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BE AWARE, ALWAYS, EVERYWHERE

Volume 8, Issue 05, May 2015

INSIDE STORY

My Hijab-My Choice

Empathy in Marriage

A world full of Muslims

Recognizing Armenian Genocide

Is the Quran incomplete

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Bihar Anjuman BaKhabar

Editorial Board

Asrarul Haque, Seraj Akram, Mohd. Allam,
Ms Farhat Shakeel and Jahanzeb Mashhadi

bakhabar@biharanjuman.org

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Masjid e Rabaa bin-Adawiya: We Weep for Thee

Your majestic walls
Turn ghostly
Splintered arches, broken
pillars
Rip open our masks
The bowed heads
Splutter!
A red splash!
You become crimson bright
Masjid e Rabaa bin Adawiyya
We weep for thee
We named you after Rabia
When misery came to her,
cried
I thank you, O Allah,
You haven't forgotten me!
Listening to my passion cries
Rabia spoke softly
You were, 'Occupied' when
Aqsa was seized
Now why do you weep for me?

By Asma
Anjum Khan



9 Ways to Lower Your Daily Stress

I By Abu Productive I

Stress has unfortunately become a normal part of our lives. In modern society, it is one of the silent culprits that affects anyone. A little might not be too bad for anyone, but continuous stress can cause negative effects on your mind, body and overall life.

A stress statistic data showed that 77% of people in the U.S. regularly experience physical symptoms caused by stress. Long-term stress can cause headache, acne, chest pain, high blood pressure, fatigue, teeth grinding, depression, anxiety etc. Making use of stress management methods is essential to take charge of one's own health and mind. Although it is not an easy job, managing stress is a prerequisite to living a healthy and happy life. I have suffered from stress for a long time without realizing it, so to help manage your own stress, here are 9 practical tips that helped me keep stress at bay:

1. Exercise regularly

Exercise is one of the most effective treatments against stress. Not only does it reduce stress levels, but it can also reduce fatigue, improve concentration levels and the physical ability to fight disease. Research shows that doing exercise in the morning on an empty stomach has a greater impact than at other time. If you feel a lack in energy, you can eat a few dates to stabilize your blood sugar levels.

Exercising every morning for 20-30 minutes is a great way to start your day. There are many different types of exercise to choose from, so do whichever is suitable and enjoyable for you.

Start with small changes

Exercise does not always have to be a specific workout; it can include any activity that increases your heart rate, so try being active whenever the opportunity arises. For example, make it a habit to take the stairs instead of the elevator, or walk/bicycle when traveling short distances instead of riding a car. Our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was reported to walk in a fast pace, now known as a power walk. In a hadith, Ali raḍyAllāhu 'anhu (may Allāh be pleased with him) described Muhammad's ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) vigorous way of walking:

“When he walked, he lifted his leg with vigour. He did not drag his feet on the ground like women do. When he walked, because of the speed and force of the legs, it seemed as if he was descending from a high place.” [Tirmidhi]

In another hadith about the Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), Abu Hurairah raḍyAllāhu 'anhu (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that:

“I did not see anyone walk faster than him, as if the earth folded for him. A few moments ago he would be here, and then there. We found it difficult to keep pace when we walked with him, and he walked at his normal pace.” [Tirmidhi]

Remember that if you take exercise as a chore, after sometime you could lose interest or find excuses not to do it. Therefore, try to encourage your family members to join you, as any activity done with others tends to be more enjoyable.

2. Do breathing exercises

Breathing exercises are another excellent antidote for stress. When you feel really stressed out, try this for 5-10 minutes:

breathe in with your nose for 5 seconds hold your breath for 3 seconds, then slowly breathe out through your mouth for a count of 7 seconds. This breathing exercise will calm your body and you will start to feel relaxed. Just remember to breathe with your belly, specifically your diaphragm (the muscle that sits just below your lungs), rather than your chest, for more efficient breathing.

Doing this regularly is good for a healthy body and mind. Studies have shown that doing a similar breathing technique while meditating for as little as 8 minutes a day can slow down the negative effects associated with ageing.

