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BE AWARE, ALWAYS, EVERYWHERE

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COVER STORY

Tolerating Aberrations



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To end terrorism, we should follow the path of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH): Dalai Lama

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama who is also a Nobel Laureate termed the Holy Quran as a Sacred Book which is a priceless Gift of God given to mankind for guidance and welfare of the entire humanity.

According to Karnataka Muslim, the leader express his views at the grand global meet of Buddhists in Mysore. The spiritual leader also lauded the great services of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the mankind. He said that “The Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) life is the best example for the entire humanity.”

“We should follow the path shown by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in order to establish global peace and to end terrorism and tyranny from the world. The Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) message of Peace, love, justice and religious tolerance will always be a leading light for the whole humanity”, he added.

“Thousands of the followers of Buddhism from around the world thronged the venue for their world congregation at Buddhist Monastery in Bylakuppa”, reports Karnataka Muslim.

The spiritual leader receives a copy of the English translated Quran from CMA District President Mushtaq Ahmad. Dalai Lama received it with reverence.

<http://www.siasat.com/news/end-terrorism-we-should-follow-path-prophet-pbuh-dalai-lama-895214/>

JOURNEY TO ISLAM:

The Journey of a Czech Young Man From Atheism, to Christianity to Islam

I wished to become a good Christian, but some crucial questions of mine were left unanswered...

Once I knew an atheist who claimed he had never believed in God's existence. In his view, believers were supposed to be people of weak character who felt the necessity to find a crutch for their inability and laziness, so they attended church. He felt agitated if, when debating religion, he could not persuade the opponent with his arguments. He despised believers in an almost hysterical way. He had, however, a very good friend who believed in God. They agreed to refrain from discussing religion whenever together.

One day this man, probably in a rare moment of weakness, accepted the invitation of his friend to visit his church. To himself, he laughed at the thought of speaking out in the middle of mass and laughing and pointing his finger at the believers from the pulpit. However, as we know, God works in mysterious ways. He went to church, stood in the back benches, and stared at the people praying.

The mass service started and he gave all of them a sarcastic glance. Then the sermon began, lasting about 15 minutes. Suddenly, in the middle of the sermon, tears welled in his eyes. A strange feeling of joy and happiness washed away his animosity, a feeling that engulfed his entire body. After mass, the two friends left together. They were silent until the moment they were to part ways, when he asked his friend whether they could go to church together again. They agreed to go again the next day.

It's possible some of you might have guessed that I was that stubborn atheist. I had felt nothing but contempt and hatred towards people of faith. But after that sermon in 1989, when the priest discussed how we should not judge others if we don't want to be judged, my life suddenly took a dramatic turn.

I started attending church services regularly and was thirsty for any information on God and Jesus Christ. I took part in meetings with Christian youngsters where we exchanged our spiritual experiences. I felt resurrected. Suddenly I felt the need to be in the company of believers. I needed to make up for the past 18 years.

I was brought up in an atheist family, who except for having me baptized, did not exercise any attempt to guide my spiritual development. I remember being in sixth grade when a comrade was sent by the Communist Party to explain to us why God does not exist. I remember myself absorbing his every word. In my case, I needed no convincing. I believed everything he said. His arrogance, contempt, and hatred towards believers became mine. But now I had to make up for all those years.

I met with a priest and others who guided me in this new direction. I was full of so many questions, to which they responded. Later I was to realize a big mistake: I accepted everything without contemplation or reflection. I could say that they explained things to me in a 'take-it-as-is' manner, but that would not be fair to them. It was, in fact, my mistake. I didn't reflect upon their words, nor did I think critically. This would cause me a lot of complications later. In retrospect, I believe an important factor that influenced my behavior was age. I was too young to properly comprehend matters so serious and complicated as faith.

I wished to become a good Christian, and God knows I tried very hard. Yet over time, I could not reconcile the contradictions found in the Bible, such as the divine nature of Prophet Jesus and the concept of inherited sin. Priests tried to respond to my questions, but eventually, their patience began to run thin. I was told that such matters should be accepted on faith, and that these questions were a waste of time and would only serve to distance me from God. Till this day, I recall myself quarreling with a spiritual leader, an event that restarted my self-destructive tendencies. Maybe I wasn't right after all. I was young.

How I Became Muslim

My path toward Islam wasn't easy at all. You may think that since I was disappointed with Christianity, I would have immediately accepted Islam as my faith. This could have been very simple, but all I knew about Islam at the time were things like Muslims refer to God as Allah, they read the Qur'an in-

stead of the Bible, and they worship somebody called Muhammad. Also, I think I was not yet ready to accept Islam.

So I withdrew from the church community and claimed to be a soloist Christian. I found out, however, that even though I didn't miss the community of believers or church, God was 'settled' so deep in my heart that I couldn't let Him go. I didn't even try. Quite the opposite. I felt happy to have God around and hoped He was on my side.

Later I began to engage in one stupidity after another, living a life of luxury and lust. I did not realize that such a road would lead me away from God and towards hell. A friend of mine says that you need to hit rock bottom in order to feel the ground beneath your feet. This is exactly what happened to me. I fell really deep. I can just imagine how Satan must have been waiting for me with open arms, but God did not give up on me and gave me another chance.

In July 2001, I met a young man from Iraq. His name was Ibrahim. We very quickly struck up a conversation. He told me that he was Muslim, and I responded that I was Christian. I was worried that my being Christian would be a problem, but I was wrong. I was glad to be wrong. It was interesting that I did not want to become Muslim and he did not try to convert me.

Although I considered Muslims an exotic group, I had been interested to learn more about Islam. It was a good opportunity to learn more. I realized that I had in front of me a man who could teach me a lot about Islam, so I mustered the courage to ask him to do just that. That was my first meeting with Islam, indeed my first step. After some time we parted ways, and I did not see him again, but the seed had been sown.

I remember once reading an interview with Mohammad Ali Silhavy (an old Czech Muslim) and being eager to find his address and write him a letter. Then came September 11. Because of the political climate, I thought it might not be an appropriate time to contact Mr. Silhavy. So I found myself at a dead end.

About two months later, I found the courage to write a long letter to Mr. Silhavy. After a while he replied and sent a package including Islamic literature and

leaflets. He told me that he had informed the Islamic Foundation in Prague about me and asked them to send me the translation of the Qur'an. So this was my beginning. Step by step, I learned that not only is Islam not a militant religion, but to the contrary, it is a religion of peace. My questions were answered.

Because of certain circumstances, it wasn't until three years later that I decided to visit Mr. Silhavy. He showed a lot of patience while explaining to me different issues, and suggested that I visit the mosque of Brno (Czech Republic). When I went to the mosque of Brno, I was afraid that I would be seen as a stranger, an outsider. How surprised I was to find quite the opposite. I met K. and L., who were the first persons to help me. Of course, I met other brothers who welcomed me in the warmest possible way.

I began to delve into all aspects of Islam, and found how understandable and logical Islam is. I gradually started to learn how to pray, and today I master prayer with no problem, even in Arabic. I gave up a bad habit of mine that was not compatible with Islam. I was a gambler and a very good one indeed. It was a difficult struggle with myself, but with God's help I won that battle.

If I ever doubted my interest in Islam or whether I could live as a Muslim, I know now that my interest is permanent and I consider myself one of them. Maybe it looks very simple, but again with God's help I won this internal struggle. I thought carefully before I definitively decided to embrace Islam. To be honest, throughout 2003 and the beginning of 2004, I was not completely sure if I could manage this. Finally I decided definitively. I am not that young man from the early '90s anymore.

That's why today I feel very happy that I am Muslim. I finally feel free. I still have my imperfections but I am trying to improve upon them. I believe that God will help me. Now, listen to what I want to tell you and consider this my obligation: I believe in my heart and declare by word that there is no other god but God and Muhammad is God's Messenger.

<http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/my-journey-to-islam/contemporary-stories/448973-from-atheism-to-christianity-to-islam.html>

Iran Launches the Mustafa Prize the Muslim Nobel Prize



I By Sameen Ahmed Khan I

Iran has announced the recipients of the inaugural Mustafa Prize. In the field of Nano-biotechnology sciences, it is awarded to Jackie Yi-Ru Ying from Singapore and to Omar MwanneYaghi from Jordan for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. The Mustafa Prize established by Iran is to recognize leading researchers and scientists of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, as well as Muslim researchers from around the world. Presented biennially by the Iranian government, the Mustafa Prize aims to encourage education and research by playing a pioneering role in developing regional relations between science and technology institutions working in the OIC member countries. OIC is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations with fifty-seven member countries. The Fields and Categories covered by the Prize are: (a) Life Science and Medical Sciences; (b) The Information and Communication Science and Technologies; (c) Nano Science and Nanotechnologies; and (d) Top Scientific Achievement in other fields. The laureates in each section will be awarded US\$500,000 and will be adorned with a special medal and certificate.

Jackie Yi-Ru Ying was born in Taipei in 1966. She first moved to Singapore with her family in 1973 and then to New York at the age of fifteen. She obtained her PhD in Chemical Engineering from the Princeton University in 1991. She spent a year as a Humboldt Fellow at the Institute for New Materials in Saarbrücken and researched nanocrystalline materials.

She served as a professor of Chemical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), before returning to Singapore in 2003. She is currently the Executive Director of the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, Singapore, and an Adjunct Professor of Chemical Engineering at MIT. Ying's research is interdisciplinary in nature, with a theme in the synthesis of advanced nanostructured materials for catalytic and biomaterial applications. Her laboratory has been responsible for several novel wet-chemical and physical vapour synthesis approaches that create nanocomposites, nanoporous materials and nanodevices with unique size-dependent characteristics. These new systems are designed for applications ranging from the production of fine chemicals and pharmaceuticals, the efficient use of energy and resources, the control and prevention of environmental pollution, the targeted delivery of drugs, proteins and genes, to the generation of biomimetic implants and tissue scaffolds. For her research on nanostructured materials, Ying has been recognized with the American Ceramic Society Ross C. Purdy Award (1993), David and Lucile Packard Fellowship. She is serving on several editorial boards and advisory councils. HosseinZohour, Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the Mustafa Prize said, "Amongst the many novel outcomes of her work, Prof. Ying's contribution to the development of stimuli-responsive polymeric nanoparticles that deliver insulin to diabetic patients only when their blood glucose levels are high, without the need for external blood glucose monitoring, is considered an outstanding scientific approach of great promise for improving the quality of life of

mankind in the near future.”

Omar Mwanne Yaghi was born in 1965 in Jordan and moved to USA at the age of fifteen. Now, he is a Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, USA. The prize committee stated that ‘Omar Yaghi has made seminal contributions in the field of metal organic frameworks (MOFs). MOFs possess a wide array of

potential applications including materials for gas storage, gas/vapour separation, catalysis, luminescence, and drug delivery. In the last two decades, he developed MOFs through innovative approaches to construct novel materials and explored their applications in various fields, including encapsulation of bio-molecules, and capturing of gases such as carbon dioxide and hydrogen’.

Metal-organic frameworks are extended porous structures composed of transition metal ions (or clusters) that are linked by organic bridges. They are prepared as crystalline solids by solution reactions of metal ion salts with organic linkers. MOFs represent a new class of network solids that have great potential in specific applications such as separation, storage, heterogeneous catalysis and controlled drug delivery. Extensive research has been performed on MOFs as these materials are excellent for storing hydrogen and carbon dioxide. Yaghi’s work was recognized by numerous awards including the US Department of Energy Hydrogen Program Award for outstanding contributions to hydrogen storage (2007). Omar Yaghi received the 2015 King Faisal International Prize for his contributions in the field of metal organic frameworks.

In the inaugural round, only two of the four categories were judged to have outstanding nominations. The nominees must be citizens of one of the 57 OIC member countries, while in the last category the nominee must be a Muslim, although not necessarily a citizen of an OIC country. The Mustafa Prize Committee has emphasised that the prize shall serve

as a beacon to other Islamic researchers to show that they too can perform high quality, impactful research. The Committee further said, “OIC and other developing countries have to create a paradigm shift to again become a community that values knowledge and become proficient in utilising and advancing Science & Technology to enhance their socio-economic wellbeing as well as humanity’s”. The other major science prizes instituted by the Muslim World

are the King Faisal International Prize (KFIP) by Saudi Arabia and the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation. Both of them do not have any restrictions on the recipients. To date there are 17 KFIP laureates who also received Nobel Prizes (mostly after the KFIP). Some of the KFIP laureates are also recipients of

other prestigious awards including the Fields Medal and the Dirac Medal.

