeavors makes Islamic Coin one of the only crypto currencies on the market that bring direct economic value to local and regional communities.

Current market trends indicate that the global Islamic finance market will exceed \$3.69 trillion by 2024 due to rising demand for Sharia-compliant services, finances, and products.

(SOURCE: <https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/companies-news/uae-based-islamic-coin-gains-over-13mln-users-paves-the-way-for-halal-crypto-investments-xnz4za7x>)

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Muhammad Alamullah

Food Culture vs. Education Culture of Muslim Areas

Recently, while traveling from the metro, I started looking at Facebook while sitting, and I saw a friend's post. It meant something like this:

"While passing through Muslim neighborhoods, I am often reminded of a conversation between the famous Andalusian philosopher Ibn Rushd (1198-1126) and a Christian priest who was very proud of his city. As there is no city, in response, Ibn Rushd made him incomparable by saying that *'when someone (singer) dies in our city, your city (probably Ashbelia) is used to sell his instruments. And when a scholar, researcher, or scholar dies in your city, his books come to our city (Cortuba) to be sold.'*"

This was the story of our heyday, but today the case is quite the opposite. Those people (heirs of the priest) come to our neighborhoods to eat and drink, and we (heirs of Ibn Rushd) go to their areas to read and write. That was the **reason for our rise and this is the reason for our downfall.**

If this sounds like an exaggeration, visit Old Delhi's Urdu Bazaar. There used to be bookstores here, but now you'll see more hotels instead. Find out from an old literate person in the area that the market which was famous for book shops, where most of the book shops have gone. Not only Old Delhi, but you can



also go to any town. The concept of the library, which included even patrol libraries, has become alienated from our society. Every *time Rakim al-Haruf* passes through a Muslim settlement, he has a longing to see the library there, which has always been a dream come true. Now there are reports of the closure of old libraries too.



Some people may know this as a common thing, but it is certainly true that today people from non-Muslim areas come to Muslim neighborhoods to enjoy food and drink, while people from Muslim areas visit non-Muslims for education. Travel to areas. This is a cause of concern and worry, because the development of sciences and arts helped Muslims to reach a prominent position in the past, and this wave of intellectual flight and scientific and research activities spread to

many regions of the world, including Europe. The generation was given a happy opportunity to reach new heights of knowledge and art, but the brightness of these bright lanterns of knowledge, wisdom, and research is no longer visible.

Thinking about this attitude, I started to have different thoughts in my mind, I started to remember the scene in the movie *Avatar* in the first episode where Jack Sully tells the Na'vi tribe that *I want to learn from you people. Natri's mother tells her that if the cup is already full, nothing else can be added.* People in the world who think that they already have everything, that they already have all the knowledge, then they stop moving forward. Muslims seem to have assumed this about themselves. I have visited many cities in India, and except for a few settlements, I have seen very few settlements that we can call ideal in terms of education and

learning, yes, the name of Muslim settlements must have been taken in relation to food, drink, and clothes, etc. can go.

Many so-called progressives will blame the religiosity of Muslims for these conditions when the reality is that the religiosity of Muslims is nothing more than lip service. If an honest analysis is made, Muslims are far away from religion, otherwise, how could the religion whose first commandment is 'Iqra' be an enemy of knowledge? The ummah of which the Prophet ? gave the good news of Paradise to the one who gave two sisters or two daughters good training and good upbringing, would not close the doors of schools and madrasahs and even mosques for their daughters and sisters.

Why is that the case? We need to consider this. The problem is not the religion itself but the attitudes and mindset of the people. Of course, hotels should also be opened in Muslim areas, these are also necessary for life, but establishing institutions like coaching centers, schools, and think tanks are also the need of the hour. Now is the time for Muslims to rise above their materialistic desires and focus on their education, which will ultimately benefit them and their community. It is only through knowledge that Muslims can establish their identity in various fields and break the barriers that stand in the way of their progress and success.

(The author is a Research Scholar, KR Narayanan Center for Dalit & Minority Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Mobile +919911701772, Email alamislahi@gmail.com)

People in the world who think that they already have everything, that they already have all the knowledge, then they stop moving forward. Muslims seem to have assumed this about themselves.

Sir,
Alhamdulillah!

The author deserves kudos for the piece! Very well-analyzed piece. Pakistani intellectual Pervez Hoodbhoy had once observed, there are four mosques in the precincts of Quaid e Azam University (perhaps in Islamabad) but no bookshops.

Muslims read only those books that are prescribed as textbooks. They read them to get a degree. They need degrees for jobs. They need jobs for their livelihood, nothing more, nothing less.

There is no budget for the purchase of books and magazines in average families. There are no shopping rounds for kids in Muslim families.

Authors and writers live in fear in Muslim societies. New ideas are repulsed. For namesake, every scholar would have written a dozen books, all (as one of my professors in Madras University had once commented) *....edited, printed, published, and read by.... himself.* Book publishing in Muslim society is a joke. An individual compiles his thoughts, goes to a printer, and gets them published all by himself. No vetting, no referees, and no market survey to determine whether a similar book exists in the scholastic universe or not. Lo and behold! He has added yet another book to his credit.

Urdu no longer offers anything new. My late friend Omar Khalidi (Boston based) once said: *If someone offers you an Urdu magazine or book, you can predict its content with 100% certainty. There will be nothing in it that has not been said earlier.*

Once I approached a director of Al-Ameen College in Bangalore (who happened to be a bibliophile and a good friend of mine) to inquire if a particular book can be found in Al-Ameen Library. His reply was: "Siraj sab, you are most welcome to our library. The book is very much there. All our books are in pristine, virgin, untouched condition, even the pages which remain uncut in print shops can be found intact (uncut)."

During my student days at Madras University, I chanced upon a treasure of Urdu books published by *Darut Tarjuma*, Hyderabad Deccan. The rack was enveloped in dust. I began to take out books one by one. As I remember today, there was a book on Statistics (Sukooniyat) and yet another one on International Law (*Qawaneen bainul Mumalik*).

Maqbool Ahmed Siraj, Bengaluru

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Need For Starting Pre-Marital Counselling Centers

Over the years AASRA has noticed an increase in the number of women seeking counseling. This may be since the population of Bangalore itself has exponentially increased together with a growing increase in oppression and violence against women in homes particularly against young women that are recently married. Most of the women complain about domestic violence, dowry harassment, and other matrimonial problems. During counseling, it is noticed that marriages are irretrievably breaking down and spouses trying to get divorce either in the form of Talaq or Khula. Further after discussing with both parties at counseling, it is noticed that most of the post-marital problems could have been avoided with pre-marital counseling. The following is the detailed analysis by AASRA that suggests that there is an urgent need to start pre-marital counseling centers.

Many marital discords are taking place because of a lack of awareness among the brides and grooms on the nuances and complexities of married life. People enter married life mechanically just because they have reached the chronological age prescribed by the Government for marriages. Many them lack the maturity required to manage a marital relationship be it intellectual, financial, or even sexual matters. It is therefore vital that the intending marriage partners get an overall exposure of the expectations and responsibilities that are likely to come into their lives after marriage.

As marriage entails a drastic change in life and conditions from what the parties involved are used to, it requires adequate preparation to take on this life-changing stage. Unfortunately, neither the individuals themselves seek the necessary competencies to prepare themselves nor is there any institutional mechanism in the community to address the issue. Earlier marriage counseling was performed by close friends, religious heads, or elders in the family. With modernization and continuous shift towards nuclear families the services of trained counselors have become inevitable. It will be good to expose the potential couples entering wedlock to multiple aspects of interpersonal communication and relationship management, in the pre-marital stage itself. In India and particularly among Muslims importance is given not only to the couples that are to spend their lives together but also to the young entrants in the new families who have to deal with their extended family members

Proposal to Start Pre-Marital Counselling Centers in the Masjids of Every Mohalla



such as Parents in law, and brothers and sisters in law and their respective spouses and further other close and distant relatives. As the saying goes, it is not only marrying an individual but into a family.

The trend of divorce among Muslims in India is showing an alarming and drastic increase as witnessed by Shariah courts, Family courts, and Counselling centers, which is a worrisome factor. We are staring into a situation of an irretrievable breakdown of society. Such a situation is detrimental to the most vulnerable i.e., women and children.

In a country where every six hours a young married woman is burnt alive, beaten to death, or driven to commit suicide, more than 30% of married women in the country are victims of physical or sexual abuse by their husbands. We at AASRA get responses from innumerable victims who have felt that after coming to the Counseling Centre, they came to the 'right place' that is reason enough to recognize the invaluable services provided by Counseling Centers. With this insight and to mitigate the burning issue the following proposal is suggested.