3. Eat right

Most people do not realize it, but food can also affect stress levels. Certain types of food and drink can increase stress levels, such as fast foods, butter, cheese, meat, shellfish, sugar, tea, coffee, and soft drinks.

This does not mean that you have to avoid them completely, but you should consume them in moderation.

Remember that Allah subḥānahu wata'āla (glorified

and exalted be He) says: "... And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." [Qur'an: Chapter 7, Verse 31] Some people like to drink tea or coffee when they are stressed from their studies or work. It may feel refreshing for a short time, but they also contain certain neuro-stimulators like caffeine and theobromine, which are proven to increase stress levels. Fortunately, there are also some foods that can help relieve stress, particularly foods with a high vitamin and mineral content. These include fresh vegetables and fruits, yogurt and green smoothies. Eating fish that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, trout, sardines and tuna three times a week, can also help reduce stress levels.

4. Sleep well

Sleep is a vital part of our life. To reduce stress-inducing hormones, a good night's sleep is exceedingly important. When you are tired and not well-rested, your stress hormones increase. You can easily remedy this by sleeping 7-9 hours per night. However, the best quality sleep occurs in the early part of the night, which is in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ who advised us to sleep right after 'Ishasalah. Sleeping around 9-10 pm also makes it easier to wake up for Fajr. However, if you happen to wake up in the middle of the night and cannot fall back asleep, get up and pray tahajjud. Also if you get chance, take a

short power nap after Dhuhur.

5. Laugh

They say laughter is the best medicine and not only is it good for the body, but also for the mind as it can reduce stress hormones. So whenever you get a chance, try to enjoy the blessings of a good laugh. Of course, a lasting smile (also sunnah) can be just as beneficial, as your brain is tricked into being happy thereby releasing stress-relieving chemicals. You could also try other activities that make you happy, like reading a book, baking, or taking a walk.

6. Enjoy the company of family and friends

The lonelier you are, the more you will attract negative feelings. Keep in touch with your family members and close friends to feel better and spread some love. A study from the University of Michigan found that chatting released hormones involved in bonding, which in turn reduced anxiety and stress, thus making the participants happier.

So to reduce stress, enjoy some time with your family and friends by doing any kinds of activity, for example, go for a picnic, a bike ride or just chat. Not only will it help reduce your stress levels but also help to build a strong bonds between each other.

7. Take advantage of your free time

In our busy life, we need some time to enjoy our-



Photo Credit: Amy McTigue at flickr[dot]com/photos/amymctigue/

selves. You can use your free time in a productive way by doing something to serve your community, or simply relaxing and listening to Qur'an recitation, a lecture by your favorite lecturer, or reading any hadith or Islamic book.

This way you can increase your knowledge and faith, and also help calm your daily struggles. It is a necessary asset in the life of a person who wants to live stress-free. When you learn about of the struggles the sahabah made for their religion or how difficult it was for them initially to even pray five times in a day, a person can easily see that their struggle is small compared with that of our Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and his sahabah.

I read an article where a sister mentioned that she had a special place in her house where nobody is allowed to disturb her, not even her children. She went there everyday for some time to praise Almightily Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) as if she was in a cave. Having a similar dhikr zone in your own house is an excellent way to make time to connect with Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) and enjoy some peaceful moments.

As Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) says in the Qur'an: "... and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed." [Qur'an: Chapter 62, Verse 10]

8. Manage your time well

To manage your time properly, identify your 'MITs': most important tasks; and do those first everyday to get them out of the way. You can also develop a routine based on your regular tasks, so you can focus on the tasks that need more attention. There are many apps available to help you, such as 30/30 or Todoist.

If boredom is the reason for your stress, then simply use that time for learning or understanding verses of the Qur'an, or even try to memorize it. As Ibn Abbas raḍyAllāhu 'anhu (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

"There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) Health and free time for doing good." [Bukhari]

9. Be content with what you have

Most of us are not satisfied with what we have. You might be stressed about not getting that promotion, or unsatisfied with your job/salary, or tensed with your children etc. Remember that there are people dealing with harder situations than yourself; some are homeless, jobless, or without children.