Sameen Ahmad Khan

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Emotional response to issues can be counterproductive

I By Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam I

I am returning to this column a little earlier than usual. I must reiterate before proceeding further that this column is meant particularly for Muslim youth. The idea is that youth have vitality and extraordinary physical energy, and older people have a wider and longer experience of life because of the sheer fact that they have lived for more years and decades than the younger generation. Joining together, youth and age can work for greater goals meaningfully.

I am writing this column a little earlier because I am afraid the advice offered in the last column was not taken seriously by some of our youth. I had advised that we should respond to insults hurled on us and our religion with care and caution because it could be a trap to ensnare us and inflict greater damage on us. Provocations are basically a tool to make us respond in anger. The opposition knows it well that an angry response is, more likely than not, inappropriate and damaging for us.

The thoughtless remarks of a Hindu Mahasabha leader, Akhilesh Tiwari, against the holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in retaliation for UP minister Azam Khan's remark against the RSS was stupid in the first place. What he could have done is say something derogatory about Khan's leader, Akhilesh Yadav, or the party supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav, as a revenge against the remark against the RSS. Khan had not criticised Shri Ram or Shri Krishna for this mad man to react the way he did. I am calling him mad because no sane person will do what he did. Can he give us an example of a Muslim slandering Shri Ram or Krishna even in Pakistan or Bangladesh? Does anybody slander Jesus or Moses, Shri Guru Nanak or Buddha? Only mad men do it.

Tiwari's rant could have been ignored. Or, protested against with some caution, as was done by large gatherings at different places in India. However, people of Malda district in West Bengal protesting against Tiwari went overboard as the large crowd gathered at Kaliachak in Malda district and the organisers could not control the crowd when a part of it broke loose and attacked the police station and

some neighbouring properties. Nobody was physically harmed. It was not Muzaffarnagar where more than 50 Muslims were killed and hundreds of homes were destroyed. Even this much of lawlessness is regrettable and we condemn it.

According to some versions, a section of the crowd was stoned, which provoked them to behave wildly. Such strategically aimed stoning of crowds has turned them violent in the past. However, the responsibility for controlling unruly gatherings lies with organisers alone. In this case, the organisers, frightened by the unruly mob, ran away from the scene, instead of controlling it. Some of them are still said to be hiding in nearby districts, fearing the police. This is reprehensible behaviour, worthy of condemnation in strongest terms.

Having said that, I will like to reiterate that the holy Prophet (PBUH) cannot be insulted even by the Satan himself, who instigates ignoramuses and lowly criminals to try to insult him. The Prophet's original name was Ahmad (one who profusely praises God). He was given an additional name by God, which was Muhammad (one who is universally praised). Even God praised His Prophet. Our ulama say that nobody can insult someone whom God Himself praised. The abusers and slanderers insult somebody of their own imagination and the Prophet does not live in the imagination of the scum of the earth. Hence, they abuse themselves.

God said, addressing the Prophet (PHUH): "I have exalted your name's mention". Let someone tell me, is there anyone on earth, or was there anyone ever on earth, whose name is called five times a day loudly from minarets in all the continents? As time zones vary, the Prophet's name is called on public address system virtually every moment of day and night. Show me a man whose mention God has thus exalted! Thus nobody has the face to disgrace the praised one, howsoever badly he might try. The abuse and slander of such miscreants will only recoil on them and their forefathers.

Even after knowing this, and also knowing God's reassurance about the exalted status of our Prophet, we get upset every time some eternally damned soul

tries to malign him. It is not right to run after barking dogs. However, being human we feel offended even though we know that nobody can insult someone whose name God has so exalted. Because of this I once again advise restraint in the face of provocation.

At the end I am tempted to mention the attitude of the media in such cases. The Indian Express in a special follow-up report, spread over two pages, said the Muslim gathering was of 1 lakh men. The media also reported Hindutva groups' claims that it was 2-3 lakh strong. More level-headed people reported it to 20-30 thousand. The latest estimate was 10,000.

So, what do we make of all this? Nothing really meaningful. However, the only point to remember is that we must always act with restraint and consult our elders in all such cases where experience matters more than youthful enthusiasm.

http://iosworld.org/short_takes/Emotional_response_to_issues.htm

Lost 'N' Found



I By Hajira Khan I

Once a boy named Mike was travelling alone to Chicago, USA, from Salalah, Oman. He was travelling as an unaccompanied minor. While returning back from there, he was on the last leg of his long journey: flight from Qatar to Salalah. At Qatar he suddenly realized that his passport was not with him. He searched and searched through his pockets and the bags. He then he told the airport staff that he has lost his passport. Then, he thought that he must have left his passport in the aeroplane. That plane was searched before it left for Dubai. The passport was not found in the plane. Mike

phoned his relatives in Chicago and his parents in Salalah. There was a huge panic fearing that Mike will be sent to his motherland, India. In such an event he would have to make a new passport in India. The plane returned from Dubai to Qatar. On the telephonic request of Mike's parents the airline staff did a second search. Lo and behold the passport was found stuck between to the legs of two seats several rows away from the seat on which Mike had travelled from Chicago to Qatar. It was a miracle of sorts! The aeroplane had made two flights and nobody else noticed the passport! Otherwise it would have landed in the hands of some person and ended up somewhere else!!! Finally he took the scheduled flight to Salalah. The long wait which Mike had planned to spend exploring the Qatar airport was lost in the passport lost 'n' found incident. Mike was given a huge welcome at the Salalah Airport by his anxious parents and their well-wishers.

Mike had travelled from Salalah-Qatar-Chicago as an unaccompanied minor. But while returning the staff at Chicago treated him like an adult and Mike was compelled to keep the passport with himself. This was the root-cause of the problem. The unconcerned staff should have checked his age from the passport and treated him like a minor as in the onward flights.

What happened with Mike can happen with anybody irrespective of age: losing the passport during travel. The moral of the incident is to keep the passport secure such that it may not slip or fall. One should also keep some photocopies and digital copies.

Nonetheless, Mike had an adventure of sorts. Now, he has an adventurous incident to describe to one and all again and again. This is based on a true incident.

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Science and Freedom

I By V.K. Tripathi I

Science implies learning and exploring the laws of nature. These laws help us in understanding the processes going on around us and in making useful tools, machines and appliances. Technology is the art of making machines and the skills to operate them.

An important characteristic of science is to find relationship between cause and effect. We eat rotten food and fall sick. Food is the cause and sickness is the effect. By carrying water from the well we get tired. Fatigue, the effect, is related to the work done in carrying weight. By understanding these relationships we can make our food habits and work more favourable and comfortable.

Those who show off the power of their muscles or intellect, forget that this power is associated with the body, in the making of which they had no contribution. Nor do they have capacity to sustain it. The body is sustained by air, water, food and mutual cooperation. The wealth that they have has been created by the hard work of poor workers.

Modern Science

Three hundred years ago science took a mighty jump forward when Newton formulated the laws of motion and put them in simple mathematical form. They provided the basis for quantitative estimate of various processes. The recognition of the power of the steam led to the invention of engine, leading to the development of trains and mills. The understanding of laws of electricity and magnetism led to the generation of electrical power from coal, oil and flowing water and to the development of motors, machines and appliances.

This development had its maximum impact on the process of production. The oil, cloth, sugar (gur) and other commodities of daily use that were manufactured in village industry began to be prepared in big mills. The mill owners needed cheap raw material and markets for their finished products. To realize these objectives they and their ruling classes considered it proper to enslave other countries. In this pursuit they needed weapons, hence they hired scientists to make weapons. Thus colonialism and imperialism

spread in the world and science, instead of becoming beneficial to the masses, became an instrument of their slavery and poverty.

The Current Phase

Science and technology have entered most areas of human endeavour, from farming and food production to civil construction, textiles, mining, transport, power, communication. etc. Computer is the most powerful instrument that has replaced many vital functions of mind – information storage, information processing, analysing, computing, maintaining accounts, and operating machines. Only the function of decision making rests with the mind. However, in the current state of market driven economy, common man has no role in decision making in respect of education policy, economic policy, polity, governance, defence etc. Even scientists and engineers have no role. The authority of decision making rests with the elite controlling markets, resources and polity.

Marginalization of masses is the result of centralization of decision making and market economy. An important role in this process is played by mental conditioning created through media hype on issues like narrow nationalism, notions of war based defence, show off of superficial identities etc. and glamour. For the liberation of human mind and emancipation of masses we need i) media and social media to be freed from the control of vested interests, ii) decision making to be decentralized, iii) small machines to be given a priority, and iv) objectivity and scientific temper to grow. Scholars can reach out to masses. Try to teach them engineering principles related to their field of endeavour.

**“IF YOU DON'T
BUILD YOUR
DREAMS, SOMEONE
WILL HIRE YOU TO
HELP BUILD
THEIRS.”**

TONY GASKIN

The Clingy Ex

Before you start reading I should warn you this isn't something that artists who practically are nomads across the world or those who do not conform to the idea of fighting for a single piece of land would appreciate or understand. This is meant for Indians and Pakistanis that enjoy nitpicking through history and this is a Pakistani voicing out how one particular Indian got it all wrong. Thus it would be better if the asynchronous communication remained judgment free from the contexts of regional unifications, diplomacy and any idea that is ideal in only a world where differences don't exist.

I was looking for an interview by Kamila Shamsi, the author of a book I had hoped to read; a plan that got sidelined, and wound up watching Letters from Across the Border that included a very lengthy ode to Pakistan written and read by Aatish Taseer the main highlight of the 20 minute transcript being how the partition was based on the fallacy called the Two Nation Theory and Jinnah himself was a victim to the notion that Pakistan would be the ultimate proverbial paradise for the Muslims of India.

He made some valuable points that I accept in earnest. Yes the eastern provinces Sindh and Punjab share cultural similarities with their Indian counterpart. Even though it is slightly less prominent there is an innate caste system where Syed, Rajput Families, Shahs, Khans and all the dynastical leaders claim superiority over other Pakistanis and Muslims in general. We enjoy spices, songs and clothes the same way Indians do. Dacca fall is what people consider the political demise of the two nation theory and yet there are factions of our country that want another such separation.

But none of that contradicts the fact that Pakistan had to be made, it was as much a necessity as a dream of our founders. Our forefathers bled and sacrificed everything for a cause that we Pakistanis hold dearest to our hearts and would not trade for another united India in a thousand lifetimes.

This is the passion of a young Pakistani from a metropolitan city who has lived a privileged life loves her identity as a Pakistani. My feelings aside there is also a lot of clarity behind these words and our belief that the validation of our ideological state can't be undone by the words of intellectuals, writers or

artists who criticize Pakistan for her independence, something the world constantly chants should be the motto of all states.

I wonder will they say the same about USA that opted out of being a British Colony. After all they speak the same language; they even have the same predominant religion or did at the time of their own separation; the 50 states continue to become more and more independent of the federation and if anything they had more reasons to stay together than India and Pakistan ever did.

Sure it is absolutely appalling that I would compare my third world, terrorism-struck country with the world super power but isn't that discrimination against the poor? There are countries better off than us and then there are countries worse off than us. Why should Pakistan be the only country subjected to these unfair questions about why it exists?

It is tactless and rude to suggest that our existence, 170 million people that live on a diverse landscape reaching from the Arabian Sea to the Hindu Kush and Karakoram, is a sincere historical blunder at best. Nobody has the right to question the legitimacy of any state, a lesson Pakistan taught the world the day it accepted the former East Pakistan as Bangladesh. At least one lesson we bested our neighbor at.

This wasn't supposed to be personal but it is. Because it wasn't a political gesture, it wasn't an administrative maneuver in the best interests of Pakistan which I do not expect from anybody in the world because Pakistan needs to be able to take care of herself. I am offended because somehow, people judge the separation as an isolated incident, as something only a few people wanted and the rest of Indian Muslims have better judgment because they picked a land they were already situated in.

The fact remains it is a human condition to seek independence. Pakistan and India are the same bloodlines, keeping the facts of Muhammad bin Qasim coming from Hijaz and Mughals from Persia aside, let us accept this argument for a while to put forth my case.

We have a Desi system of combined families where

siblings, first cousins and even distant cousins live in the same house for a generation. In some if not most cases, with each new generation sons leave their fathers' houses and learn to build life anew. It is a monetary struggle, the new house isn't as big as the previous one and the judicial trauma of acquiring their shares fractures the cordial relationship they have with the rest of their family. This is considering the worst case scenario, but suffice to say the world witnessed far worse when India and Pakistan split.

Some Pakistanis also share Aatish Taseers sentiments. They act like children who envy their cousins for living in a bigger house without realizing they are much powerful in their own small cottage when they don't have to make decisions after appeasing a long list of personality conflicts because they never fully grasped the situation before partition as they only see Pakistan and India now where Pakistan is pre-dominantly Muslim still; India is secular or at least gives that impression. If the Pakistan Movement hadn't come along a united India would reflect the political situation similar to that of 1935-1939. We skip crucial historical facts and so how India herself portrayed its pro-Hindu bias before 1947 isn't even mentioned in these debates.