Pre marital counseling helps :

- Understand the Rights, Duties, and Responsibilities of spouses under Shariah Laws
- Build inter-personnel communication skills.
- Establish a shared vision.
- Plan the future with your partner.
- Set realistic expectations from marriage.
- Learn de-escalation techniques.
- Address pertinent issues
- Identify potential conflict areas.

Precedents:

Statistics and the example of the Christian community where such a practice exists show that the breakdown of marriages can be reduced if not completely avoided if the parties involved in the marriage that include the immediate family members of the couple such as parents and siblings get involved in preparing for a new stage of the family's life

cycle by pre-marital counseling and a certain period of acquaintance with each other. This will help in assessing each other's needs, and expectations and ascertaining one's capacities to fulfill such expectations and other obligations that are entailed in a life-turning enterprise of this kind. Counseling by a neutral third party will keep the atmosphere sufficiently objective so that heightened emotions do not obfuscate reality. Such an exercise will help individuals to make informed choices and ensure there is no pressure on any party to compromise unnecessarily to later backtrack and seek divorce as the only option.

As already mentioned above the Muslim community in India does not have such recourse and initial proposals of such kind may be viewed with skepticism if not outright rejection. However, the time has come for the community to grasp the issue by its collar and come up with solutions, failing which we will not only cut a sorry figure but our own youngsters are going to lead dejected lives that in the long run will be detrimental to the families as well as society for it will result in dysfunctional lives of people and the society. As the problem is a societal one it is imperative that all the members of society and its institutions come together in a unity of purpose to grapple with this problem.

With this Objective, the Roles of different Entities are defined herein.

The Wakf Board exercising its powers vested by the Wakf Act and Rules and any other provisions can be in the vanguard of this exciting socially transformative activity in the following ways:

1. Issue a Government Order or at least a Circular to all the Masjid and the Qazi's making pre-Nikah counseling mandatory. Failing this the Nikah shall not be registered in the Daftar of Nikah and no Nikah Namah can be issued. The Qazi should solemnize the Nikah only

upon producing a satisfactory Pre-Marital Counselling completion certificate issued by the counselor of the center for counseling either attached to the Masjid or any other place designated for the purpose. Wakf Board shall decide the competent authority to countersign the certificate within the masjid premises.

2. Issue directions to all masjids on providing a minimum required space attached to the masjid for conducting the counseling. Space should be sufficient for seating counselors and their families, to store records, and have one or two computers.

3. Wakf Board from its funds should provide initial stationery for starting the centers along with two computers and a printer. Later the center should manage its office expenditure out of the earnings of the counseling. To make it viable it will be better if such counseling centers are started in masjids catering to large population groups. Later, as per need, centers can be spread out to the smaller masjid.

4. Wakf shall make part of its duties to organize training for counselors and put in a system to

monitor the activities of the centers that shall include performance parameters, reaching the objectives, and reorienting of masjid committees and counselors. It shall allocate a sufficient budget for training.

Role of Masjid:

1. As a masjid for Muslims is a place where the community meets five times a day and sometimes more as in Ramadan, it is an ideal place to undertake such activities. For one it is a place of trust and people will feel comfortable going there. Also, this will prevent any negative connotations about the activity itself, and later, it will help in solving domestic and marital conflicts in such a way that they do not reach irretrievable breakdowns. Traditionally and in the scripture the masjid has always played a role in resolving disputes and by this, they will be empowered to rejuvenate such a role that has largely been abandoned today. As late as the 1980s it was a common practice to approach the masjid for resolving domestic and marital conflicts. Many such disputes would get resolved. This practice was abandoned and now Muslims are rushing to courts for small problems draining their financial capacities and getting pauperized in the process.

2. They can be a mild overseeing agency of the counseling centers

» Page 12

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Syed Tahsin
Ahmed

Haqooq ul Allah (Rights of Allah) includes salah, fasting, zakaath, haj etc. *Haqooq ul Ibaad* is the duty we owe to our fellow human beings. *Haqooq ul Ibaad* is also an important requirement in the life of Muslims. *Haqooq ul Ibaad* includes rights of orphans, rights of neighbours, rights of husband on wife, rights of wife on husband, rights of children on parents, rights of parents on children, rights of inheritors, rights of students on teachers, rights of teachers on students, rights of relatives, right of guest over the host, right of host over guest, right of animals on us, rights of employees over the employer, rights of the employer over employee, rights of friends on us, rights of customer over business owner, right of the environment on us and so on. **Ulema tells us that on the Day of Judgement, our failings of haqooq ul Ibaad will not be forgiven until and unless that person forgives us whose rights we violated.**

Quite often we repeat the famous saying “**Service to humanity is service to God**”, but fail to adopt it in our own lives, barring exceptions of course. A lyricist Javed Anwar has very well ventilated these thoughts thus:

*Apne liye jiye to kya jiye,
Tu ji aye dil zamane ke liye.*

You do social service and then watch the results. You can bring smiles to the faces of those whom you have helped, joy in their hearts, and regard for you. More than anything, this gives you that inner satisfaction that nothing else can give. Don't we feel that feeding a starving person gives greater happiness than eating the food ourselves? **Men and women are**



(Photo Courtesy OkCredit)

measured by what they do, not by what they possess.

Social Work and Social Service

Social work is done as a profession by a social worker who possesses an academic degree in the field of social work and aims to improve the quality of life and the well-being of people, especially those who are in distress. Social service means the social welfare activity done individually or collectively by governments or organizations without the purpose of making a profit. Islam teaches us that we should strive to relieve the pain and suffering of mankind and serve the people which is termed “*Khidmat e Khalq*”.

The essential feature of Social Service is that one should help others without expecting any reward or benefit. Quite often we notice that people do small things and are eager to post the same on social media. My grandmother used to tell: “*Neki kar, dariya mein daal*”. Now it is: “*Neki kar, WhatsApp mein daal*”. Getting garlanded in a function and having a photograph published in the next day's newspaper has become an obsession for many. Taking

mileage from such good works may deprive us of the benefits of *Aaqira*. Of course, a little bit of publicity may be necessary for the institutions to make people aware of what the organization is doing and make others join them in the beneficial works and also for taking the projects forward.

What to Do? How to Do?

Many responsible young men and women approach me saying that they want to do social service but do not know what to do. Many of them are young professionals who have succeeded in their careers and have a passion to serve the community and society. What could be more tragic than this is that the community is not able to utilize their youthful energy, their enthusiasm, and their professional expertise. The Waqf institutions are dominated by a group of persons who know the art of holding on to power for years together shut the doors on anyone outside their coterie. Many of the Trusts and Societies formed by the community are full of aged and retired persons. After the death of the visionary founder members, the organization shows signs of

regression. This happens because there is no blend of elders and youngsters in most of our institutions. There is a need to infuse young blood in our organizations at frequent intervals, while at the same time retaining the old guard to fulfill the objectives of the institution.

Social Service by Individuals

Youngsters who wish to do community service may join a good NGO or an Association and give a helping hand in furthering the goals of the organization. Organizations are best suited to work on major projects and bigger objectives since they will get inputs from their members and the tasks are executed with a collective effort. But there is much that can be done individually too. There are people with a burning desire to do something for the community but are hesitant to work in an organization. The reason could be lack of time, family or professional compulsions, health reasons, a distant place of residence, or an introverted nature. There is no need for such men and women to be disheartened since they can do a lot by themselves. Here are a few suggestions which are by no means exhaustive:

You can finance the education of a bright student from a poor family. The assistance should not just be restricted to the fees, but should also include expenses on books, uniforms, etc. This kind of assistance is far superior in contrast to organizations distributing Rs.2,000 to hundreds of students, which is just a token of help.

One of my friends in Mysore has an unofficial understanding with a hospital. Whenever the hospital comes across a destitute patient who is not able to pay the hospital's in-patient bill, they give the

information to him. Our good Samaritan arranges funds and clears the bill. They also inform him about unclaimed bodies, and he promptly arranges for their decent burial.

Another friend of mine goes to the jail on the two Eid days, conducts Eid namaz for the jail inmates, and distributes fruits. This he has been doing for almost two decades. An autorickshaw driver gives a free lift to patients and pregnant ladies who must be rushed to the hospital.