In worldly matters, look to those below you to be humbled (looking above you triggers jealousy and ungratefulness), while in religious matters look to those above you to get inspired to reach a higher level of taqwa.

You must always be thankful for what Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) granted you. You might think that what you want is better for you but He knows what is truly best for you. Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) might be giving you what you need or He may be testing your iman so that you may call upon Him and increase in piety. The path you are on is the right one for you, even if you cannot see that right now.

Stress cannot solve your problems, but it only causes more, especially to your health and social life. So, be happy with what you have, be patient, try to do your best and ask Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) for guidance.

Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He) said: "So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me." [Qur'an: Chapter 2, Verse 152]

In reality, it is difficult to avoid all sources of stress as we encounter a myriad of situations on a daily basis, but do not let stress control your life. Try to make a little time everyday for your health and well-being, as they are blessings from Allah subhānahuwata'āla (glorified and exalted be He). About Abu Productive: Abu Productive is the nickname of the founder & CEO of ProductiveMuslim.com, Mohammed Faris. He is an international speaker, author, and coach dedicated to boosting productivity in the Ummah. Currently, he's authoring a book on Islam & Productivity which will be released in the 2nd half of 2015.

Source: <http://productivemuslim.com/lower-your-stress/#ixzz3YEpdNCQP>

A world full of Muslims?

I By Aijaz Zaka Syed

A distant Indian friend seems to spend much of his time scouring world media for all things Islamophobic. He shares the insight thoughtfully with people like yours truly often with his own commentary in big, bold type. His mails often begin with ‘Mad Muslims did this... or that.’ He often trolls me and my types on Twitter, imploring us to “open our eyes” and “go get a life.”

I do not mind the ‘intellectual engagement’ although his ‘love’ of all things Muslim gets a tad overwhelming at times.

A global study by the Pew Research Center this week suggesting Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and that by 2050 India could overtake Indonesia as the country with the largest number of Muslims got my friend and his ideological kin predictably excited. Already obsessing over the bogey of an ‘alarming rise’ in Muslim population in India, the findings couldn’t have come at a more appropriate time for the Parivar. By the way, if it is any consolation, before India, it is Pakistan which is set to beat Indonesia as the nation with the largest Muslim population in the next 15 years. And if the Pew study is to be believed, this could be the global pattern of population growth in the next few decades.

“Over the next four decades, Christians will remain the largest religious group, but Islam will grow faster than any other major religion,” notes the study titled, ‘The Future of World Religions: Population Growth and Projections 2010-2050.’

It suggests that by 2050 there will be near parity between Christians and Muslims (2.9 billion and 2.8 billion respectively), possibly for the first time in world history. And if the trend continues, Islam will emerge ahead of Christianity as the most popular faith in the world by CE 2070. But Hindu friends can take heart from the fact that the Hindu rate of growth will also continue apace with Hinduism emerging as the third largest faith in the world. However, while India will remain a predominantly Hindu majority country, it will also be home to the world’s largest Muslim population, which will grow only marginally, from 15 to 17 percent.

The Hindu population is projected to rise by 34 percent worldwide, from a little over 1 billion to nearly 1.4 billion by 2050. Interestingly, the next four decades will also see Europe’s Muslim population — Islam is already the fastest growing faith on the continent — nearly double its demographic share, jumping from the present 43 million to 71 million or 10 percent of the white, Caucasian, Christian population. These are fascinating findings and may have quietly lifted the spirits of the easily excitable faithful at a time when there’s so little to celebrate. A mere increase in numbers does not necessarily promise a rosier future and a greater say and share in global affairs and resources though.

The Pew study must have also been greeted with a groan by many around the world at a time when Muslims aren’t exactly the most popular people around. A world with more “mad Muslims,” as my friend often describes us, may seem like the ultimate nightmare to the rest of the world.

But given the endless shenanigans of IS, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Shabab, Taleban and our other benefactors, can you really blame the world if mere mention of Islam and Muslims sets off alarm bells everywhere? Islam is supposed to have come as a blessing and bearer of glad tidings to all of mankind. Muslims believe that Qur’an is the Last Word of God that must be shared with and become the collective legacy of humanity. According to the Book, the Last Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent as ‘Rahmat Al-Alameen,’ a mercy for the whole world. It was Islam’s universal message of peace and oneness of humanity that within a short span of 23 years united the perpetually sparring, cacophonous tribes of Arabia into a force for peace and good and conquered the world.