When Indians propose we were better off with them, I feel like Pakistan has a clingy-ex situation at hand. Because despite all of the trouble, the freedom that comes with living away from the shadows of somebody else, to craft our own identity and to live our dream is all worth it. This is The American Dream for Muslims that happened in 1947, and yes the situation has deteriorated since then till now in 2016 it still holds true that we achieved our independence from two more powerful and much larger entities on

the same day. Islamic Republic of Pakistan is not the charity of India or the British Empire. It is the hard earned prize of constant struggle which people from both sides who lack practicality miss out on.

Worth the wars, the poverty, the struggles of administering a country and of internal conflicts we stand tall and proud. Indian Muslims chose to live in India that works out for them, we couldn't be happier. And if Pakistanis suggest we should be a united region, nobody will stop them from filling out dual-nationalities. The need doesn't stem from the political stands of these countries but the fact that we still have families across the border. Living with them might seem convenient but in India we won't only live with them.

The push and pull relationship Hindus and Muslims have had since the 13th century doesn't mean we are all bad people in the sub-continent incapable of living together. It means we drew a line as to how much of a merger we can stand; the Muslims who dreamed of Pakistan did the entire sub-continent a favor by claiming their independence and we need to stop challenging that decision. Most importantly Indians need to stop questioning the motives of our forefathers; after all independence means we are not nor will ever be answerable to them again and all of India combined doesn't have the power to blur the lines across the border. We put it there for a reason and despite our shortcomings we know how to protect our land and autonomy regardless of their intellectuals or their army opposing Pakistan's existence to its very core out of sheer ignorance of how patriotic and ideological Pakistanis value Pakistan and our identity as the only ideologically Muslim state above their redundant ideas of a united India.



‘Tolerating’ aberrations

I By Vidya Bhushan Rawat I

Indian Parliament paid glorious tribute to Baba Saheb Ambedkar on his 125th birth anniversary celebrations and prime minister asked that the values of the constitution be promoted all over the country yet the home minister wanted the ‘Socialist secular’ word to be deleted as they are ‘redundant’ and ‘misused’ in India and not part of the original preamble. Even if these two words were not there and there might have been reasons does not mean that they have no relevance. How could Ambedkar who espoused the cause of socialism giving absolute

those concern of Dr Ambedkar if we say we genuinely respect him and his thoughts. His concern was for a social democracy but has it been addressed. Will the government outlaw the Khap Panchayats and promote self arrange marriages that transcend religious, caste boundaries. Will it protect those who do so? Modi’s successor in Gujarat felt that the 22 commandments of Dr Ambedkar to Dalits, can create animosity between the societies and hence withdraw the book on Ambedkar. Have we seen any country where you want to create temples of man, worship him but refuse to implement his socio cultural thoughts? Will political parties take to Ambed-



guidance through directive principles not like ‘socialism’?

The violence and cruelty in this country are not new but the problem is how our media comes out with general reference suggesting these are ‘aberrations’ and then harp on great golden past of ‘tolerance’ and then this country jump out with candle lights and black badges against ‘aberrations’. In Parliament Rajnath Singh said Ambedkar was humiliated and discriminated yet he never felt leaving the country and Congress Party’s leader in Lok Sabha Mr Mallikarjun Khadage retorted by saying as why should he leave the country, he was the ‘moolniwasi’ indigenous habitat of the country, Aryans came from outside to oppress us. What have we done to address

kar’s vision of Prabudha Bharat and it is possible only through a fair implementation of our constitutional values and ensuring they become part of our daily habits culturally too.

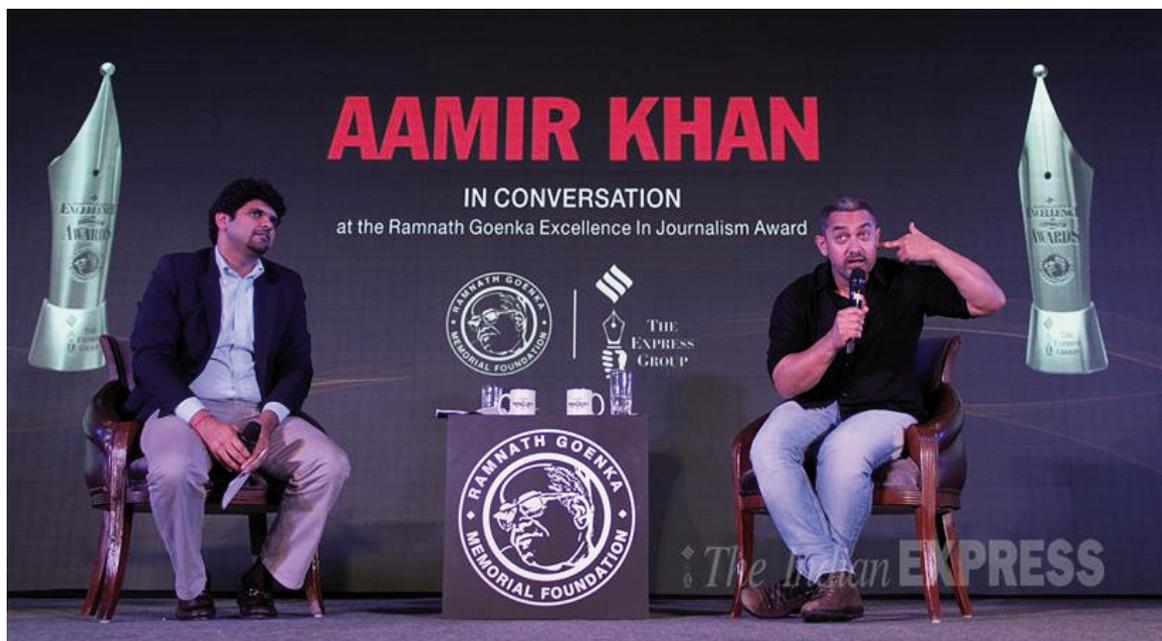
When values of liberalism, freedom of thoughts and respect for dissent comes in our heart and become part of our core values then we are capable of even admitting that not everything was ‘golden’ in our past. It is not important to say that all our forefathers were the greatest people on earth and did not commit any atrocity or mistake on any one. When you are surrounded by those who believe more in jargons and high voltage ‘nationalism’ to fulfill their ulterior political motives you start glorifying and justifying everything of the past and that result in distortion of

facts and converting many people into heroes and others who disagree to be as villain. The liberal ‘followers’ of these theories actually will condemn these incidents but term them as ‘stray’ or fringe. But today the situation is not that simple. It is not just the physical violence but academic dishonesty and projecting our past as always ‘golden’ and liberal. We are not a theocracy and the constitution gave us freedom of expression to remind the good and bad of our past so that the current generation could learn from both. Hiding the dirt of the past will only create a highly intolerant society. It is time to remember some of the incidents termed as aberrations and our reactions then after the independence.

1. In 1948, immediately after the independence, a fanatic Brahmin assassinated Gandhi but the nation remained calm. I shudder to think what would have happened if the murderer of Gandhi were a Dalit or a Muslim but then most of the ‘intellectuals’ pointed out that it was a murder carried by a RSS affiliated organization and not really by a Hindu or Brahmin fanatic. We were told that it was an aberration as people of India love tolerance.

2. In 1982 thousands of innocent Muslims were butchered to death at a place called Nellie in Asam in the name of ‘outsiders’. The government of India failed. There were other ‘communal riots’ engineered in Bijnaur, Moradabad, Bhagalpur and Meerut. The victims did not get any justice and we satisfied with these aberrations. Life was as usual as ever.

3. In 1984 Indira Gandhi was assassinated by the two body guards of her who happened to be Sikhs and the ‘people’ decided to teach Sikhs a lesson of their life. For next three days the country saw planned massacre of the worst kind in India in which children were burnt to death and people were chased



away simply because they practiced another faith. Human Rights Organisation worked day and in night yet we said it was an aberration. Some said it was ‘emotional’ outburst while the ‘power’ justified it as ‘jab bada ped girta hai to dharati hiltee hai’ when a big tree falls the earth trembles. The movement against the highhandedness of the prime minister had just started but rather than being apologetic he challenged the opponents in the plain Bollywood style, ‘Unko naani yaad kara denge’.

4. In 1991 when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the Tamil terrorists the entire country remained calm. Why? There were no accusations and counter accusations. His cremations passed peacefully. There was no aberration as perhaps the killers were not Muslims. I walked through the streets of Delhi that day to see the empty roads but no ‘terror’ unlike the first three days of Indira Gandhi’s assassination when the city was virtually burning.

5. In 1992 the Hindu fanatics demolished the Babari Masjid proclaiming that it was a temple where Lord Rama was born and that the said temple was demolished by Emperor Babur hence it was a history ‘correction’ project for them. Accordingly, Babari Masjid was the symbol of slavery and must be demolished to pave the way for a grand Ram Temple. It is well known fact how the idols of Lord Rama were installed in the masjid yet even if those factors are not accounted none has given right to street goons masquerading as politicians to become constitution unto themselves. World watched with horror how the lynch mob of Hindutva climbed up to the monument and demolished it. From December 7th, 1992 onwards we found ‘secular’ people re-

membering Gandhi and condemning Sangh Parivar and its affiliates with utterings, 'our age old tradition of tolerance' is broken. It brought shame to Hinduism. Rather than saying that you cannot correct history and if you try to dig too much you will only find the Buddhist structure underneath and if they want to correct everything then you can imagine what will be left in India? But again demolition of Babari Masjid was described as aberration of the Hindutva fringe.

6. Immediately in the aftermath of the Babari Masjid riots were engineered in Mumbai in 1993 and state apparatus failed to protect the people of the city as political rivals were raising the issue. Hundreds died and none was punished so far. In fact, the hate mongers became managers of the city and now control the levers of power. Bombay is the city of tolerance, we were told and this incident was an aberration only. The case continues in the court and the Tamilnadu government seeks commutation of the death penalty respecting the 'sentiments' of the Tamil people and it is so as the murderers are not Muslims.

7. The thugs burnt a Christian Missionary Graham Stains and his innocent children in the forest of Odisha blaming him for engaging in 'conversion. We all cried and condemned the incident and called it the work of a 'fringe' and mad man influence by the toxic 'ideology' of Hindutva. On the other hand, we don't have much appreciation for his wife who pardoned the barbarians who killed her husbands and children so brutally.

8. In 2002 hundreds of people died because of the absolute failure of the state. A former member of parliament was burnt to death while begging for protection. We heard many stories of brutality and barbarism. Many attributed to Godhra incident of burning of Hindus in the train who were returning by the Sabarmati Express by the mob incited by the Muslim fanatics. Now, there were two kinds of people who said Godhara accident was not planted by Muslims as if they can't do it and the other said it was only Muslims who did it and that Hindus have a right to avenge it and therefore all that happened in post Godhara incident in Gujarat was justified. Our position was clear on both the front. State cannot justify tit for tat as it needs to protect people and provide justice to the victims. If the Muslims of Godhra were engaged in certain incident that can't be a justification for their lynching in rest of the state and in

the country. The duty of the state is to provide protection to its citizens irrespective of caste and investigate the matter and bring justice to the people whoever he or she is.

9. In between we had seen the murders of Dalits in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat by the upper caste landed communities. None went to jail. We had numerous caste murders, honored killings, khap justice killing innocent lovers who dared to cross caste and religious boundaries, in the most brutal and barbaric way. There was not a tear shed for them. Communities laughed blamed others and went scot free. We the romantics blame a few fringes and said it was an aberration.

10. Then came the 'horror' moment of India. December 16th Nirbhaya rape put blame on violence against women on the prime minister and the then government. The 'nation' burnt and cried. It wanted a new law which was given to it. The 'nation' wanted to hang the perpetrators of the crime. We protested and wanted our streets, markets, home become 'secure' for our girls but when a British woman make a documentary and 'reveal' the dirty reality of the society in India, we all wanted a ban on the film. We said that the 'nation' is against the culture of ban yet if somebody exposes its culture then that must be banned. The film on Nirbhaya was banned because the upper caste lawyer was seen saying that if his daughter would come late and had a boyfriend he would not hesitate to burn her. We saw the statement in deep dismay and utter disgust yet we decided to shoot the messenger and said such episode do not 'reflect' our society which is very tolerant.



11. A Christian professor's hands were chopped off by the Muslim fanatics for allegedly 'insulting' prophet Mohammad. The Hindu communal became liberals asking for the human rights of the professor while the 'secularists' ignored the ghastly incident. We all said Muslims are not like that and these are fringe.