The educational expenses of a maidservant's child could be taken care of, thus saving the child from becoming a dropout. Help a poor family to meet the marriage expenses of their daughter. Reach out to a poor sick person who must undergo an operation and contribute your mite. Contribute liberally to Baitul Maal, Orphanage, Old age home, and such other organizations. There are umpteen ways in which you can help the poor and needy at the individual level. Not being a member of a social service organization should not deter you from community service and from being a useful member of society.

Islamic Perspective

Islam laid the foundation of social service by creating the system of payment of zakat which makes it obligatory on every Muslim who has the means to contribute a fixed amount from his savings to the poor and downtrodden. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) institutionalized the concept of zakat by channelizing it through the Baitul Maal established by him. But the spirit behind all these endeavors is exemplified by the saying of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that “**Even a kind word to a beggar is also an act of charity**”.

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

READERS RESPONSE

I read the article captioned “Old age homes and the Muslim community” written by Syed Tahsin Ahmed (IV June 2023) with interest. It is such an informative article that it can even be called a research paper. The article gives comprehensive coverage of Old Age Homes. The article is worth preserving for future reference and study. It inspires people to care for senior citizens.

Ayub Khan,
Advocate, Bangalore

Dear Sir,

Apropos the article “Old age homes and the Muslim community” (IV June 2023) by Syed Tahsin Ahmed which I read not once, but twice and more. The topic selected for the article is apt and the approach is motivational. The style of the article is amalgamated with the genesis of the theme and chronology to build

up clarity. Thanks to Islamic Voice for the very interesting article. I strongly suggest to the author to write a series of articles on relevant Government orders and case studies.

Prof. Syed Akheel Ahmed,
Former Vice Chancellor
Yenepoya and Global
Universities,
Mysore.

Sir,

IV issue of June 2023 carried a very sensitive and emotional article titled “Old Age Homes and the Muslim Community” by Tahsin Ahmed. The writer has done an in-depth study of elderly people and their helplessness when their life is on the verge of witnessing the sunset of their life span. I would like to add to what the writer has touched upon.

In the old times, the family consisted of multiple children and as such, it was easier to attend to



elderly persons till the end of their lives. The families have not only become smaller but have also become nuclear. Due to the high cost of education for their children, young parents find themselves on a short leash, trying to make ends meet. As such, the responsibility of the parents becomes an obligation, especially when one of the parents becomes bedridden. With both the husband and wife working, it becomes necessary to engage a full-time caretaker or nurse at a hefty price. The author has rightly pointed out the necessity of old age homes,

while at the same time putting an onus on the children and grandchildren to provide the elders a dignified life in their own homes. Waqf properties and minority funds can be used to develop the infrastructure and build the caretaking facilities. Surely it is a thought-provoking article and the need of tomorrow, if not today.

Qazi Minhaj Azher,
USA

Sir,

The article “How to Stay Focused: The Method of Concentration in a Distracted World”, *Islamic Voice*, June 2023, by Arshad Sayyed in the Youth column is a thought-provoking article. In these days of AI, the 5 points with additional tips are really a boon to everyone, especially youth.

Wassalam.

Agri. A. Kaja Nazimudeen,
Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu.

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Aziz Azmi Asroli Srimir

According to our thought and tradition, which values money more than education and passport more than books, Aba left his studies and made a passport, and went to Saudi Arabia with the dream of changing the destiny of his house with Riyals and Dirhams. There is no doubt that With Riyal and Dirham, our economic conditions have changed, our lifestyle has changed, the style of exhibition and decoration has changed, and the quality of the rich and the poor has changed, if nothing has changed, the quality of education and political thinking has not changed. They were still there today, but now they are even more marginalized, we are not in politics, not in the government, not in the press, not in the court, at any point, at any time, we should be killed by the Sena and the crowd, nor do we have any voice. And not a happy situation, thanks to dirhams and dinars, cars, horses, bungalows, and palaces were built, but not Dr. Engineer, IS teacher, PCS - due to dependence on Arab countries, educational degradation, mutual rivalry in politics and Shariat. We have not been able to achieve the position in the country that other nations who got education and livelihood by staying in the country did.

My father left the country to improve his fortune, but in today's technological era, it is difficult for highly educated and skilled people to get a job, so where are the jobs for uneducated and unskilled people, the changing conditions of Saudi Arabia and increasing due to unemployment, when father did not find any work, he also kept the tradition and learned the easiest and favorite profession of our youth, driving, with the help of his friends from the village and learned in the house of a Saudi. Became special, the father called Ghar Khan Sahib is now known as the "family driver" in Saudi Arabia. I have no shame or shame in doing all those things. In my country, society does not have relationships in the house of vegetable and fruit

Dream of Changing the Destiny of his House with Riyals and Dirhams



sellers. No, but there is no loss of respect for those who earn riyals and dirhams by selling ice.

Unaware of God's wisdom, his fate, and the glitz of the world, Aba went to Saudi Arabia, but could not go further than fate. This job was also missed, but it was a good coincidence that the sponsor who was the driver here this time was a doctor. It was his duty to leave the hospital and bring him back. must have created a feeling in them that I wish I was educated too, and this was the feeling that Aba had earned in Saudi Arabia, and with this feeling he promised himself that he would not go home until the children were educated. Allah had written that the sustenance was not limited in the fate of Aba, but it was so short that even after sweating all day in the hot sands of Saudi Arabia, his income would have ended where poverty started, but in the eyes of the world, Aba Saudi Lived in the Arab countries, the house of those who earn Riyal and Dirham would be cramped. I, to keep the illusion of my honor and family honor, mother wins every day and dies every day for every Meena sent my father for five to seven thousand, to keep the honor of the house dressed in white clothes, to make dowry for the marriage of two young sisters, how difficult it was for Amma to send her to school, express her happiness in front of her neighbors by killing her dreams and aspirations. If she

had done it, she would have said that it was a beautiful dream that moistened her eyes.

But the mother's love would drink her sorrows with tears to keep us happy but not express any worry, it is the tragedy of us white-clad people that we will die of hunger but to keep the illusion of our independence, our honor, our family prestige. Because neither can spread their hands in front of anyone nor can they explain their plight in front of anyone, Amma kept smiling in front of the world by satisfying all our needs by throttling all her desires in the same seven thousand years, our good. For the sake of the future, my father's stay in Saudi Arabia for years used to make us sad. Seeing his love and longing eyes on the video call, my heart cried tears of blood. Time flew by when Amma forced me to borrow 1000 for my school fees and sent me to Rahman Dada's house to get 1000. He stood for hours, but it was as if no one heard him. After standing for hours, when he started to go back in frustration, his elder daughter-in-law said, "Look, they are standing with their faces raised for money, as if there are piles of money here when there is no time." There is no need to teach them to eat, but dreamers do not know which medal they will get by studying.

Words have no teeth, but when they bite, they injure the soul, not the body. On that day, his sarcastic

words, his arrogant tone, pierced my chest like a dagger. that I could answer them,

Instead of money, he returned home with his *Nishtari* accent piercing his heart and wept bitterly by his mother's side. Amma said, "No problem, son, those who understand wealth do not understand education." Time is a great salve; it will also heal the wound. The other day, I received a phone call from my father and asked him to give up his dream of teaching me and call me to Saudi Arabia. Hunger can be tolerated, but people's bitter words and hurtful words cannot be tolerated. My eyes fell on my words and said in a trembling voice, "Son, if you want your children and future generations not to suffer the wounds of words, then don't resist coming to Saudi like me. At that time, there is definitely trouble and hardship." Of course, considering your fate and God's will, ignore people's words and live on half-bread and torn clothes, but don't refuse to fall, my son, to teach you the last drop of my blood in this hot sand of Saudi Arabia. I will squeeze but I will not give up then why do you give up after intermediate you have to prepare for medical you have to give MBBS test son I can't go beyond my fate, Allah's decision, and His provision but you I promise that I will spend the precious years of my youth in this morning for the sake of the future of my future generation, but I cannot come home and see my children being humiliated in front of people for the rest of my life. The heat of Arabia will fill my eyes with light, it will encourage me to work in the sand, and being called the father of a doctor will heal all these wounds of mine.