Yet some lunatics are hell-bent upon painting this liberating, all-embracing faith as a rigid, rabid cult of hate and death. Not a day passes without some shameful atrocity and abomination being carried out in its blessed name. Indeed, the extremists have spawned a whole new ecology of violence and indifference. And the world has gotten so used to these frequent acts of horror and shame that they no longer provoke a strong, popular response.

While the majority of Muslims silently hang their

heads in collective shame, many of them simply shut out the obscene reality that these extremists have come to represent. As a consequence, whether one likes it or not, it is the fringe that is increasingly being perceived as representing and speaking for Islam and Muslims.

The Economist magazine, often speaking for the Western intellectual establishment, has concluded that “liberal Islam” has already lost the battle, if not the war, to manic extremists like IS. Which is, to put it mildly, a dangerously flawed and limited view of the complex reality of the Islamic world. Notwithstanding all the havoc that groups like Al-Qaeda and

proud, prosperous country that gave birth to IS. A report in the UK’s Independent this week offers eye-opening insight into how former Baathists and generals of Iraq’s disbanded army helped in spawning the phenomenon called IS. Indeed, they are said to be largely running the Isis show, (which perhaps explains the spine-chilling killings and casual brutality, characteristic of the former Baathist regime). Indeed, if the whole of the Muslim world, from Africa to Afghanistan, is in freefall today, much of the credit goes to the self-serving, shortsighted interventionist policies of world powers. Yemen, in the front-line of the US ‘war on terror’ for the past many years, is the latest victim.



Isis have wreaked in the past few years in the name of Islam and its followers, they remain a very tiny, little fringe.

Despite all their claims and protestations to the contrary, the extremists do not represent or speak for even a fraction of the vast and diverse population of nearly two billion people. Besides, all said and done, much of the violence and destruction unleashed by the extremists, despicable and deplorable as it is, is spawned by a combination of factors including historical injustices and political and economic dispossession. Look at the rise of the so-called Islamic State, for instance.

As President Barack Obama acknowledged recently, it is the US invasion of Iraq and the fine mess that the ‘coalition of the willing’ subsequently made of a

That said, Muslims cannot afford to content themselves by blaming the West for this mess. No matter who sowed the seeds of strife and no matter who started the fire, they must do all the firefighting. For it is their house that is on fire.

Muslims must speak out more often and more forcefully for reason, tolerance and peace and against the growing extremist attempts to appropriate, taint and distort the universal teachings and message of their faith. What is the point of swelling Muslim ranks if they remain afflicted by perpetual strife and violence? What’s the point of our growing numbers if we do not contribute to the progress and wellbeing of humanity at large?

<http://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/730446>

Age of Consent or Age of Marriage! A Fresh Look at Marriage Prospective

Authentic narrations inform us that Abdullah bin Amr bin al Aas, the companion of the Prophet (pbuh) was only 11 years younger than his father Amr bin al Aas (May Allah be pleased with both). So it is said to be the case of Abdullah Zubair and his father Zubair bin Awwam (May Allah be pleased with them both).

While streaming along the local trends, some of which are global, a majority of Muslims have started taking some Islamic values as out dated and impossible or impractical in today's life. They might not say it but their attitudes and actions show it.

A prominent Scholar of India who is well over 60 got married to a young girl of 22, (and this was not an affair). Wherever they go, people in the Muslim circles, react with surprise. Their reactions are like: "What an odd couple! How can a guardian get his daughter get married to a man her grandfather's age! In today's times it should be better avoided." By the way the couple is happy and don't care for the blamers. Alhamdulillah.

A comfortable way to be happy, is not to care for "what will people say" if you have not done anything that is haram.

If you are ashamed of Islamic values, even of the permitted things, then something is wrong with your confidence, not with the values, because Islamic values never get outdated nor its fruits get stale. One of the many Islamic traditions, that needs to be revived, and which offers solutions to many prevailing problems, is the age of marriage.