12. In district Kannur, Kerala a Dalit woman Chitralkha was hounded, named and humiliated by the people including that of those belonging to ruling left front leaders that time because she became an auto driver much to discomfort of many drivers who wanted to throw her out because she belong to the Dalit community. She fought for her battle for nearly 11 years yet our national conscience did not wake up.

13. In 2013 Western Uttar Pradesh saw the communal flashpoint. How the Mujaffarnagar violence killed people. Blame game started. The goons got political legitimacy and finally went to their political parties and became ministers. Those who were killed, raped and left homeless still suffer. The helpless People came in the street, protested with candle-light suggesting that such 'aberrations' don't takes place next time if we follow Gandhiji.

14. Now people are being killed for their food menu inside the home. Akhlaq was killed for no fault of his as it was alleged that his family was cooking beef. We felt outraged at it and said the Hindutva fringe do not represent India. Hindus and Muslims have lived together and have been very tolerant. Several years' back two dalits were killed for tanning the skin of a dead cow in Jhajjar town of Haryana. The hypocrisy is 'liberalism' that in this country killing a cow is punishment and raise so much of 'passion' while killing a Dalit does not attract that much of passion and condemnation.

15. Hundreds of Dalit families faced tyranny of the caste Hindus in Harayana and none came to support them. When they converted to Islam after all option failed they were threatened. Now two Dalit children were burnt in



Harayana and the nation woke up to protest,' the killers of these brutalities don't represent us as these are aberrations'. The minister compared them to dogs and get away with it only to show how much are we 'tolerant' towards those who spit venom every day.

16. When rationalists like Dr Narendra Dabholkar, Kalburgi and Govind Pansare were killed no remorse was shown. In fact people were threatened with dire consequences. None of them were part of any mainstream political party. They had been speaking against prevailing superstition in the society an issue none of the political parties dare to question hence not much botheration about their killings. But today when the world watch us in horror and our culture of 'tolerance' stand exposed then we have started singing again that 'they' do not 'represent' our society.

17. Amir Khan and Shahrukh Khan are actually the 'brand' 'ambassadors' of 'Indian tolerance' and 'inclusive' democracy world over. We don't realize that this country could not convince Maqbool Fida Hussain to return as the Hindutva's lunatics continue to threaten him with diverse cases in different courts. Sad that there is no mechanism from saving people from such kind of 'legal' 'terror' where you don't know who and where can file a case against you. The local courts are ready to take such frivolous petitions and failing to respond could place you in jail. With all this, we have shown remarkable 'tolerance' for those who are spitting venom on social media against the opponents, threatening them with murders and exporting people to Pakistan as if they have an agreement with the latter.

18. In the past fifty years, we have 'tolerantly' witnessed the silence annihilation of Adivasi culture in the name of development. Millions have been

uprooted from their native land to make India a 'world power'. We have land for big corporate but no land for the honorable and dignified settlements of Adivasis. Every big dam can narrate you story of slaughtering of adivasis from their land.

19. Even after 68 years of our 'independence' people clean filth, go deep into pit to pick up garbage, millions are still engaged in picking human excreta. Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat cannot eradicate it as it attempt to hide the dirty reality of manual scavenging. As a society, don't we think that we should have been highly 'intolerant' towards such discrimination but then what to do we are a 'tolerant' society.

20. That we have tolerated so much to see women's are disallowed in the temples along with Dalits. Girls are being killed in the womb, sold in the market in many places. Going out without a male aid is a challenge and we witness this with great tolerance.

21. Haven't we 'tolerated' too much the discrimination to people in North East that AFSPA still remain in force despite protests by the people there. We will 'glorify' Irom Sharmila as 'greatest' but not ready to listen to her voice.

These are just a few 'aberrations' in a society where it is happening at a regular stretch. You need to just go deep into communal violence, massacre of Dalits, violence against women, untouchability, manual scavenging, anti land grabbing protests, encroachment of big corporations in the forests, big dams etc to see the level of 'tolerance' that India has towards its own people.

The tolerance-intolerance debate reminds me of a great word of wisdom by Sardar Hukum Singh in the Constituent Assembly related to minority-majority issues. He warned against majority communalism as soon the thin line disappear and criminal communalism become war cries of 'nationalism'. If the minorities who always are threatened react by asserting as well as displaying their cultural identity then it is easily termed as 'communalism'. Minority's assertion to their identity therefore become a dissent and must be dealt with harshly.

But in the current phase India is passing through that kind of tolerance where a 'Muslim' cannot express anything against the 'popular' notions and he must be proud of our 'great' heritage at the same point of time Hindus can speak anything without getting noticed. So there is no doubt that we were never tolerant towards dissent. Muslims may be becoming victim of this 'intolerance' now but we have history of celebrating killings right from the mythological text. Don't we celebrate burning of 'Holika' during the Holy festival? Haven't we seen celebration of killings of Ravana, Meghnath, Kumbhakaran, Suparnkha, Tadka at such a

huge level? How can our children think of tolerance and Dharma. How you define it. Rama who exiled his pregnant wife and left her, spied her and doubted her chastity while Ravana who did not even touch her despite abducting her just to avenge his sisters humiliation. How will our children become rational when they are told do just follow the 'symbolism' and not to think as why should we celebrate killing. Don't we celebrate killing of Mahishasura. No body wants to know as why these people were killed. The only arguments for them as that they were 'asuras'. So it means you can kill any one who is 'asura' which was their identity. It means your rights and wrongs are judged by your identity. That is the crux which most of our historians refused to accept. Muslims-Christians face it today. Dalits-aadivasis faced it life long not just from the caste Hindus but also from the upper caste Muslims and Christians too. You cannot be tolerant, civilized when you justify killings in the name of identities. It is important we start scrutinizing these religious texts and historical text as what is wrong. The wrong is in our thinking process and social attitude where your identity and display of identity is a 'dissent' and that has to be crushed. History is a tool of the power elite to intimidate others through distorting and corrupting the knowledge system. So Amir Khan, Shahrukh Khan, Saif Ali are good as Rahul, Vijay, Shankar or so on but not as Mohammad, Aslam or Naushad. They cant speak anything on Muslim issues as that would prompt reaction from the 'trolls' who will abuse you, intimidate later and kill you finally. Isn't it the biggest sign of 'tolerance' that we as a society continue to legitimize them and justify their acts to which 'liberals' would again throw their 'jumla' of 'aberration'.

Europe, Canada, Australia and Newzealands Parliaments have apologised for what they have done to indigenous people. It was a great gesture. Our Parliament is discussing so many things during the 125 years of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the father of our modern republic yet none in the Parliament ever spoke of the historic injustice done towards the Dalits, Aadivasis and the shudras in 2000 years of history of brahmanical brutalities and cruelties. It is time Parliament show some intolerance towards this tolerance of barbaric culture to our own people by our own forefathers. Are we ready to apologise for what the Manusmriti and its masters did to India's Bahujan masses and that would be the real tribute to Baba Saheb Ambedkar if we accept the fact that we were brutal, barbaric and maltreated to our own people and now time has come to undo those historical wrongs.

http://iosworld.org/national/Tolerating_aberrations.htm

Using cool heads against terror

I By AIJAZ ZAKA SYED I

After long years of reading from the hymn sheet provided by its hosts, sense finally seems to have dawned on the United Nations. The world body has apparently concluded that it is insanity, in the words of Einstein, to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results.

Addressing the UN General Assembly last Friday, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon did not beat about the proverbial bush as he unveiled a blueprint to tackle the challenge of extremism.

The UN chief was unusually honest in his counsel to those busy fighting the ever widening war on terror: “We all lose by responding to ruthless terror with mindless policy – policies that turn people against each another, alienate already marginalised groups, and play into the hands of the enemy. We need cool heads and common sense. We must never be ruled by fear – or provoked by those who strive to exploit it. Countering violent extremism should not be counter-productive.”

Cool heads and common sense? That’s the last thing anyone in the coalition of the willing wants to hear right now as it fights ‘Islamist terror’, forever shifting goal posts in the crusade against imagined enemies.

Has anyone noticed that for the first time since the end of the last Great War, the two superpowers, United States and Russia, and their numerous gofers all find themselves on the same side of the fence as they purportedly take on the monster called Isis or Daesh.

Indeed, it is interesting that the usually voluble Washington did not make even perfunctory noises when the Russian bear barged into what has traditionally been Uncle Sam’s turf.

In his last State of the Union address, President Obama trashed the talk of an imminent World War III between the West and Islam, accusing clowns like Trump of playing into the hands of Isis. The first black president of the most powerful white, Western nation may not see it as such but many in the West already seem to have concluded that this is indeed a

civilisational battle for survival. In fact, Pope Francis already sees the Middle East conflict as World War III.

Whether one likes it or not, after long years of Western wars and the violent extremism of groups like Isis that they have spawned, this has indeed acquired the proportions of a civilisational clash, something that neocon pundits like Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington have long dreamed about.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani columnist of a popular Urdu newspaper thoughtfully pointed out that with the involvement of the US, Russia, UK, France, Germany and other members of Nato in the Middle East’s theatre of war, nearly all major schools of thought representing Christianity – from the Catholic church and Church of England to the Russian Orthodox church – are waging wars in Muslim lands or fighting forces that claim to speak on behalf of the believers.

Hardly surprising then, notwithstanding the anger and revulsion that the Isis tactics and its claim to represent the Muslims evoke everywhere, it continues to attract the young and restless from around the world.

On the other hand, after all these futile wars and years of carnage and destruction that have left millions dead and homeless in the region, not to mention the mindless destruction of historically rich countries like Iraq, Syria and Libya, there is still no sign of a willingness to confront or even acknowledge the sources and drivers of this conflict. Indeed, a few weeks ago the New York Times reported that the US is considering a Pentagon proposal to set up a string of military bases in the Middle East, Southwest Asia and Africa which could be used, “for collecting intelligence and carrying out strikes” against Isis’ many affiliates across those regions.

The bases would serve as hubs for Special Operations troops and intelligence operatives who would conduct counterterrorism missions, creating what the Times described, in Pentagon-speak, an “enduring American military presence” in these volatile regions.

This despite the overwhelming evidence – and ac-

knowledge by President Obama among others – suggesting that the Western invasion and occupation of Iraq gave birth to the spectre called Isis.

There cannot be a more absurd idea. An “enduring American military presence” from the Middle East to Africa, over and on top of what already exists across the region, may be the best thing to happen to the extremist fringe, from Isis to Al-Qaeda and TTP to Boko Haram, further allowing them to portray themselves as the ‘defenders of the faithful’ and inflate their ranks.

If this isn’t precisely what the West and their allies are secretly hoping for, they would do themselves and the region a huge favour by not taking that perilous route.

Military force and brutal, police state tactics cannot defeat terror and extremism. Short-sighted and crude measures like UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s threat to deport Muslim women if they do not learn English and his promised ban on the Muslim veil do not help the cause of fighting extremism either. These pronouncements are hardly any different from the intemperate rants of US presidential hopeful Donald Trump.

Camerons and Trumps would do well to spare 15 minutes to scan and mull over Ban Ki-moon’s proposals, delivered as part of the UN action plan to counter extremism. The UN chief offers 70 specific recommendations for action under five broad categories:

Prevention: It requires improving underlying conditions, helping individuals attain their full potential growth. It is humiliation and desperation that drive men towards extremism. “Extremism flourishes when human rights are violated, political space is shrunk, aspirations for inclusion are ignored, and too many people – especially young people – lack prospects and meaning in their lives”, pointed out the UN chief.

Principled leadership and effective institutions: The UN calls for building “inclusive institutions that are truly accountable to people.” The UN chief points out that “poisonous ideologies do not emerge from thin air. Oppression, corruption and injustice are greenhouses for resentment.”

Prevent extremism by promoting human rights: “All too often”, the UN chief noted, “sweeping definitions of terrorism or violent extremism are used to criminalize the legitimate actions of opposition groups, civil society organizations and human rights defenders. Governments should not use these types of sweeping definitions as a pretext to attack or silence one’s critics.”

Inclusive approach: An ‘all of government’ approach that breaks down “the silos between the peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian actors at the national, regional and global levels – including at the United Nations.”

UN engagement: It involves actions by the UN itself while also promoting coordination with and support for national plans of action that address the many inter-linked dimensions of the violent extremism and terrorism threats.

Real food for thought there. The UN approach at last acknowledges why violent extremism has spread so rapidly around the world and attempts to craft an effective response to it that, in the words of Rami Khouri, cuts out its core drivers at the roots, rather than snipping off the buds that sprout at its extremities.