Abba's compassionate manner and emotional tone became an encouragement to the heart and mind of the deceased and I also promised myself that I will not let this sacrifice of his go in vain. Fulfilling his dreams made it his goal, loved books, forbade sleep,

and passed the MBBS exam the first test. I didn't come home for six years, I came to my father's house a few months after I became a doctor, I had started practice in a hospital in Delhi and was preparing for MD. He couldn't control his emotions after seeing his father and thinking of his sacrifice and mother's perseverance, his eyes were filled with tears. After spending a few days with him, he went back to Delhi. After a few years, I built my own hospital in the name of my father, so according to my father's wish, I kept the treatment of the people of the village free. After leaving Rakha, he reached the hospital and saw that Rahim Dada was standing outside. He quickly got out of the car. He started the operation the next day with a team of doctors, and after being in several hospitals, finally, when Allah healed him with my hands after he regained consciousness, he cried seeing me. I went to ask for a loan of 1,000 for the same education, so he said that if there is no time, what is the need to teach and what medal will he win by studying? He held my hand and started apologizing to me. He only said that sister-in-law, wealth gives prosperity and education gives life, wealth, and money, and good education makes fun of poverty, but not education. A school was built in which the education of poor children was kept free.

May Allah reward them well and grant us the opportunity to respect the greatness of our parents and their sanctity. ■

“He only said: wealth gives prosperity and education gives life, wealth, and money, and good education makes fun of poverty, but not education.”

◀ Page 10

and supplement funds required for running the center, such as office expenses, stationery, etc. from the masjid funds if required. 3. The centers will help the masjid develop a live database of their musallis and know the new members added or that leave it. This is not the real objective but is a latent outcome of such an activity. By this, the masjid will be a place that is looked upon for succor and not only a place where namaz is done.

Role of Counseling Centers:

1. The Counsellors of the

Proposal to Start Pre-Marital Counselling Centers in the Masjids of Every Mohalla

counseling centers attached to the masjid for this purpose should ensure they perform their duties with diligence and sincerity to achieve the objectives of the center.

2. They should be a neutral third party and not get personally involved in family disputes.

3. They should run the center smoothly and maintain records and accounts of the center. Above all maintain the confidentiality of

the parties.

4. They should be open to monitoring by the masjid committees in manner that shall be prescribed and the Wakf Board through its officers or representatives in a manner to be prescribed by the board.

Role of the Community:

1. The community members shall utilize the services of the counseling centers for a period prior to the celebration of the

marriage to be prescribed and the families shall mandatorily attend the counseling sessions along with the couple to be wedded and complete the course till they get a certificate that they shall produce prior to performing the Nikah.

2. They shall bear the counseling charges to be prescribed.

(Aasra Women and children welfare trust an NGO recognized by the Department of Women and children development, the government of Karnataka, can be contacted at 98453 83905 / 80550907706, Bengaluru) ■

DEAR READERS

We wish to inform you that Islamic Voice takes no responsibility for the validity of the commercial or matrimonial advertisements which are published in the paper. The information and content in the advertisements has to be verified by the readers themselves if they are using the products and the services.



Sana Rubiyana

Codependency is psychological concept that refers to people who feel extreme amounts of dependence on certain loved ones their lives, and who feel responsible for the feelings and actions of those loved ones. It doesn't qualify as a mental health diagnosis yet can cause severe distress. It can lead to developing mental health concerns, such as anxiety. In other words, it involves sacrificing one's personal needs to meet the needs of others. Someone who is codependent has an extreme focus outside of themselves. Their thoughts and actions revolve around other people, such as parents, spouses, or relatives.

What causes Codependency?

- It is usually rooted in childhood. Often a child grows up in a home where their emotions are ignored or punished. This emotional neglect can give the child low self-esteem and shame. They may believe their needs are not worth attending to.
- It may arise when someone is in a relationship with a person who has an addiction. The person with codependency may take on the role of a caretaker.
- It can also develop from living in an abusive household or relationship. Emotional abuse can make feel small or unimportant. Codependent behaviors can



develop to counteract those feelings.

- Parents with codependency may try to live vicariously through their children. Some parents may try to protect a child from all hardships in life, others may try to control a child, so they grow up to meet the parent's definition of success and obedience. This behavior increases the risk of codependency in children and continues into adulthood. When children are allowed to explore the world and make their own plans, they develop a sense of independence. When parents make all the decisions, children may learn to ignore their own desires. They can also learn to place others' approval above their own needs. These effects can last for years. A codependent child may lack confidence and struggle to make decisions as an adult. They may also be unable to make any decisions of their own even as an adult without the validation and

approval of their parents. An adult child may also not have an opinion of their own, mind of their own, their opinions, goals, and desires would be extremely influenced by their parents. Without help the cycle of codependency may continue from one generation to another.

Common Symptoms of Codependency:

- **Low self-esteem:** it may cause feelings of shame and worthlessness. A person may believe they do deserve happiness. If a person does not value them, they may try to get others to value them. The sense of "being needed" can prompt internal gratification, even if the recipient of care does not show gratitude.
- **Poor boundaries:** Codependent people often feel responsible for others' happiness. They can also have a hard time saying "no" or putting their needs first. They might hide their true thoughts and

feelings to avoid upsetting others.

- **A need to save others:** Codependent people may feel it is their duty to always protect their loved ones from all harm. If a loved one does something wrong, they will likely try to fix the situation on their behalf.
- **Self-denial:** A codependent person often prioritizes others well-being over their own. They may deny their own needs for rest, emotional support, and self-care. They may feel guilt or anxiety when asserting their own desires. Codependent people can feel uneasy when others offer support.
- **Perfectionism:** Codependent people often project as image of self-reliance and competence. It is common for people to take on more responsibilities than they can handle. When they make errors or receive criticism, they may grow insecure.
- **Control issues:** A codependent person may link their own self-worth to others well-being. If a loved one fails a codependent person may as if they failed themselves. This attempts to make others' lives better by shifting control or indulging in possessive behaviors.

How to Overcome Codependency?

- Healing from codependency means rebalancing ourselves. Instead of focusing on what others need, we must consider their own needs and make them a priority. This doesn't mean that you should

never consider others' needs or take care of them, it just means that your needs are as important as other people's needs and that if you don't take care of yourself, you will end up depleted, resentful, and unfulfilled.

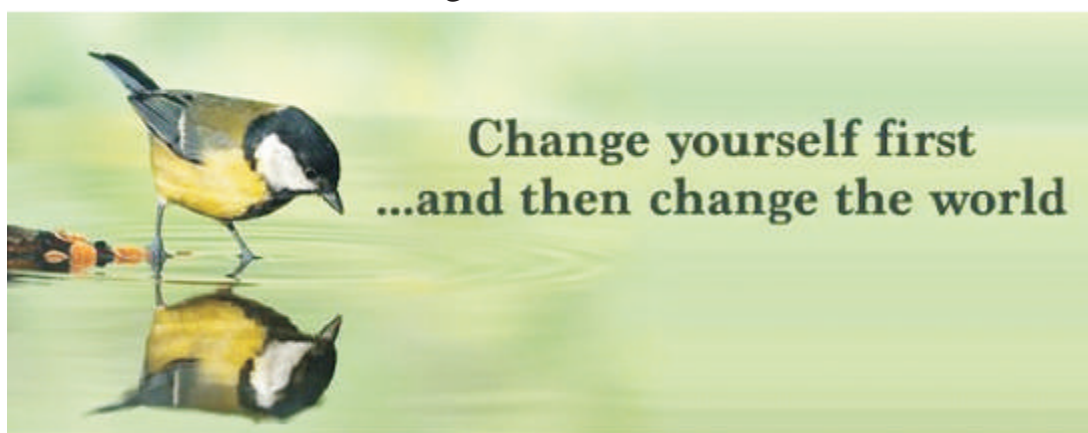
- Healing from codependency included not only knowing what you need but asking for it. We can't continue to act like victims or martyrs. We must learn to communicate assertively, stand up for ourselves, set boundaries to protect ourselves from mistreated and create relationships where we give as receive.
- Get to know yourself. Often codependent thinking about and trying to take care of or appease others they lose touch with themselves. So, we need to intentionally explore who we are—what we like, what's important to us, what our goals are so forth.
- Self-forgiveness and self-compassion. Codependents tend to be hard on themselves, self-critical, and unforgiving. This is both unwanted and unhelpful. Instead, we should offer ourselves kindness, acceptance, and support and treat ourselves as we would to a dear friend. Self-Compassion is another way to value and care for us and it's been shown to increase resilience and motivation while decreasing stress.
- A therapist can help reduce codependent behaviors and develop healthier relationships. (The writer is a Psychologist and Rational Emotive Cognitive Behavior Therapist, sanarubiana@gmail.com) ■



Naqi Ahmad Nadwi

When I was young, I wanted to change the world but it was very difficult so I decided to change my country that also seemed impossible so I decided to change my city but that was also a difficult task. Yes, then I decided to change my family, but that was not easy either. By that time I was old and not fit to do anything, now I have come to the conclusion that what I can do is It's Just That can change myself and I have changed myself. If only I could have done this when I was young, I would be able to change my family, my city, and maybe even my country today. This is a monk's own story that he told his disciples eleven hundred years ago.