The West has a similar term, 'The Age of Consent', which means that a girl or a boy is at liberty to choose a sleeping partner.

In some Western countries, including Sweden, the age of consent is around 13 years, with some countries having 16 years of age, thus the news of girls getting pregnant in schools and facilities of condoms and anti-pregnancy pills are not looked down upon. It is not a taboo.

Islamically, it is a taboo to get involved in illicit relations. Islam welcomes the age of consent if it is asso-

ciated only with marriage. For example, Islam accepts if a 13 year old girl in Sweden gets married, but a fornicating relationship will not be tolerated.

Government surveys in India reveal that more than 30 percent of girls in inner India get married before they reach 18, but there are no statistics of girls sharing a bed with boys during their school age. The former is taken as a genuine concern of worry while the latter is taken as 'fruits of liberty'.

The Prophet's (pbuh) marriage to Aisha, who was more than 10 years younger to his youngest daughter, went un-protested even by his staunchest enemies. No Jew or a Christian or a Mushrik ever raised the issue, but we see that many Muslims, who are educated in the secular environment, feel uncomfortable on being confronted. In fact, the smart Muslim would turn the tables over putting counter arguments on illicit affairs among school age children in most parts of the world. Twenty percent of abortions carried out worldwide are done for the purpose of getting rid of unwanted babies in illicit relations.

Islam has offered so many options to make marriage easy and zina (adultery and fornication), difficult.

Consider these norms which were very general in those times and essentially required in today's time:

- Marriages do not include expensive banquets. In one of his marriages, the Prophet (pbuh) asked people to bring whatever eatables they had and the people shared the meal.
- If a girl likes a virtuous man she can also request her guardian to send a proposal for marriage.
- A pregnant widow delivered her child and prepared herself for another marriage. Her guardian found it odd and presented the matter to the Prophet (pbuh) who approved it.
- The age factor is never an issue when arranging a marriage.

A truthful man like Abu Bakr Siddique (r.a.) never minded his daughter getting married to the Prophet (pbuh). Ali bin Abi Talib got his daughter married to

Umar bin al Khattab (r.a.). Abdullah bin Abbas said: “By Allah! Even if I knew that there is only one day left in my life yet I would get married!”

Size, shape and color never matter. Ummuhatul Mom'ineen Sauda, the wife of the Prophet was a woman of large size, people could identify her easily. Another wife, Safiyya (r.a.) was short and

Prophet. She did not compare her status and looks with his. Narrators say that after the sahabi died there were offers of marriage proposals from many Noble Arabs to this lady, who had accepted the proposal of a man not matching his looks.

AbuTalha (r.a.) had been injured in the battle of Uhud and he had a small limp. Despite that he was



Khadeeja was 15 years older to the Prophet. (May Allah be pleased with them all)

The elderly Khadeeja and the teenage Aisha were the dearest wives of the Prophet (pbuh) and he (pbuh), never showed any signs of regrets for marrying them.

‘Indeed in the Messenger is the best example for you to follow’, Surah al Ahzab, Verse 21.

A young maiden accepted the proposal of a dark and short sahabi just on the recommendation of the

receiving marriage proposals.

Moral of the story? Even noble men love to marry women who do not mind their physical and social shortcomings because of their religious inclinations. This is what is expected when male and female Muslims desire to marry a person of religion.

My advice to sisters: Huge and lavish houses and lucrative careers should not be the main criteria for choosing your partner. Prefer Simplicity. Simplicity offers the best alternative. There are very few boys

who earn huge amount of money to satisfy your expensive desires and can offer you luxurious tours and designer items, but there are large numbers of boys who can keep you happy with little amount they earn.

My advice to brothers: There are very few girls whose looks can fit into the image of the good looking females whom you have been carrying in your minds after watching pictures of models and actresses, but there are large number of girls who will carry on with you in spite of your ups and downs in your life and be happy with what Allah has given you. Choose your spouses from this list.

If you don't take up the easy route to peace and tranquility offered by your Creator then you may have to tread on difficult paths made by others. In that case, instead of being the leaders of the world, you will be following the rest of the world meeting more miseries on the way.