But if governments around the world, especially the world powers and their allies busy fire-fighting in the Middle East, do not take these recommendations seriously and adopt them as a global action plan, the UN recommendations are not worth the paper they are written on.

Doubtless, the battle ahead is long and arduous. You cannot win it by quick-fix, dishonest tactics or by unleashing more firepower and boots on the ground. What is really needed is serious, meaningful dialogue and hearts-and-minds engagement between the West and the Islamic world at the civil society level, while addressing the ideological drivers and sources of this long-festering conflict.

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Growing up with Nehru's India

I By AIJAZ ZAKA SYED I

India's Tehelka magazine has come up with an interesting, if belated, special issue, marking the 50th anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru's death. Ironically, the special occasion on May 27 last year passed off without much fanfare. Only the Congress Party offered perfunctory tributes. In tune with the changed order and ideological flavor of the times that we live in, even the Congress has been rather apologetic and timid about owning the legacy of the man who led it for long years in very challenging circumstances.

As for the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it has gone to elaborate lengths to ignore and belittle the man who firmly and defiantly stands against everything that the Bharatiya Janata Party and the larger Hindutva Parivar represent and believe in.

Since it came to power, the BJP and members of its extended clan have been pursuing a clever strategy of hijacking national icons such as Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel and even the Dalit icon Dr. Ambedkar, the father of Indian Constitution who despised Hinduism and its caste hierarchy, and canonizing them as part of their own pantheon of 'national leadership'.

On the other hand, they have been relentlessly attacking Nehru and chipping away at his awesome legacy. The architect of modern India and easily its tallest leader after Gandhi is being portrayed as a weak, indecisive man with feet of clay (and 'corrupt morals') and blaming him for all of modern India's woes and warts. More mischievously, they have pitted Patel with his hard-line, anti-Muslim image against Nehru projecting him as a bigger and abler leader who should have, in their view, succeeded Gandhi as the leader of the Congress and independent India.



In the run up to the 2014 General Elections, Modi who has for long consciously fashioned himself in the mold of the 'iron man' and fellow Gujarati chose to trash Nehru in the presence of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, bemoaning the fact that Patel could not lead India after Independence. It is profoundly ironic that, in the words of historian Ramachandra Guha, the BJP and Sangh idolize someone who had been a lifelong Congress man.

It is nonetheless true that the Hindu Right shares a sense of ideological kinship with Patel. In 1966, M S Golwalkar, the RSS supremo wrote in his book, Bunch of Thoughts, "We were fortunate that we had in Sardar Patel a person with an iron will to face the reality in those days."

For his part Patel, a religious conservative at heart and perhaps the first practitioner of 'soft Hindutva',

clearly admired the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh as a “socio-cultural” organization and its members as “patriots who love their country.”

Three weeks before Gandhi’s assassination, Patel even invited RSS workers to join the ruling Congress Party: “In the Congress, those who are in power feel that by the virtue of authority they will be able to crush the RSS. You cannot crush an organization by using the danda (stick). The danda is meant for thieves and dacoits. They are patriots who love their country. Only their trend of thought is diverted. They are to be won over by Congressmen, by love.”

Things dramatically changed after the assassination of Gandhi, carried out by Nathuram Godse, a veteran of the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. Of course, RSS quickly disowned Godse. And the fact that its ideology of hate and propaganda demonizing Gandhi, holding him responsible for the Partition and being “soft” on Muslims led to his killing was not sufficiently proved in the court. However, it was hardly a secret who inspired and directly or indirectly was responsible for the assassination of the Mahatma.

No wonder Patel was forced to ban the RSS. In a letter to Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, latter the founder of the Jan Sangh, the forbear of the BJP, Patel wrote: “As a result of the activities of these two bodies (RSS and Hindu Mahasabha), particularly the former, an atmosphere was created in the country in which such a ghastly tragedy became possible. There is no doubt in my mind the extreme section of the Hindu Mahasabha was involved in this conspiracy. The activities of the RSS constituted a clear threat to the existence of the Government and the State.”

Surprisingly, Patel withdrew the RSS ban only a year and half later with a warning that the RSS would not take part in politics. Within a year though, the RSS floated the Jan Sangh which would later be replaced by the BJP under the leadership of Vajpayee and Advani.

No wonder the BJP and the rest of the Parivar feel so indebted to Patel. However, there is more to it than merely the love of the man who after the Partition bluntly told India’s Muslims to “behave” or go to Pakistan and presided over the “Police Action” in 1948 against the State of Hyderabad, the last bastion of Muslim glory in India, resulting in thousands of killings and rapes.

Behind the deification of Patel and shameless appropriation of national icons lies the Hindutva stratagem to paper over its own role, or lack of it, in India’s freedom struggle on the one hand and reimagine the national narrative from purely a Hindu perspective as against Nehru’s pluralist approach on the other. The Parivar knows full well that without demolishing Nehru’s legacy, it cannot succeed in reshaping the idea of India. For the country we know as India today was built on the vision and ideals of the first prime minister. If India, bucking the trend in the region, grew into a secular and tolerant, multicultural democracy with a benevolent state pursuing balanced growth and looking out for its poor and dispossessed, the credit entirely goes to Nehru.

John K Galbraith, the eminent US economist who served as his country’s ambassador to India during those defining years, offers an interesting assessment of Nehru: “With Gandhi, Nehru was, indeed, India: Gandhi was its history; Nehru, after independence, its reality.” Leading the young nation in its formative and crucial years, Nehru was indeed India. He defined its identity, charted its trajectory of growth, informed its world view and shaped its political and national character. Urbane, liberal, humanist, left-of-the-center and yes above all, staunchly secular — the most abused trait and belief in Modi’s India — Nehru fashioned the young, emerging nation in his own image. Even people of my generation, born after Nehru’s death, grew up perpetually feeling his brooding presence and influence everywhere.

Today, 50 years after his death, he still stands tall, towering above everyone else, including the inflated pygmies of Hindutva, thanks to his immense contribution and the indelible imprint he has left on the country and its institutions. More important, Nehru and his powerful legacy, seen in the strong political and democratic institutions of the country, remain a challenge and stumbling block in the way of the Parivar’s ambitions to paint India saffron. If the Parivar’s idea of Hindu Rashtra is to take shape, Nehru’s idea of an inclusive, tolerant India must die. But, as Dilip Cherian notes in *Teהלka*, in pulling Nehru down, without understanding his achievements, his detractors reveal their own smallness. In trying to obliterate Nehru’s legacy, the Hindutva clan could end up destroying India.

Essence of Discussions at Chitan Shivar Indore

On August 8 and 9, 2015, Sadbhav Mission, Indore organized a 2-Day Sadbhav Chintal Shivar at Visarjan Ashram, Indore with the dedicated efforts by Prof. A.A. Abbasi and Shri Tapan Bhattacharya. Ninety people participated. From Delhi Mrs. Khadeejah Farooqui and Prof. V.K. Tripathi joined. Four sessions were held on the following themes: i) Peoples' History and Culture, ii) Class Character of India's Partition and Rise of Sectarianism after Independence, iii) Neo-imperialism, Fascism and Terrorism, iv) Sadbhav Network and Program.

Peoples' History and Culture

For three thousand years India has been an agriculture based society. All the essentials, ranging from food grain, vegetables, fruits, spices, milk, oil, and butter to clothes and shoes were produced in the village. To a large extent villages were self reliant or would fulfil their needs with the cooperation of nearby villages. In place of currency, exchange of goods was prevalent. Ironsmith, carpenter, cobbler, potter, goldsmith, weaver, tailor, barber, oilman, mason, and artisans were integral parts of agrarian society. A small section in the village had large share in ownership, had opportunities for education and had influence over religious institutions. By the time of arrival of Gautam Buddha and Mahavir Swami (500 BC) the authority of this class had increased substantially and it began asserting itself as upper caste. Common men were divided into castes that had several levels of superiority. Dalits and tribals were largely deprived of ownership of land. The freedom of landless laborers and tribals (who made forest produce available to the village) was curtailed to a large extent.

When big empires came into existence, trades expanded, centers of higher education were created, mining grew, and the interference of state in the village increased. There were conflicts for power also. Big wars took place. A part of earnings of farmers and laborers went to the treasury. Soldiers would also be hired from among them. Some masons and artisans would find work in state activities. However, the interference of state in the villages was limited. To a large extent the self reliance and freedom of villages remained intact. So remained the caste hierarchy. Village Panchayats would resolve the dis-

putes according to prevailing laws and customs, albeit one can't say that the laws were fully rational and just. When it is recognized lawful that the Dalits and tribals have no right to study then how could a judgment on the issue of education would be just. The status of girls was also discriminatory and unjust. Despite these inconsistencies, a system had developed between the farmers, laborers and artisans. Bauddha Bhikshus tried to take education to common man. Some other people also came forward.

One common characteristic of all agrarian societies the world over has been adaptability. The agriculture began ten thousand years ago from the middle of Dajla and Farhat rivers in Iraq and the masses all over the world adopted it. Babur brought with him wax and new handicraft skills and these spread widely. Buddhism went from India to China, Vietnam, Japan, Sri Lanka etc. Christianity came to India soon after the crucifixion of Jesus when his disciple St. Thomas came to Kerela. Islam too came to India during the life time of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.) through the traders and King Cheraman Perumal accepted Islam. He went on pilgrimage to Mecca. Many others adopted Islam.

In 1194 when Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti came to India from Iran and established his khankah in Ajmer, Sufi-Saint movement began in India. From every section and class emerged sufis and saints – Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Ravidas, Namdev, Mira, Tulsi-das, Soordas, Rahim, Bulleshah, Hamdani etc. – who spread the message of truth, love and equality through their lives and behaviour. They expressed the essence of Vedas, Upnishads and Qoran in simple words/ verses and brought religion to the doorstep of masses. This lessened casteism, and fundamentalism. Many people, influenced by Sufis accepted Islam. For Dalits it provided a way of liberation from generations of oppression. Thus nearly one quarter of India's population adopted Islam. Even those who didn't convert, adopted several of Sufi' teachings. Many people influenced by the life and message of Jesus and the behaviour of fathers and nuns accepted Christianity. Only a few might be there who converted under greed or pressure. The influence of state on social structure was not large. Under the rules of kings like Akbar, there were some improvements in laws related to ownership of land, land revenue, and justice. Tolerance

also grew.

In the 17th century, Science took a mighty leap forward when Newton formulated laws of motion in simple mathematical form and James Watt invented the steam engine. This led to the development of trains and mills. The understanding of laws of electricity and magnetism led to the generation of electrical power from coal, oil and flowing water and to the development of motors, machines and appliances.

This development had its maximum impact on the process of production. The oil, cloth, sugar (gur) and other commodities of daily use that were manufactured in village industry began to be prepared in big mills. The mill owners needed cheap raw material and markets for their finished products. To realize these objectives they and their ruling classes considered it proper to enslave other countries. In this pursuit they needed weapons, hence they hired scientists to make weapons. Thus colonialism and imperialism spread in the world and science, instead of becoming beneficial to the masses, became an instrument of their slavery and poverty.

In India British rule began in 1757 when Sirajudaula was defeated in Plassey. British destroyed the textile cottage industry, put restrictions on agriculture, took away rights of Panchayats (village republics), raised an army of landlords and officers to have direct control of villages. This broke self-reliance of villages and led to famines every ten years, killing 1 to 2 million people.

However, science in Europe led to expansion of education and scientific thinking. Marx discovered the surplus value of labor and quantified exploitation, That led to freedom movements in the world. In 1857 India had a massive rebellion against the British rule. Farmers and tribals participated in it in many parts. Its prime feature was Hindu-Muslim unity. In Awadh alone, one lakh people were killed, a large number of whom were Muslims.

In 1885 Indian National Congress was established that laid the foundation of political struggle for freedom. Dadabhai Naoroji exposed acute economic exploitation of the Indian masses by the British. In 1915 Gandhi returned from South Africa. He gave a new meaning to Freedom – freedom in which every one is freed from oppression and exploitation, and in attaining which he/ she has a role. It was not possible

through guns to give strength to the souls of the oppressed and meek masses. Gandhi touched peoples' souls through truth, labor and realization of pain. From that evolved the power of the people. Farmers, workers, weavers, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, tribals, backwards, upper castes, boys and girls participated in every struggle from Champaran Satyagraha to Salt Satyagraha and Quit India movement. In 1947 India gained freedom.