It is true that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) first changed himself, changed his thoughts, changed his belief, changed his role, changed his desire, changed his attitude, changed his feelings, and changed his action. The world changed by itself. Many countries make five-year plans, spending billions of dollars on the development of their country. In order to eliminate crime and corruption, technology



worth billions of rupees, manpower of millions of people, and thousands of buildings and offices are opened, yet the result is disappointing, years pass and crime does not decrease. Neither is corruption. Leaders then commit and the cycle goes on, but no change is seen on the ground.

In a short period of only 32 years, an uneducated man rose from the land of Makkah and transformed the Bedouins of Arabia in such a way that they conquered not more than half the world. Rather, the environment changed in such a way that during the time of Hazrat Umar, a woman would go from Syria to Makkah alone, but no one

would look at her.

All that happened because the person who invited changed himself before he changed the world.

Change is a very difficult thing and changing one's thoughts, habits and actions is the most difficult. No one likes to change, but it is also true that development, success, and performance are not possible without change, the condition is that the change is positive. The secret of Arab Bedouin rule over the world was in change. He changed his thoughts, habits, and actions. He liked to see a change in himself before seeing a change in

others. This is the secret of the success of any individual, organization, and government official.

US President John F. Kennedy has passed away. This is the man of the world who challenged the moon. The moon, which was worshiped by some nations, made a mission to send humans to the

same moon and successfully completed it. His decision-making ability, extraordinary powers of perception, and far-reaching plans were so dangerous that it is said that John F. Kennedy was shot dead for this reason. The same powerful President of the United States said this famous sentence on June 25, 1936, in the Assembly of Paulskerke Frankfurt:

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." John F. Kennedy

Try to bring change in your thoughts, ideas, and thinking as well as in action, your world will also change. Change is difficult but inevitable, this universe is constantly changing. This earth, the stars, and the planets in the heavens are constantly changing, so it is very important for humans to create positive changes within themselves. ■

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."

John F. Kennedy

Reviewed by
Ravindra Pandit

***Educating The Mind Without
Educating
The Heart Is No Education At
All***

- Aristotle

The world has seen the rise and fall of several civilizations. What was the root cause of their downfall? Denis Goulet, an American human development theorist, argues that most civilizations perished not on account of external threats but due to internal strife precipitated by the erosion of fundamental human values. Religious scriptures, spiritual gurus, thinkers, and leaders have given us profound wisdom on how to lead a happy and peaceful life. The question is, are we following them to live a righteous life?

The author draws our attention to the reality that we live in troubled times in a dangerous and destabilized world. Wedges between faiths are created by raising questions about the history of people, places, and cultures. All religions teach love, compassion, and forgiveness. And yet there is violence in the name of faith. Our living conditions have improved a lot over the years. Have we also become better human beings? Unfortunately, there is no evidence that civilized societies are morally superior to primitive societies. We have seen two highly destructive world wars in the past century. Have we learned our lessons to live in peace? Not quite.

COVID-19 also exposed the fragility of our shiny world. It came as great adversity and caused social isolation. Moin Qazi put the period of isolation to good use by writing spiritual columns for the Asia Age. This book is a compilation of these short essays.

«Page 5

**Following Karnataka Elections, What Should
be the Strategy for the Upcoming Elections**

performance campaign against the Congress.

Priorities of an elected government include improving the law-and-order situation and ensuring justice, equality, freedom, and fraternity. Measures should be undertaken to cultivate respect for the law and people should be made to dread the bad consequences of their misdemeanor if they violated the law; the police administration should regard the supremacy of the law as their supreme concern. If the rule by Constitution is in force, people will be found in high spirits, the country marches on the path of development, and the whole society moves forward because the Constitution doesn't allow discrimination; nobody fears excesses against him and is not scared of any trouble.

The eternal quest of every person in this world is for happiness. Different people adopt different means to derive pleasure. But true and lasting happiness comes by observing the universal moral law. This book endeavours to handhold the readers find contentment, the essence of joy. Those who focus solely on happiness do not find it; those whose goals lie elsewhere are more likely to achieve satisfaction. The plans should not be confined to personal gains but to larger purposes of doing good to others. Happy people connect well with the world around them. They have a goal in their lives. Materialistic accomplishments alone do not ensure happiness. The key is to develop inner peace and serve others. Selfless love needs to be a key component in our compassionate actions. And compassion has to be practiced with a spirit of altruism, expecting nothing in return. Muslims are taught to live as trustees of God's blessings. There is a duty to serve those who are less privileged. Similar preaching is found in scriptures of other religions as well. And yet we find that peace is lacking in the world.

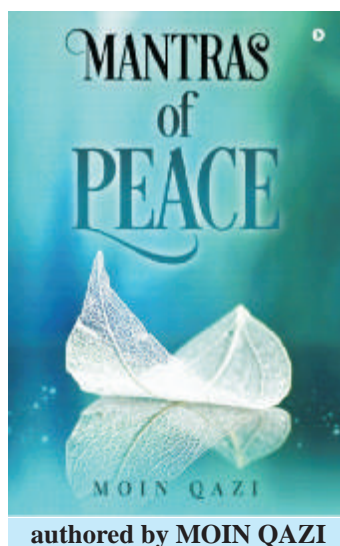
"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all", – said Aristotle. Conditioning of our mind colours our vision. We act accordingly without applying a discerning mind. Ideologies, superstitions, customs, and social restrictions cage us. There is a need to do some introspection periodically. Every religion encourages its adherents to set aside time for silence, reflection, and meditation. Self-reflection is not a trait we are born with; we must cultivate it as a habit. This is so important that

Therefore, the basic agenda should be to take all people along, the environment of hatred between Hindus and Muslims should be ended and there should herald a new era of fraternity, so the state government can go all out for development. Thus, people will come to live in peace and focus with a calm mind on their tasks; employment should be made certain, and the weak and the poverty-stricken people should be given special attention. The government which takes care of the basic needs of the people is always acceptable to people who are inclined to bring back the same government in the future. People are intelligent; they possess good judgment and are contemplative as well.

(The writer is General Secretary of All India Milli Council) ■

Mantras of Peace

Mantras of Peace, in the Interfaith Compendium



Plato said, "The unexamined life is not worth living".

Life is never a cakewalk. We face several challenges. This is for our good. A life devoid of adversities is an incomplete life. Unless we are exposed to healthy doses of pain, there is a danger that we will become hyper-sensitive and vulnerable to even small amounts of stress. We need to build our resilience to face adversity. Adversity turns our faces to God. A firmly embedded template of sound values brings out our inner repertoire of talents.

The author points out that the values of justice, fair play,

humility, modesty, tolerance, and curiosity are time-tested. Values constitute the inner sense of right and wrong based not on laws or rules of conduct but on who one is. When we look at the world today, we see a breakdown of society, family life, religion, and ethical principles. The collapse seems to be deeply connected with a loss of human values. This, therefore, highlights the need to rebuild human values.

It is also essential to keep the mind open to fresh thinking. Societies prioritising women's empowerment show better development indices and are better governed, more stable, and less prone to violence. Proactively embracing change and adaptability are the keys to survival and progress. Adaptability includes respect for differing opinions. Diversity alone does not constitute pluralism. Legitimate space needs to be given in our consciousness to the other. Pluralism is built on dialogue, give and take, criticism, and self-criticism.

Spiritualism helps us to guard against the corruptive influences of the world. We need to stay away from fake religious leaders. Buddha has taught us the way to a good life – neither too much nor too little, in brief, the 'middle path'.

We must understand that every scriptural book has to be read with the truest and purest light that our hearts and conscience can provide. Our prayers and rituals should enhance the quality of our character.

Making peace is a process. Never a single action. 'Mantras of Peace' touches upon every aspect that contributes to finding internal peace. It would be a continuous journey to internalize its wisdom and make it a part of oneself. The book keeps the reader fully engrossed. An enriching experience indeed.

(Ravindra Pandit an interfaith author and HR professional has a special interest in human development. He has actively participated in endeavours to enhance service orientation in Civil Hospitals by conducting workshops.) ■

“Spiritualism helps us to guard against the corruptive influences of the world. We need to stay away from fake religious leaders.”