Class Character of Partition

The foundation of partition was laid in the aftermath of 1857 revolt with the return of the British to power when they suppressed Muslims more than Hindus and latter Hindus more. This began antagonism in the elite of both the communities against each other. The structure of landlords, officers, traders and princes, created by the British, was such that they were devoted to the British. When Satyagraha and Khilafat and non-cooperation movements of 1919-1922 shook the roots of British empire, these classes created a network of communalism – Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League (initially both these were in favour of freedom), and RSS. For them Hindus' biggest enemies were not the British rulers but Muslim working classes and the enemy of Muslims were poor Hindus. The poison of sectarianism was so effective in the help of imperialism that even now it continues to be the powerful weapon of neo-imperialism.

The 1943 famine that killed two million people, mostly in Bengal, also helped the communalists to raise the bogey of higher percentage of Hindus among the people who became instantly rich through hoarding. In March 1947 the demand of partition of Punjab and Bengal by non-Muslim political parties also advanced the cause of partition. Gandhi had no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. When the volcano of hatred erupted, he jumped into it while the government encouraged the rioters. Nevertheless partition was not the division of people or land. It was only the division of political power – rule of the Congress on some states and the rule of Muslim League on some others.

Rise of Sectarianism after Independence

Gandhi's assassination in 1948 stopped the communal storm in India and Pakistan, For 20 years India

remained peaceful barring a few riots in Jabalpur, Ranchi etc. However, sectarian forces continued spreading their network underneath the surface. They already had their base among the officers, traders, landlords and princes. Through them they strengthened their hold on administration, academic institutions, religious institutions and markets. In 1969, by invoking massive communal riots in Bhiwandi and Ahmedabad that killed several thousand people, they established sectarianism as the prime instrument to break the unity of masses and accentuate exploitation. After that, massive riots, e.g. the ones in Nellie, Delhi and Bhagalpur, became a frequent occurrence. The temple movement, where middle and elite classes played a major role, raised passions to sky high. Around that time began globalization and privatization that rapidly increased the economic power of these classes. Their control over media and polity also grew. Post-Babri Mumbai riots, 2002 Gujarat pogrom, 2012 Bodoland violence, 2013 Muzaffarnagar violence that killed thousands of people and rendered lakhs homeless are examples of the ferocity of communalism. The ongoing process of polarizing farmers and workers arousing religious hatred is even more dangerous, specially when the villages are facing ruination at the hands of market forces. Communal forces are not oppressive and exploitative only to minorities but masses of all religions.

Neo-Imperialism, Fascism and Terrorism

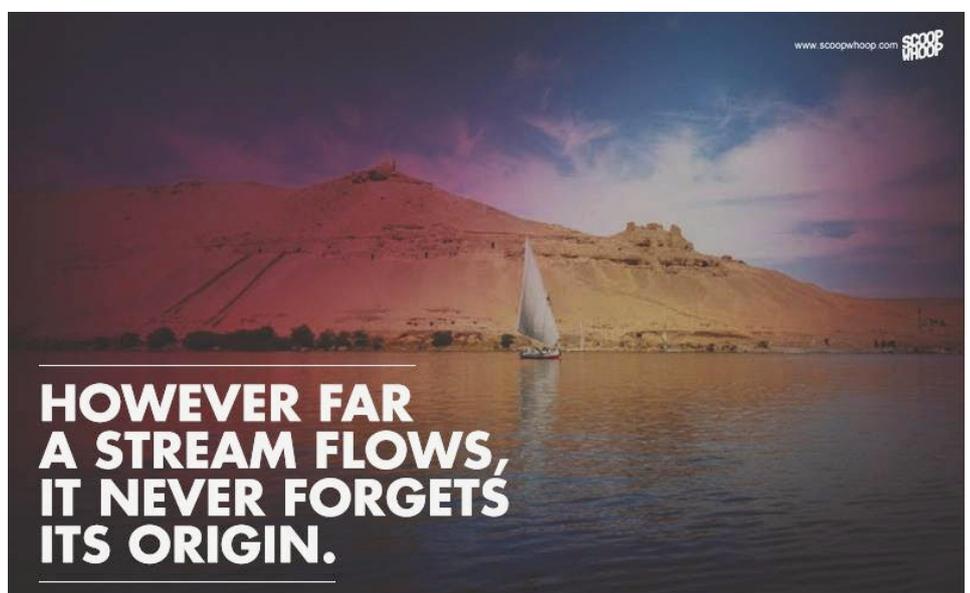
After World War II, capitalist camp declared communism as its main foe. Bloody coups were executed against elected/ progressive governments in Iran, Indonesia, Congo, Chile, and other nations and dictators were installed. Millions of people were killed by imposing devastating wars on Korea, Vietnam, Al-Salvador, Nicaragua etc. In this campaign communalists and terrorists of all shades – Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sinhalese etc. became their trusted allies.

In 1979 this fearsome design reached our neighbourhood. Until then Afghanistan had no extremism or violence. During our freedom struggle it had provided us

maximum help. In 1979 US intelligence got President Tarazi killed and Amin installed. Soon Russian intelligence got Amin killed and Karmal installed. The latter invited Russian forces to Afghanistan. USA funded fundamentalism and raised Taliban and Osama Bin Laden, to fight against them. After 10 years Russians left, however, super power tussle killed lakhs of innocents. When USSR vanished, capitalist bloc declared Islamic fundamentalism as its new enemy.

Terrorism for the last sixty years has been a slave of rich nations. They raise it and in the name of finishing it kill lakhs of innocents. Today they talk of Islamic terrorism, while 80% Muslims of the world, like other masses, are victims of violence and exploitation - half a million Muslims got killed in Bosnia, one million died of hunger and lack of medicine in Iraq due the sanctions imposed by the rich nations, Palestinians are oppressed and so on. Only handful of Muslims indulge in terrorism and that kind of people are there in all religions, who killed thousands of people including Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi. However, real culprits that brought death 40 million people, Hitler, Mussolini etc. were the rulers of affluent nations. In last sixty years too the ones responsible for killings of millions are the ruling elite of affluent nations.

The real motive of rich nations is economic exploitation. In the garb of countering terrorism they are making military bases in developing nations and spreading their intelligence network that keep leaders frightened and remain subservient to interests of multinational capital. This is the way to slavery. Besides this, they are strengthening sectarian forces.



2015 UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation



جائزة اليونسكو السلطان قابوس لحماية البيئة
*UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize
for Environmental Preservation*



I By Sameen Ahmed Khan I

The 2015 UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Award for Environment Preservation has been awarded to Fabio A. Kalesnik, Horacio Sirolli and Luciano Iribarren of the Wetlands Ecology Research Group of the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Prize is awarded every two years. The prize consists of a diploma, a medal and a cash endowment of US\$70,000. It is funded by a generous donation by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said of Oman. The awarding ceremony took place on the first day of the World Science Forum held in Budapest, Hungary, from 4-7 November 2015, under the auspices of UNESCO. This year marks 150th anniversary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; the 70th anniversary of the foundation of UNESCO and coincides with the silver jubilee of the prize.

The research and advocacy work of Kalesnik, Sirolli and Iribarren have contributed to the establishment and management of the Delta del Paraná Biosphere Reserve of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. Established in the year 2000, this Biosphere Reserve is a coastal freshwater delta of the Paraná River located just north of Buenos Aires. It is an area rich in biodiversity including species that find their southernmost limit of distribution, which makes the area interesting for the conservation of genetic diversity. The Biosphere Reserve contains low forests, forest ecosystems and secondary forests with plants such as Black Cottonwood (also known as western balsam poplar or California poplar). The main human activity in the delta is the exploitation of the willow forest for commercial purposes. Some areas

are however difficult to access and human impact is low. The region has suffered from a loss of human population and there were only 3,600 inhabitants living there, when the project was established. The establishment of the Biosphere Reserve aims at revitalizing the economy of the region at the same time as conserving the natural and cultural values of the area.

In order to support international efforts in the field of environment conservation, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman declared the establishment of the prize during his visit to the UNESCO Headquarters (Paris, France) in 1989. The awarding of the prizes commenced in 1991. The purpose of the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation is to afford recognition to outstanding contributions by individuals, groups of individuals, institutes or organizations in the management or preservation of the environment. Contributions have to be consistent with the policies, aims and objectives of UNESCO, and in relation to the Organization's programmes in this field, i.e. environmental and natural resources research, environmental education and training, creation of environmental awareness through the preparation of environmental information materials and activities aimed at establishing and managing protected areas such as biosphere reserves and natural World Heritage sites.

The UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environment Protection aims at finding scientific solutions to the environmental problems being faced by planet Earth. Since its launch in 1991, the prize honoured individuals and institutions across the globe. The prize is a noble message by His



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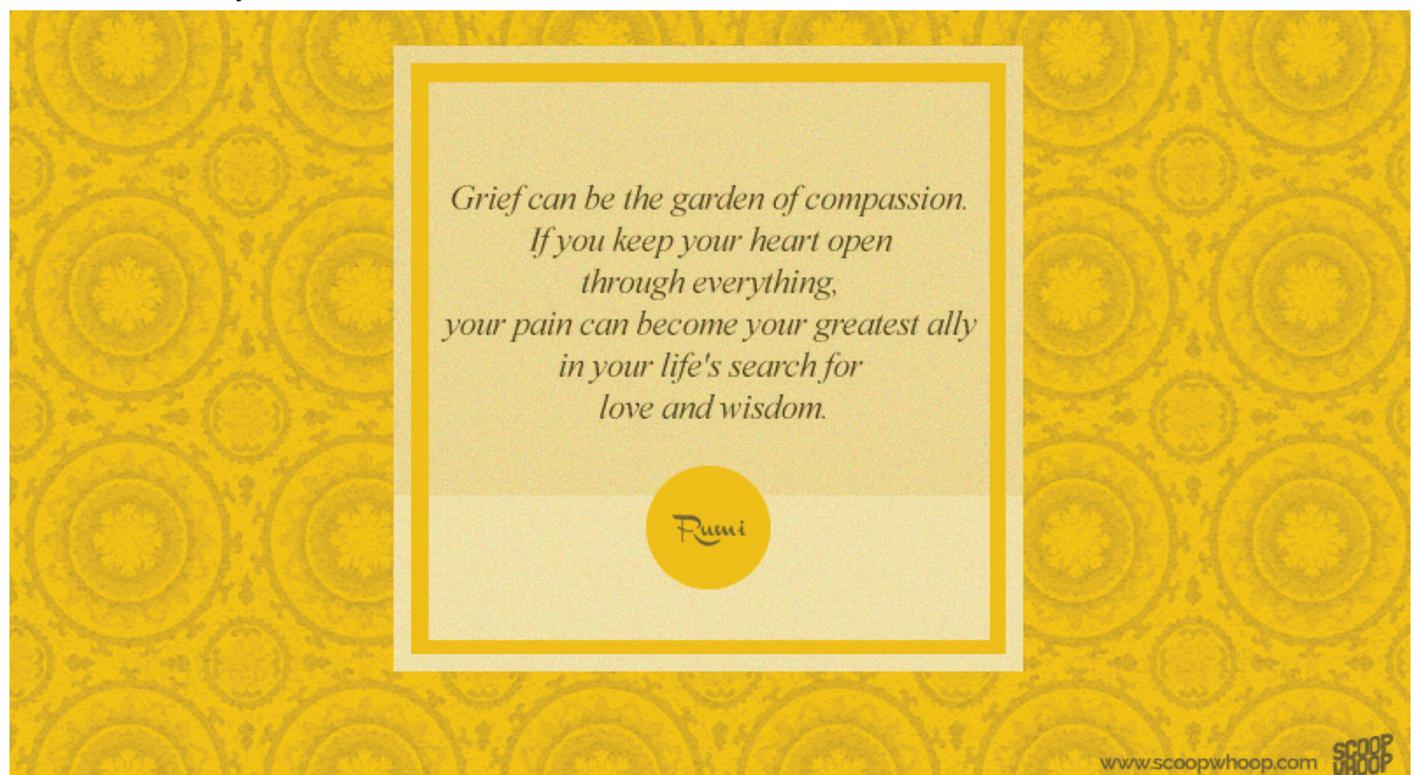
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Majesty Sultan Qaboos and is meant to invite the whole world to put in effort to achieve environmental safety for humanity. It is the first Arab environmental protection prize to be awarded at the international level. The other major science prize instituted by the Arabs is the King Faisal International Prize.

Nominations for the Prize can only be made by UNESCO Members States and by International Organizations or by Non-Governmental Organizations which have consultative status with UNESCO, each of which may make only one nomination. Others can propose their candidate to their country's National Commission for UNESCO. The deadline for submitting nominations for the 2017 Prize is around June 2017.

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Fresh wave of goonda attacks

I By Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam i

ning train.

Over the last few weeks there has been a growing sense of uncertainty among Muslims when they read about attacks on their co-religionists, their religious symbols, and malicious statements against celebrities with Muslim names. There is a clearly discernible method in this madness.

After the crushing defeat of BJP in Bihar elections, the Sangh-controlled, hate-driven organisations had for a while slowed down their rowdyism, fearing that such acts would further alienate voters from their political party, the BJP.

Interestingly, as the demoralised Sangh organisations de-escalated their goonda attacks, the large community of our writers, poets, artists and scientist relaxed and allowed the powerful award wapsicampaign to gradually taper off. As if on a cue, a fresh round of violence and provocation has begun.

The lynching of Akhlaq in Dadri for allegedly storing beef in his fridge was a better-known incident, but similar, less murderous, attacks have been going on in villages away from media glare. The police are not known to have thwarted a single attack, or brought the culprits to book.

Such attacks by Gorakhsha (cow protection) gangs are now more frequently reported. They are making random raids on non-vegetarians and alleging people to be eating, carrying or storing beef before beating them up badly. More often than not, it turns out to be mutton, or buffalo meet, not beef.

Nobody cares to know whether the flesh in question is beef. Even the meat taken away from Akhlaq's fridge for forensic test is still not known whether it was beef. Supposing it was beef, the law does not allow vigilante violence or murder, as in the case of Akhlaq, for this "crime".

The latest case has been reported from Harda district in Madhya Pradesh. Last week gang of ruffians boarded a train near Bhopal and straightaway started roughing up Muslim-looking men and women, alleging that they could be carrying beef. They announced that they were Gorakhsha volunteers. They demanded from all Muslim-looking men and women to show their baggage. They snatched a sack from a couple and asked what was inside. They said 30 kg of pulses and other grains. Then the ruffians threw away the sack out of the run-

The Muslim husband and wife, whose sack had thus been thrown away, started a senffle with the ruffians. Then a policemen materialised from nowhere and disengaged them. The Gorakhsha men moved to the next compartment, hunting for some other Muslim.

The police almost never come to the victim's rescue. Even in this case the policeman intervened only after the sack with 30 kg of pulses and other grains in it was thrown out of the running train. However, in this case the Harda SP acted more boldly and arrested some of the culprits.

Undaunted, the ring leader of the gang has threatened that if SP did not relent, he would have to face a massive anti-Muslim riot. He threatened to "repeat 2013 in Harda." He was alluding to the huge anti-Muslim riot of 2013 in Harda, which was a handiwork of these people. The man has several criminal cases against him. Fortunately, the SP has refused to be bullied by this politically-connected mischief maker.

This terror campaign against Muslims has several components. One of them is making derogatory remarks against Islam, Muslims and their Prophet (PBUH) publicly. The obvious goal is to humiliate Muslims enough for them to retaliate, which then is turned into a full-fledged riot situation.

Another is to target high-profile Muslims and publicly malign them as anti-national. At least on two occasions they tried to humiliate Vice President Hamid Ansari by suggesting that he was not patriotic enough. On both occasions the veep was constitutionally right and proper while the Sangh trouble-makers were in the wrong.

Every now and then they ridicule Dilip Kumar, Shahrukh Khan and Aamir Khan for their Muslim birth. Shahrukh's and Aamir's high-security protection has been taken away and Aamir has been dropped from government ad campaign. These steps have been taken after a long demonisation campaign against them. Salman Khan has been spared because of his father's and his closeness to the PM.

All this shows that no lesson has really been learnt from Bihar.

http://iosworld.org/short_takes/Fresh_wave_of_goonda_attacks.htm

Appeasing the Relatives: Article of Faith

by Dr Syed Zafar Mahmood

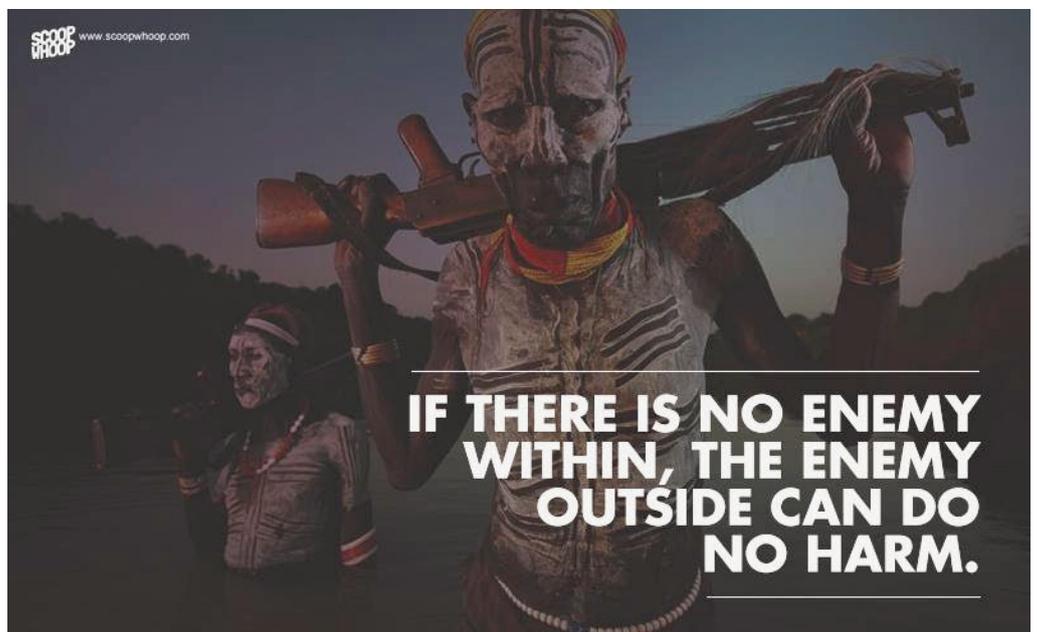
Last week an elderly lady in my extended family left for her eternal abode. May Allah bless her soul with a high pedestal in Paradise, amen. Later during condolence sessions it came to light that her son is highly technically qualified and worked in the Gulf at half a million Rupees monthly salary. As mother began falling frequently ill he requested his wife to shift to New Delhi, permanently stay with mother and serve her. The good wife happily agreed and shifted base to the Indian capital. In due course, as mother began remaining regularly unwell, the son quit his lucrative job in the Gulf, took up a not so good position in the national capital region and both of them started living full time with mother. He noticed that due to her aching knees mother was not able to climb up while she liked to sit in the sun on the roof. He carved out space in a corner of the house and got an elevator installed. Lo & behold, even in the 21st century there are some persons in the world who discern God's real purpose behind creating the humanity and act thereupon. One feels like envying the parental upbringing of this young couple. The boy and his wife were actually implementing God's command in letter and spirit: In the best way possible do good to your parents and the relatives (holy Quran 4.36). Even Dr Sir Mohammad Iqbal was amazed at such high level of parental upbringing:

Ye faizan-e nazar tha ya ki
maktab ki karaamat thi
Sikhaaye kis-ne Ismaeel ko
adaab-e farzandee
Was it the school lesson or
parental upbringing that
taught Ismail (Ishmael)
what should he happily for-
bear for the sake of his par-
ents' pleasure ?

While the significance of serving the parents is generally well known let's try to understand what God has enjoined upon us in respect

of our relatives. In order to describe the relatives God has used two types of terms in the Quran: Arhaam and Aqraboon or other derivatives of the 3-letter Arabic root QRB like Qurba, Aqrabeen, Maqraba. Arhaam is plural of Rahm that's the chamber in the mother's sacrosanct body in which the human being gestates. But as a collective noun, Arhaam has been used in Quran Kareem to describe one's extended family comprising all the relatives both through birth and matrimony. As per divine instruction each one of us has to continuously and duly discharge the obligations of kinship (4.1). Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi writes in Tafseer-e-Majidi that according to the divine law (Shari'at) the kinship group is the basic unit of society. Prophetic tradition says that, hanging from the celestial throne, the womb supplicates God to 'bless those who augment me and censure those who frustrate my centrifugal aspirations'. Quranic commentators mutually agree that patronizing the relatives is a fundamental obligation of faith (Wajib) and to deliberately disregard them is sacrilegious. For this, the individual is under continuous divine surveillance. The Prophet (S) also exhorted that even if the other fellow tries to sabotage the relationship bond, one should still stick on unilaterally. He declared: Whosoever wishes augmentation of provisions and elongation of life period must indulge in obliging and appeasing the relatives (Sila-Rahmi).

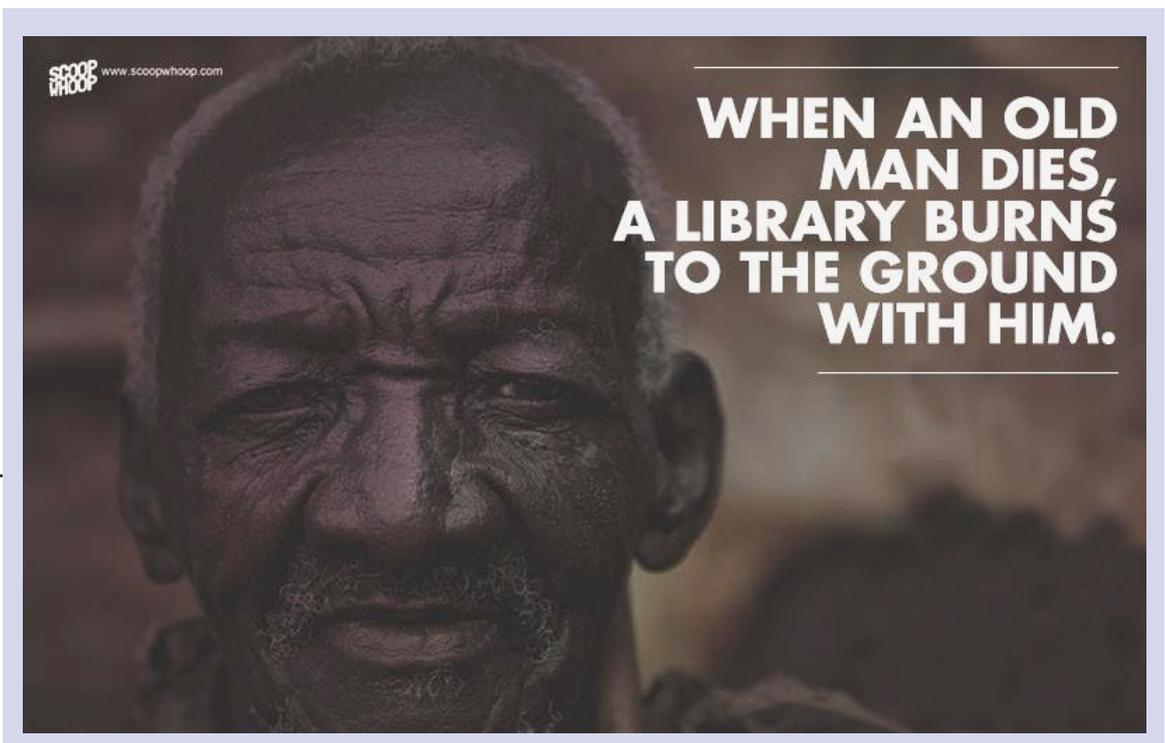
Abu Huraira (R) complained, "I try to strengthen the



bonding while some of the relatives frustrate my efforts"; the Prophet (S) informed him that till he does that an angel would remain deployed by his side. God further desires (26.214) us to keep reminding the society about such injunctions of Shari'at. Also, He cautions us that the relatives deserve our attention on priority vis a vis the other members of the society (33.6). According to Tafhim-ul-Quran any act of charity done ignoring and superseding the needy relatives doesn't squarely measure up to the divine reckoning. There is a special mention in the Book regarding helping the relatives who are orphan (Yateeman za maqraba - 90.15) that commands greater reward. We are forewarned (47.22) that our going against these heavenly writs may tantamount to twisting the basic infrastructure leading to societal upheaval; God detests and deprecates such assailants of His design. Tafhim-ul-Quran says that this verse enlists Qata-Rahmi (cutting off a natural relationship) among the fundamental prohibitions (Haraam). Conversely, Sila-Rahmi has been bracketed (2.177, 4.36) among the best deeds (A'maal-e-Saaleh). According to the commentators all the relatives - distant & close - of an individual constitute what is known as Zawil Arhaam. For special consideration of this group God has used (42.23) the term Al-mawaddata Fil-Qurba. Closer the relationship more intense is the obligation and bigger is the sin for pausing or laying off the relationship. As per divine scheme Zawil Arhaam has been made internally self-sufficient. In a kaleidoscope, turning around the cylinder in a circular motion shows different designs and colour combinations. Similar is the internal mechanism of Zawil Arhaam: in the group of relatives some are very rich, some very poor, some on the threshold, some very learned, some illiterate, but the group as a whole is internally self-reliant. God keeps a tab on every group member as to his/her behavior with others. God's minimum expectation from us under Sila-Rahmi is to "not avoid what best one is

capable of doing" for the fellow group members. In two verses of Quran Karim (17.26 & 30.38) Sila-Rahmi has been declared as the right of the needy relatives in the assets & capabilities of the better off members of Zawil Arhaam. Mind you, God may sometimes even turn around the kaleidoscope of Zawil Arhaam and thereafter the red color may begin looking white .. and the white, pink etc. Qata-Rahmi is ill-treatment with the relatives or deliberately not doing what best one is capable of doing with the relatives. In 17.26 God enjoins upon us not to be spend-thrift and squander away our wealth & income and, instead, discharge the obligations of the needy relatives.