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Sarah Fatima

Savoring life Blessings



Photo courtesy Freepik.com

Khadijah sat in the cozy lounge, biting into a warm slice of apple pie. Mariyam, her elder sister, sat across from her, sipping on her tea. They had just finished their dinner and were enjoying their dessert.

As Khadijah savored the sweet taste of the pie, she began to complain about not having what other people had. "Sister," she said, "I wish we had a study room like our neighbor's and fancy gadgets like Aisha's." Mariyam sighed before softly uttering, "Khadijah, don't compare yourself to others. Allah

SWT has blessed us with so much already. We have a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food on our table. Alhamdulillah, we should be grateful for that."

"But it's not enough," Khadijah protested. "I want a new tab like Aisha's."

Mariyam smiled gently. "Dear Khadijah, life is like this apple pie. When you eat it, you savor every bite. You appreciate the sweetness, the warmth, and the comfort it brings. You don't think about how you could have had a bigger slice or a fancier topping. You enjoy what you have."

Khadijah pondered her sister's words for a few moments. She looked down at her half-eaten slice of pie as she realized how much she had taken for granted. She closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and began to think about all the things she was blessed with. She thought about her loving family, her home, her health, and her education. She realized that she had so much to be grateful for. Even all her fingers wouldn't suffice to count the blessings Allah SWT has granted her.

"Thank you for reminding me, Mariyam Aapi," Khadijah said, her voice low as she felt ashamed of her earlier complaints. "You are right. Alhamdulillah, I am grateful for all that we have."

Mariyam nodded, pleased that her words had resonated with her little sister. "Always remember, Khadijah, no matter how much we have, there is always someone who has less. So let's be thankful to Allah SWT for what we have and share our blessings with others."

The two sisters smiled at each other, feeling content and grateful. As they finished their pie, Khadijah knew that she had learned an important lesson that day. She would savor every moment of her life with gratefulness, just like she savored every bite of that apple pie. ■

Be The Bridge



Photo DNA India

Haroonica

"With every hardship there is ease" so goes the saying. Exams are over. What next? "What should I do?" "How to plan my holidays?" "Where shall I go?" "Which game shall I play?" "Which short-term certificate course shall I take up?" "What is my friend going to do?" "Where are they going this vacation?" Many such endless questions are reeling around our heads.

Almost all of us like to know what is on the other side, because the pastures are always greener on the other side. To go there you need a way. But you can't because "there's a river to cross". Mobile phones with the Internet are a part of our life. It comes in handy when we are with friends; or with cousins; or even around family during family dinner! Family together is an occasion for a mega mobile zone with lots of feeds for Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp statuses, TikTok, and what more is not there? Such is the influence of mobile phones in our life! Where/What is the bridge in this? Coming! Coming!

Heart-to-heart connection is the need of the hour. That's right. Everyone knows that. Then why mention it here? Yes, the heart-to-heart connection is happening. But it is happening within "our" circle - "Our comfort zone." We need to look outside of our circle. Look at what is surrounding us. Then we would realize that not only "we" but "they" too were missing many things.

Agree/disagree. Both are missing something "deliberately" or "unknowingly." Let's make a resolution to include in our holiday plans to connect our hearts by listening to the administrative language; speaking the administrative language; reading the administrative language; and writing the administrative language. Be it by chatting; messaging; blogging; vlogging; youtubeing; tiktoking; Instagramming or the good old writing for magazines, papers, or even authoring a book to the hearts that are on the other side.

So be The Bridge! ■

Manners of Clearing the Dastarkhan



A traveler visited an old man. The old man said, "It's time to eat, come and eat. He sat down to eat with the traveler. When they finished eating, the traveler started wrapping the (Dastarkhan) table mat."

The Old man said, "What are you doing?"

The traveler said, "I am going to sweep the table mat."

The old man said, do you know how to sweep the table mat?

The traveler with astonishment asked, do we need the education to sweep the table mat?

Yes! The Old man said.

The traveler said, "Then you teach me."

The old man said that wiping the table is also an art.

He opened the table mat again and

separated the leftovers.

"Look! These are four things. I set aside these four in their separate places.

There is such and such a place for each of the leftovers.

The cat knows that herbs are kept in this place after eating, it comes at 11 am and eats them.

A certain place is fixed for the bones, the dogs of the neighborhood know that place, and they come and eat them.

The pieces of bread, I put them on the top of the wall, and the birds eat them.

Those small particles of sweet bread. I put them where the ants are in the house, they eat them.

All this is the provision of Allah Almighty, no part of it should be wasted. ■

Muslimness and Eid

Muslims like any other religious community have this embedded self-righteousness of Playing God and sending non-Muslims and even some Muslims to hell because they believe and worship differently. Today, I along with my brothers, went to purchase sacrificial sheep. We handed over the amount in cash that was checked by three people, but then due to some trick a 500-rupee note was informed to be missing from the cash. On our persistence, the butcher who earlier was bragging about religion, death, and the afterlife, helped us to take the sheep. He did not have any remorse in his eyes, despite being exposed for deceiving us. He was an elderly butcher, with a white beard and shaved mustache, seemingly Muslim but in reality a devil.

If this was not enough, I went to purchase some vegetables, and the sellers sold at exorbitant rates and once home, I found them rotten. This is our character, and we blame everyone except ourselves for the punishment and humiliation we encounter daily in our lives. Whosoever has some power among Muslims is ready to deceive fellow Muslims to earn some quick bucks. The brutal shock that these Muslims will face after death is to find non-Muslims practicing the values of Islam in heaven while they are being rotten in Hell, despite being born Muslims.

Mushtaq Sikander ■

Surprise and historic achievement.
The British Ministry of Education reveals in its annual quality rating that Islamic schools have won the first 3 best schools in the UK and 8 of the top 20 schools in the country.
Ma Sha Allah

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School ranked first in the ranking, followed by Eden Boy's school in Birmingham and the Eden Girl's School in neighboring Coventry.



Md. Mekail Ahmed

God did not Create Anything in Vain



Allah says in the Qur'an, "And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, except with the Truth; and indeed, the Last Day will come, therefore (O dear Prophet Mohammed—peace and blessings be upon him), forbear graciously. Indeed your Lord only is the Great Creator, the All-Knowing." [Surah: Hijr, Verses: 85-86]

Maybe you still don't understand for what purpose God has created you, for what purpose He has sent you to earth. If there were no people, the earth would be destroyed? All the trees would stop giving flower-fruit-cereal-oxygen to the earth. Fish production would have been stopped in canal-river-sea? Indiscriminately desolation of forest plants? Extinct animals? The moon and the sun would stop giving light? Would it stop raining from the sky? If none of these happens in your absence, then wake up your conscience, your brain, which is more powerful than 250 terabytes capacity, search God, for what purpose the owner has created you, you will easily know.

Allah did not create any weeds or seaweeds in vain. Come to think of it, this seaweed is playing an important role in preventing global warming. In the process of photosynthesis, seaweed absorbs carbon dioxide from the water and releases oxygen. Through this process, by increasing the availability of oxygen in the

water, algae make a significant contribution to our biodiversity by allowing other aquatic organisms to live. Seaweed absorbs heat from seawater as an essential component of the photosynthesis process. And in this way algae are playing a big role in preventing global warming by keeping water temperature under control. Besides, seaweed also increases the primary productivity of water. Seaweed is very nutritious. Seaweeds are also important as food. Seaweed contains protein, vitamins, calcium, phosphorus, iron, fat, beta carotene, carbohydrates, sodium, sulphur, copper, zinc, cobalt, iodine, potassium, and magnesium. Also contains vitamins B1, B2, B3, B6, vitamin D, and vitamin K.

A substance called carotene in red and brown algae reduces the risk of cancer in the human body. Algae prevent diarrhea and tumor growth and help reduce high blood pressure in the human body

due to the presence of a type of substance called carrageenan. Spirulina algae increase the body's digestive power, protect against pathogens, and increase immunity. Spirulina algae are helpful in preventing AIDS. An alternative to breakfast and rice is a snack made from a seaweed known as 'Seahood Milk Shake'. He did not unnecessarily create the light of the sun, the water of the river, the waves of the sea, or the fresh air of tranquility, scientists have now been able to produce electricity from everything through advanced technology. Why should household waste, cattle waste, or human excreta be discarded? Even from these, people's essential gas is now being produced.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, except with the Truth; and indeed the Last Day will come,

therefore (O dear Prophet Mohammed—peace and blessings be upon him), forbear graciously. Indeed your Lord only is the Great Creator, the All-Knowing." [Surah: Hijr, Verses: 85-86]

How much precious time do we waste? However, we do not have the time to think about this well-crafted sky of Allah. Allah says, "And We built above you seven strong layers." [Surah Naba, verse 12] How many plans and great preoccupations do we have with the life of the transitory world? Allah Ta'ala, therefore, says in the Qur'an, "And We have made the sky a roof, protected; and they turn away from its signs." [Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 32]. Shouldn't we think about the creation of the heavens and the earth? Shouldn't we think about the creator? The great creator who has done so much for us. Why are we so stingy to express gratitude to the great God?