Simultaneously, God has also put a caveat (60.3) that even in order to favor the relatives nothing should be done in violation of God's law otherwise on the Judgement Day the relatives too would not be of help. Also in 4.135 God clarifies that we are expected to remain on the side of justice even though it goes against ourselves, our parents or any other relatives; be he/she rich or poor, God warrants our obedience in supersession of his/her interests. We need not let our desires have the upper hand vis a vis the divinely mandated straight path and should, rather, fulfill the promise that we've made to our Creator (6.152). God told the Prophet (S), 'Say, I do not ask from you for any compensation (for guiding to the right path) except valuing the natural relationships'. The scriptural research done by the famous commentator Hazrat Ashraf Ali Thanvi (R) tells us that patronizing the relatives amounts to pure observance of faith (Iman).





King Faisal
INTERNATIONAL PRIZE

King Faisal International Prizes for 2016

By Sameen Ahmed Khan I

The King Faisal Foundation in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has announced the King Faisal International Prize for the year 2016. The recipients in the categories are as follows. Service to Islam: Shaikh Dr. Saleh Abdullah bin Himeid of Saudi Arabia; Islamic Studies (Topic: Muslim Geography Heritage): Professor Abdullah bin Yousif Al-Ghunaim of Kuwait; Arabic Language and Literature (Topic: Analysis of The Arabic Poetic Text); Professor Mohamed Abdalmotaleb Mostafa of Egypt and Professor Mohammed El-Ghazouani Miftah of Morocco; Medicine (Topic: Clinical Application of Next Generation Genetics): Professor Joris Andre Veltman and Professor, both from Netherlands; and Science (Topic: Biology) was awarded to Professor Vamsi Krishna Mootha of USA and Professor Stephen Philip Jackson of UK. The prize consists of a certificate, hand-written in Diwani calligraphy, summarizing the laureate's work; a commemorative 24 carat, 200 gram gold medal, uniquely cast for each Prize; and a cash endowment of Saudi Riyal 750,000 (about US\$200,000) to be shared equally. The winners received their awards in a ceremony in Riyadh under the auspices of the King of Saudi Arabia.

The prizes are named after the third king of Saudi Arabia. In the year 1976, the sons of late King Faisal (1906-1975) established a large-scale philanthropic organization based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and named it as King Faisal Foundation (KFF). One of the activities of the KFF is the King Faisal International Prize (KFIP), to honour scholars and scien-

tists, who have made the most significant advances to benefit humanity and enrich human knowledge. The annual prizes are in five broad categories. Prizes for Arabic Literature; Islamic Studies; and Services to Islam; were first given in 1979. Medicine and Science were introduced in 1982 and 1983 respectively. Each year the selection committee designates subjects or subcategories to each of the above five. The science subcategories cover a broad scope: physics; mathematics; chemistry; and biology by rotation cycle of four years. Over the thirty-seven years (1979-2015), there have been 247 laureates from 43 nationalities. The distribution is Service to Islam (44 scholars from 21 countries); Islamic Studies (36 scholars from 14 countries); Arabic Language and Literature (48 scholars from 13 countries); Medicine (65 scholars from 13 countries); and Science (54 scholars from 12 countries). Within Science, the individual subject recipients are Physics (17 from 7 countries); Mathematics (10 from 6 countries); Chemistry (14 from 6 countries); and Biology (13 from 4 countries). Within three decades the KFIP are ranked among the most prestigious awards. To date there are 17 KFIP laureates who also received Nobel Prizes (mostly after the KFIP). There are two KFIP laureates (in Mathematics) who are also recipients of the Fields Medal.

The prize for Service to Islam has been awarded to Shaikh Dr. Saleh bin Abd Allah bin Humaid Consultant, Saudi Royal Court; Member of the Commission of Senior Religious Scholars, Imam and Preacher of the Holy Mosque in Makkah and President of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, Jeddah (<http://www.fiqhacademy.org.sa/>). He was

awarded the King Faisal International Prize in recognition of his outstanding services to Islam, including the following: (a) His leading role in the International Islamic Fiqh Academy which serves the Islamic nation with regards to contemporary and forthcoming fiqh issues. His Excellency has put forth a strenuous effort, profound wisdom, deep vision and positive influence when dealing with contemporary fiqh issues. His input illustrates moderation and combines original fiqh opinions with present time changes. (b) His meticulous efforts in religious education and call to Islam through hundreds of classes, lectures and conferences in different congregations and cultural centers. (c) In addition to his dedicated efforts in supporting the Islamic nation through his classes, fatwa and speeches

The prize for Islamic Studies (Topic: Muslim Geography Heritage) has been awarded to Professor Abdullah bin Yousif Al-Ghunaim of Kuwait. In recognition of his seminal contributions both as an author and critical editor of original manuscripts of Muslim geographic legacy and his distinguished venture to revive ancient Arabic terms on shapes of the earth's surface and adapt them to contemporary geography. This is exemplified by his Arabic texts "The Pearls" and "The Arabic Geographic Heritage" in addition to his unprecedented record of earthquakes in his book: "Arabic Register of Earthquakes". He is the President of the Kuwaiti Studies and Research Center (<http://www.crsk.edu.kw/>). A total of 36 scholars from 15 countries have been



Medals of the King Faisal International Prize

at the Holy Mosque. (d) His authorship of many Islamic texts highlighting the virtuousness, values and history of Islam. A total of 44 scholars from 21 countries have been awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam. The previous four winners from the Indian subcontinent are Sayyid Abul Ala'a Al-Mowdoodi (1979); Sayyid Abul-Hasan Ali Al-Hasani Al-Nadawi (1980); Khurshid Ahmed (1990) and Dr. Zakir Abdul Karim Naik (2015).

awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies. The two recipients from India are Muhammad N. Siddiqui (1982); and Ali Ahmad Ghulam Muhammad Nadvi (2004).

The prize for Arabic Language and Literature (Topic: Analysis of The Arabic Poetic Text); Professor Mohamed Abdalmotaleb Mostafa of Egypt and Professor Mohammed El-Ghazouani Miftah of Morocco. Professor Mohamed Abdalmotaleb Mostafa

is recognized for his important accomplishments in applied analysis of Arabic poetry; he has competently and skilfully coined his analysis of poetic texts with deep knowledge of Arabic culture and insight of contemporary literary and stylistic concepts. Professor Mohammed El-Ghazouani Miftah is recognized for his distinguished methodical and theoretical endeavours in the Prize's topic. He has employed modern concepts in analyzing and describing Arabic poetic texts, perceiving them within the context of human culture. A total of 48 scholars from 13 countries have been awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Language and Literature.

The prize for Medicine (Topic: Topic: Clinical Application of Next Generation Genetics) is awarded to Professor Joris Andre Veltman and Professor of Netherlands. Joris Andre Veltman is a Professor of Translational Genomics at the Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, and at the Maastricht University Medical Center, Maastricht. Han Grrit Brunner is a Professor of Medical Genetics and Head of the Department of Human Genetics at the Radboud University, Nijmegen Medical Centre, and Head of the Department of Clinical Genetics of the Maastricht University Medical Center, Maastricht. Professors Brunner and Veltman were selected as winners in recognition of their prominent role in moving into clinical practice a novel method of analyzing DNA, referred to as next generation sequencing. This has greatly improved the way of identifying genes that cause disease in patients and families suspected of having an inherited disorder. They have also initiated strong international collaboration in both research and diagnostics. They have published widely in outstanding scientific journals and have been recognized by their peers as innovative scientists. A total of 65 scholars from 13 countries have been

awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Medicine.

This year's prize for Science is in the area of Biology. It has been awarded to Professor Vamsi Krishna Mootha of USA and Professor Stephen Philip Jackson of UK. Vamsi Krishna Mootha was born in Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh), India and his family moved to the USA when he was an infant. Mootha comes from a family of doctors. His father is a doctor, as are his two brothers, his sister, and all of their spouses! In 1993, Mootha received his BS in Mathematical and Computational Science from Stanford University. He too joined the family's medical fold, but with his tastes sharpened for laboratory research. He received an MD (1998) from Harvard University Medical School. It was as a first-year medical student at Harvard that he found his passion: mitochondria, the microscopic "power plants" inside cells that convert food into energy. Vamsi Mootha is an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and a Professor of Systems Biology and of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Mootha is currently not clinically active, but rather, leads a research team dedicated to fundamental mitochondrial biology and disease. His research group consists of clinicians, computer scientists, and biologists, who work collaboratively to elucidate the network properties of mitochondria, and how these properties go awry in human disease. They are also using chemical genomics to find disease biomarkers and identify therapeutic strategies. Dr. Mootha has received a number of honours, including a Padma Shri from the Government of India (2014). Stephen Philip Jackson was born in 1962 in UK. Jackson received BS in Biochemistry from University of Leeds in 1983. He was awarded the PhD in 1987 for his work on the yeast RNA splic-

Postage Stamps

On 3 April 2006, Saudi Arabia issued the following two postage stamp "King Faisal International Prize - Supporting Research



ing carried out at Imperial College London and Edinburgh University. He is a Senior Group Leader and Head of Cancer Research UK Laboratories at the Gurdon Institute, and an Associate Faculty member at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. Jackson's work focuses on the DNA-damage response, which optimises cell survival and genome integrity by detecting DNA damage, signalling its presence and mediating its repair. Such defects are associated with neurodegenerative diseases, immune-deficiencies, premature ageing, infertility and cancer. This research might suggest new ways to alleviate such conditions. He is also credited with an innovative approach to bring his findings into tangible therapeutic products to treat cancer. It is hoped that, together with the work of others, such research will indicate how defects in the DNA damage

response can lead to diseases such as cancer; neurodegenerative diseases and premature aging, and how such diseases might be better diagnosed and treated. A total of 54 scholars from 12 countries have been awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Science. Prof. Mudumbai Seshachalu Narasimhan is the only Indian to have won the KFIP in the science category (for Mathematics).

Here, it is relevant to recall the Egyptian born American chemist Ahmed Hassan Zewail, who pioneered the Femtosecond chemistry in the 1980's by observing the chemical reactions (a femtosecond is a thousandth of a billionth of a second). He was the first person to observe the formation and breaking of chemical bonds in real time. Ahmed Zewail was recognized by the King Faisal International Prize for Science in 1989 in the subcategory physics with the co-winner Theodor Wolfgang Hänsch from Germany. Ahmed Zewail received the 1999 Nobel Prize for Chemistry unshared. Egypt recognized him by issuing the postage

stamps in 1998 and 1999; Order of Merit in 1995; and Order of the Grand Collar of Nile in 1999. It is to be further recalled that the Mathematician and Science Historian Roshdi Hifni Rashed received the Award in 2007 under the category of Islamic Studies for the Topic: Muslims' Contribution to Pure or Applied Sciences. The other major science prizes instituted by the Middle Eastern region are the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation and the recently launched Mustafa Prize for Science by Iran.

The topics for the five prizes for the year 2017 (1438 Hijri) are Service to Islam; Islamic Studies; Arabic Language and Literature; Medicine (Topic: Biologic Therapeutics in Autoimmune Diseases); and Science (Topic: Physics) respectively. The deadline for all nominations is Sunday the first May 2016 (23 Rajab 1437). Additional details at the King Faisal Foundation Websites: <http://www.kff.com/> and

<http://www.kfip.org/> respectively.

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Further Reading

1. Sameen Ahmed Khan, The King Faisal International Prize for 2014, BaKhabar, Vol 7, Issue 02, pp 21-22 (February 2014). Published by Bihar Anjuman, <http://bakhbar.biharanjuman.org/>.
2. Sameen Ahmed Khan, The 2015 King Faisal International Prize, BaKhabar, Vol 8, Issue 03, pp 4-7 (March 2014). Published by Bihar Anjuman, <http://bakhbar.biharanjuman.org/>.
3. Sameen Ahmed Khan, UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation for 2013, BaKhabar, Vol 7, Issue 04, pp 13 (April 2014). Published by Bihar Anjuman,



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