The sky also has a unique beauty. Where is the end of the beauty of this beautiful sky? A kind of the beauty of the sky in the light of day. Another beauty of the night sky. It goes without saying that the extraordinary aurora can be seen in the night sky of Canada, and Norway. Norway, the land of the night sun, where there are six consecutive months of day and six consecutive months of night, is how wonderful it looks.

The blue sky of the day changes its form into a solitary wax, covered

with black color, then the silver light of millions of stars shines on the black sky. Is it possible to create such an atmosphere even if all the artificial lights of the world are combined? What would be the value of the moon without the sky? Who knows if the tourists flocked to see the sun in the morning without the sky in the land of sunrise in Japan or to see the sunset on the beach! The space research organization NASA has recently taken a picture with the James Webb telescope and it has caused a stir around the world. So much in one picture and what would they do if they could see the Mastermind behind such a beautiful space?

Undoubtedly, Allah Ta'ala is the Creator and controller of the entire universe. He did not create the universe and leave it aimlessly, but all creation is under His control. It is not possible for anyone to go beyond the boundaries set by Him. All things created by Allah are dynamic. And Almighty Allah is the organizer of this movement and consciousness. He created this earth step by step. This is the rule of His creation. The same rule can be seen if we look at nature. Everything on the earth grows gradually and moves towards perfection step by step. The whole universe could have been created in one moment if Allah willed but instead, He created the world step by step. In this, He taught people slowness and steadiness.

(The writer is a Researcher and Author and can be contacted at mekailahmed117@gmail.com)



Aadil Farook

Sufism – The Misunderstood Islam



One late night, Allama Iqbal called his faithful servant, Ali Baqsh. When Ali entered Iqbal's room, he saw a *buzurg* (saintly man) with a very enlightened face sitting on a chair while Iqbal lie at his feet pressing his legs. He was very surprised to see this. Iqbal asked him to bring drinks from the market. Although surprised, considering the late hours, Ali went out nonetheless. Nearby, he saw another *buzurg* with a small shop. He got drinks from him but when he offered him money, the *buzurg* declined saying it was between him and Iqbal. After some time, Iqbal called Ali again and asked him to take the *buzurg* outside and see him off. He went out with the *buzurg* but after a while, the *buzurg* suddenly disappeared. When he looked across, the shop had vanished as well. He was totally shocked and asked Iqbal about it. Iqbal requested him to not ask about it but he kept on asking with utmost curiosity. On his sheer insistence, Iqbal told him to never disclose it and said, "the *buzurg* in my room

was Moinuddin Chishti and the one in the shop was Ali Hajwari". This incident took place about 850 years after Hajwari's death and nearly 700 years after Chishti's death. Muhammad Munawar Mirza, a prominent scholar of Iqbal Studies, is reported to have narrated this incident and was confirmed by Iqbal's son, Javed as well. It happened during the later years of Iqbal's life when the philosopher-poet had turned into a

Sufi. To an ordinary man, such things are impossible to believe in but in the world of *Tasawwuf*, Mysticism, and Sufism, it is nothing unusual.

There are four kinds of opinions about Sufism. The true Sufis claim it as real Islam.

The literalists shun it as a mixture of *biddah*, *kufr*, and *shirk*.

The pseudo-Sufis "follow" it without knowing anything about

its reality.

The rationalists deem it only for those who are superstitious, backward, and lack brains.

The Sufis say that Islam is empty without *Ihsan* which is worshipping as if one sees God. They say that religion is way beyond acts with a ritualistic and heartless attitude devoid of any concentration. They say that Sufism is a higher dimension of Islam and the perfection of *Iman*. They aim far above the minimum requirements for salvation. Their focus is not just the quantity but the quality of deeds. They claim Sufism as the spirituality of Islam. Furthermore, they claim some portion of Sufism as a hidden Islam graspable only to them, not even to ordinary scholars let alone to laymen.

The literalists say that Sufism has nothing to do with Quran and Sunnah. They say that whatever Sufis say and do is either different or contradictory to what has been revealed to and practiced by the holy prophet. They say that Shariah is one for all without any distinction between the *awaam* (common man) and the *khawaas*

(elite). They say that the holy prophet and his companions were the true elites and they didn't practice Sufism.

The pseudo (fake) Sufis are the liberals who find the conventional, orthodox and traditional Islam as dry, boring and tough not knowing that it is a compulsory pre-requisite to Sufism. They take only the outer form of some aspects of Sufism without even a hint to their inner reality. For example, they are delighted with the artistic aspects of Sufism and find a way to follow their *nafs* under the guise of Sufi Art not knowing that before

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The fact that Sufism stresses the inner aspects does not mean that the outer is irrelevant; what it teaches is that the outer must be combined with the inner

Bringing Positive Sparks into Our Lives!!!! Through Discover Yourself Workshop!

Discover Yourself Workshop was held on the 20, 21 & 22 June 2023 at the Telangana Mahila Viswavidyalayam, formerly Osmania University College for Women in Hyderabad.



Some of the Participants share their Experiences:

- I was afraid of failure, and anxiety, and after this workshop I overcame it. Very interesting.
- At least once in a lifetime, I would suggest everyone should attend this workshop for the reality check.
- It helped me to know myself and get rid of my anxiety and phobia. Makes a person a human being.
- If I had not attended this workshop, I would have felt that only praying and fasting would get me into Jannah. My life was blank with nothing interesting in it. This workshop brought a spark to it.
- Opening of the third eye. Connecting between mind and heart, external and internal was excellent.
- Before the workshop my life was black and now it is colorful. I am very happy, and I can express my feelings now.
- I am not getting depressed. I am accepting reality as it is.
- Life changing. I am clear with reality, and I am at peace.
- Seeing everyone as equal and the very fact that everyone is created by one and the same God, gave clarity on how my approach towards people and my goal should be.



PRIYANKA: I found a new perspective on life and I am feeling positive after the workshop. I am willing to give up negative thinking and live in the present. I want to create awareness about humanity and spirituality among friends and family. Overall, it was a good learning experience.

KALYANI: This workshop everyone must attend. It helped me to live a stress-free life. Before the workshop, I was depressed but last night I talked to my mother, and she said for the first time you are talking with joy and happiness about what happened then I replied I have changed. Accept the truth and surrender to God.

DARMAJI: The workshop helped me to remove my anxiety and fear. Before the workshop, I

used to judge people and now I have stopped judging and started treating everyone equally. Before I was always thinking of my past and future but now, I live in reality and enjoy the present moment. I will give up my ego and be my word.

SHIVANI: It was very interactive. I was able to overcome stage fear and now I can manage and control my mind. I will respect others' opinions and take it in a positive way.

VIJAYALAXMI: The workshop was very interesting and inspiring. Before the workshop every minute I was only thinking of my past and suffered a lot. Now, I have literally removed the past and I am only thinking of my present and future. Thank You.

KHANUM A: Before the workshop, my life was a mess. I revolved around one question only i.e., why? why? Why? But now I take every situation as it was, as it is, it will be what it must be. It changed my perspective on life. I improved my relationship. I will not take negative comments as negative but only as other people's views.

AMINA: Excellent and valuable. Before the workshop, I had lots of fear, many questions, and misunderstandings in my mind. But after attending the workshop I got the answers to all my questions which were in my mind and my thinking and feelings have changed. I want to enjoy every moment of my life.

MANIHA: It was really impactful, and his words compelled me to change. I got a new way of viewing life. Before I felt lonely because I refused to accept myself and my surroundings the way they were. Accepting the reality of my household atmosphere being toxic and trying to find ways to change that has been way more helpful than playing the blame game. Change in personality starts with small steps and I am thankful I am stepping in the right direction. ■



Brilliant, Eye-opening, Enlightening Experience. A Need of the Hour for All

Discover Yourself Workshop was held on the 27, 28, 29 May 2023 at Al-Ameen College, Bangalore



Some of the Participants share their Experiences:

- Brilliant, eye-opening, and definitely a paradigm shift. Need of the hour for the youth, children, adults, and all.
- It was excellent, valuable, and refreshing.
- I can understand better now and remain cool when another person speaks to me.
- It was an enlightening experience. The need for the Ummah should spread to smaller towns and rural areas.
- It changed my perspective of seeing others. I will not judge and create opinions but be and truth.
- I have the tools now, need to apply them in day-to-day life to derive the full benefit.
- It taught me how to take Duniya and Akhirah together.
- It helped me understand the fundamentals of life and character on a much deeper level.
- It is a must and it helped me reboot myself.
- Enlightening. I have the tools now, need to apply them in day-to-day life to drive the full benefit.

HEMANT KUMAR: I discovered about myself. Before the workshop, I was frustrated, anxious, and easily pick up fights without any reference point. After the workshop feel relieved. My family feels rejuvenated after I shared it with them. I now look with an eye of the Divine for all the human beings on the planet. The workshop was excellent and fantastic and should spread to everyone.

UMAIBAN: A very wonderful experience. This workshop gave me a different way to think, analyze problems, and not react immediately to any situation. I always used to react and judge immediately that is the biggest problem we are creating in our life. After the workshop, I learned to control and stop judging others.

JABEEN: This workshop kicks our senses and opens our minds to understand what is right and wrong in our life. I used to get angry about minor things and after attending the workshop it helped me in many ways to keep up relations and know the value of life.

TANZEEM: A hope-giving, refreshing, and rejuvenating workshop. If I did not attend one

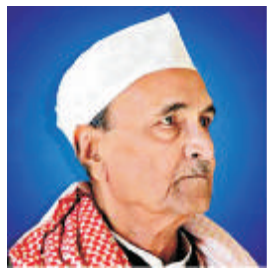
of the most precious things would have missed, that is my context and connection to Allah. It softened my heart and I got a moment of realization as to how short our life is and how vainly we are running towards vain desires. It gave me a little strength and patience to deal with myself and my loved ones. I realized my mistakes regarding how I treated my family members because they were not going according to my wishes and suggestions.

SIDRA: Before the workshop, I wanted to change myself and better my relationships but struggle to find the motivation to do so. After the workshop, I found the motivation to actually put in the effort to better myself as a person.

NIAMATH: A perfect workshop to develop oneself and very interesting. I felt modest and empowered, while everyone tried to provoke me, and I kept quiet Alhamdulillah I felt like the smartest person in the room. My parents were proud and happy. I would like to appreciate your hard work and dedication. I will give up my ego and I will honour my word. ■



Ilyas Azmi: Some memories



Masoom Moradabadi

Well-known Muslim leader Ilyas Azmi passed away after a short illness at the Apollo Hospital in New Delhi on the morning of June 4. He was 88 years old and he was so active even at that age that the country's politics He had the courage to untie the knot. He was always worried about the country and the nation, and he was busy trying to solve the knots of the problems. This is the reason why there is a wave of mourning in the circles where he died. He was a unique person in terms of his style and thought. He used to wear very modest clothes and an Arabic handkerchief was always hanging around his neck. He lived a modest life. The luxuries and luxuries of life could never trap them.

Ilyas Azmi was among the founding leaders of the Babri Masjid Restoration Movement. He wanted the Babri Masjid

battle to be fought as a national issue. He believed that making it a Hindu-Muslim problem would cause a total loss. But when they were not heard, they separated from this movement. The way the Babri Masjid movement was run, its disadvantages are clear to all. He wanted to adopt the same approach in the case of Babri Masjid with the visionary and political vision with which he had fought the battle for the minority role of Aligarh Muslim University under the leadership of Dr. Faridi.

Ilyas Azmi was born on 22/August 1934 in Mauza Buroli of Phulpur Tehsil of Azamgarh. He received his primary education at Madrasah Ruzat Uloom in Phulpur and completed his memorization of the Quran here. Fought on the BSP ticket. He was among the founding members of the Aam Aadmi Party but bid farewell to the party in 2016 due to differences with Arvind Kejriwal. He formed the People's Justice Party in 2021 with the aim of providing a strong platform to the deprived sections of society and Muslims.

Azmi married the late Smt. Badarunnisa on 2 May 1950. He had four sons and four daughters. He held several positions in his political career.

He wrote several books in Hindi and Urdu. ■

«Page 16 Sufism – The Misunderstood Islam

creating Sufi Art, one has to become a Sufi which is a lifetime struggle against *naifs*. Women who do not want to cover themselves as ordered by God, and, men who do not want to follow the Sunnah in appearance consider themselves as "Sufis". The fact that Sufism stresses the inner aspects does not mean that the outer is irrelevant; what it teaches is that the outer must be combined with the inner. In the case of men, since a beard and Islamic attire are both not compulsory, one may become a Sufi without a Sufi appearance as an exception like Iqbal, but it is very rare. However, in the case of women, since attire is a compulsion, it is impossible to be a Sufi without it.

The rationalists deny Sufi knowledge because according to them it has nothing to do with reason, logic, and proof. This category has similarities as well as differences with the literalists. The difference is that where the latter implies revelation as proof, these imply rationality or empirical information as proof. The similarity is that both deny religious experience and intuition as sources of knowledge because for them there are no higher levels of human consciousness than their

own. Thus where one consists of those who are modernists to the bones, the other carries the germs of modernism.

Sufism, if properly understood, is the heart of Islam and the essence of *deen*. It comprises *tazkia-e-naifs* (purification of the soul) and *tasfia-e-qalb*

(purification of the heart). It involves the diminishing of ego, the dominance over animal instincts, abstinence from vain or worldly desires, and the freeing of one's heart from the love of all but God. The sole aim is an intimate relationship with Allah by self-negation. ■

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Bangalore-based Sunni Muslim parents invite alliance for their daughter, 23 years doing Post Graduation in Islamic Education in the UK seeking alliance from a religious boy, seeker of Islamic knowledge, settled or working in UK/Europe/Gulf. **Contact +91 9845066818**

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Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad



M. A. Siraj

New Delhi: Imtiaz Ahmad, a renowned scholar who taught political sociology at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, died on June 19, 2023. He was 83. He was ailing for some time and was hospitalized.

Ahmad's book, Caste, and Social Stratification Among Muslims in India, is celebrated as pioneering work in the field. It was for the first time that the impact of caste and casteism on Muslim Indians was systematically studied. He etched to broad relief how caste defines the social ties within Indian

Muslim society, something the Islamic clerics had been denying. A staunch believer in India's composite culture, he was a bold academician refusing to change his tune with the change in regime. As a liberal, he was often the butt of attack from diverse kinds of fundamentalists. Muslim clerics reviled him for talking about 'pasmenda' Muslims, thereby considering it a negative reflection of the monolithic nature of Islam. The 'Indianness' of Islam ran central through all his writings. He felt no qualms in emphasizing that there is a distinct difference between textual religion and the way religion is lived out by its adherents and Islam or Hinduism were no exceptions to it. He was of the opinion that that caste has transmorphed into 'Biradari' among Muslims, particularly in the Indo-Gangetic plain where Hindus and Muslims shared a history of a millennium. There are several defining characteristics of caste and casteism. Some of these are 1- Ascending order of holiness, descending order of lowliness, 2- Being pure and impure by birth, 3- Endogamy (marrying within the

fold of the caste, 4-Priesthood being reserved for certain castes, 5-Untouchability, 6-Work by hand and work by minds, 7-Affiliation to certain occupations. The *Biradari* system among Muslims shares at least five of the seven abovementioned characteristics as Muslims do not practice untouchability and there is no priestly class among them. The clerics were never seriously interested in studying caste and the *Biradari* system among Muslims as they tended to project Muslims as a homogenous society. Ahmad got his MA degree from the Lucknow University in 1960. He started as a senior research analyst at the Institute of Economic Growth at Delhi University in 1964 and two years later, became a lecturer in sociology at the same university. After three years as visiting professor of anthropology at the University of Missouri in the US, Ahmad joined JNU as an associate professor in political sociology in 1972. He became a professor in the department in 1983 and taught there for three decades. Among his numerous publications are those which

throw light on Muslim empowerment, minority rights, the role of education among Muslims, how Islamic ideologies mesh with social realities, how Muslim women are studied in India, and communalism.

Ahmad also wrote critically on the Gujarat riots of 2002 in particular and communal politics in general. His work has been lauded as having shed light on the composite culture of India. He is survived by his wife Sabiha.

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