Failed Marriages! An Analysis

A young man was once complaining of his matrimonial problems. He said "Alas! My marriage has failed." I consoled him, "If you are divorced, then Allah will give you another wife, Inshallah". The man retorted, "No, No, I am not divorced, and though my marriage has failed, we continue to stay together. We are grading our lives !" This is a common phrase now.

It was then that I was introduced to another category of 'Failed Marriages' in our society. "We are not happy but we still continue to stay together." Most of the failed marriages fall in this category. Many couples drag their matrimonial lives unhappily for various reasons. Some are middle aged couples who fear about their own future, especially the wife who may be worried about any future prospective in getting married, while some drag their lives being worried about their kids.

"What stand my daughter, being 37 years old, will have if I get her divorced, when there are hundreds of unmarried girls of 25–30 years, earning and looking good," said a pained father whose daughter continued suffering in her in-laws house, where her husband refused to earn, her mother-in-law made her work for hours and the family believed that though it was a case of a failed marriage, the relation must go on because she had two daughters.

Among the best solutions, can be proper counseling. We require good counselors who can talk to the warring couples and sort out their issues. Someone senior in the family or a genuine senior personality can be asked to interfere in the matter and get it solved. It's a big contribution to the society. It brings to my mind the honorable verse from the Qur'an from Surah Nis'a, chapter 4: If you fear a breach between the two, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers... If they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Kindly note the last part of the verse: IF THEY WISH FOR PEACE, ALLAH WILL CAUSE THEIR RECONCILIATION.

Once, I was a party among the peacekeepers of my family where we were trying to sort out an about-to-break marriage of my relative. The stubborn couple was in a hurry getting separated as they were into hostile fights since the beginning of their married life. We were all about to give up when my grandmother, Saeeda Abdul Karim Nadiadwala, stormed in at the last moment. She walked up to us and said, "Don't take any decision, and let me have a word with the couple for few minutes in privacy." We agreed and the couple followed my grandmother. In few minutes all the three came out smiling and my grandmother announced with an authoritative cheer, "They have compromised!" It has been twelve years and the couple is still living together happily. Since then I had been asking my grandmother that what did she do or what did she say to the couple that prevented a divorce within a span of five minutes? She never gave me a reply but used to smile. Later, after ten years, when she was ill in bed, I repeated the question. This time the sick old lady whispered in my ears, "I slapped both of them!" And then she smiled.

Many a times, a timely interference of an elderly person in a matrimonial dispute can save a marriage life even though it seems that it is running into rough weathers. But slaps are not always a solution unless you hold a position in the heart and the mind of the warring couple that goes unchallenged in terms of love and affection. You must have that charisma that people will give up their egos upon your command. This is a sign or characteristic of a good and a successful counselor.

Dhaani: Empowering women financially in flood-prone areas of Bihar



A woman getting vocational training at a Dhaani training centre in Purnia district of Bihar.

I By Mumtaz Alam, I

23 March 2015.

New Delhi, 24 March 2015: Najbun had had hard times until 2009 when a big change came in her life. Mother of nine children would find it hard to meet both ends in Purnia district of Bihar while husband living in Delhi to earn livelihood. Then came Dhaani and with it a big change in Najbun's life. The economic empowerment initiative of Delhi-based ANHAD gave vocational training to her and she has since been smiling.

Living between in-law's home and her maternal home, Najbun's whole world was nine children. She was a daily wage. But since 2009, Najbun's day has not passed working in the sun but under a roof. Thanks to Dhaani, she now runs her home as well as the village. No wonder if she is the next head of her village.

In the last three years, 550 such women have been trained in Purnia and Araria - flood prone districts of Bihar. As some of the areas in these districts remain under water for a few months every year, people lose seasoned crop, months of earning, large amount goes on restructuring of houses.

Giving details about the Dhaani initiative, ANHAD's chief and renowned social activist Shabnam Hashmi says: "Anhad started working in Purnia District in Bihar in 2008 after the Kosi floods. After the initial relief work and livelihood support to over 150 families we set up vocational training centres in 10 villages in Purnia and Araria."

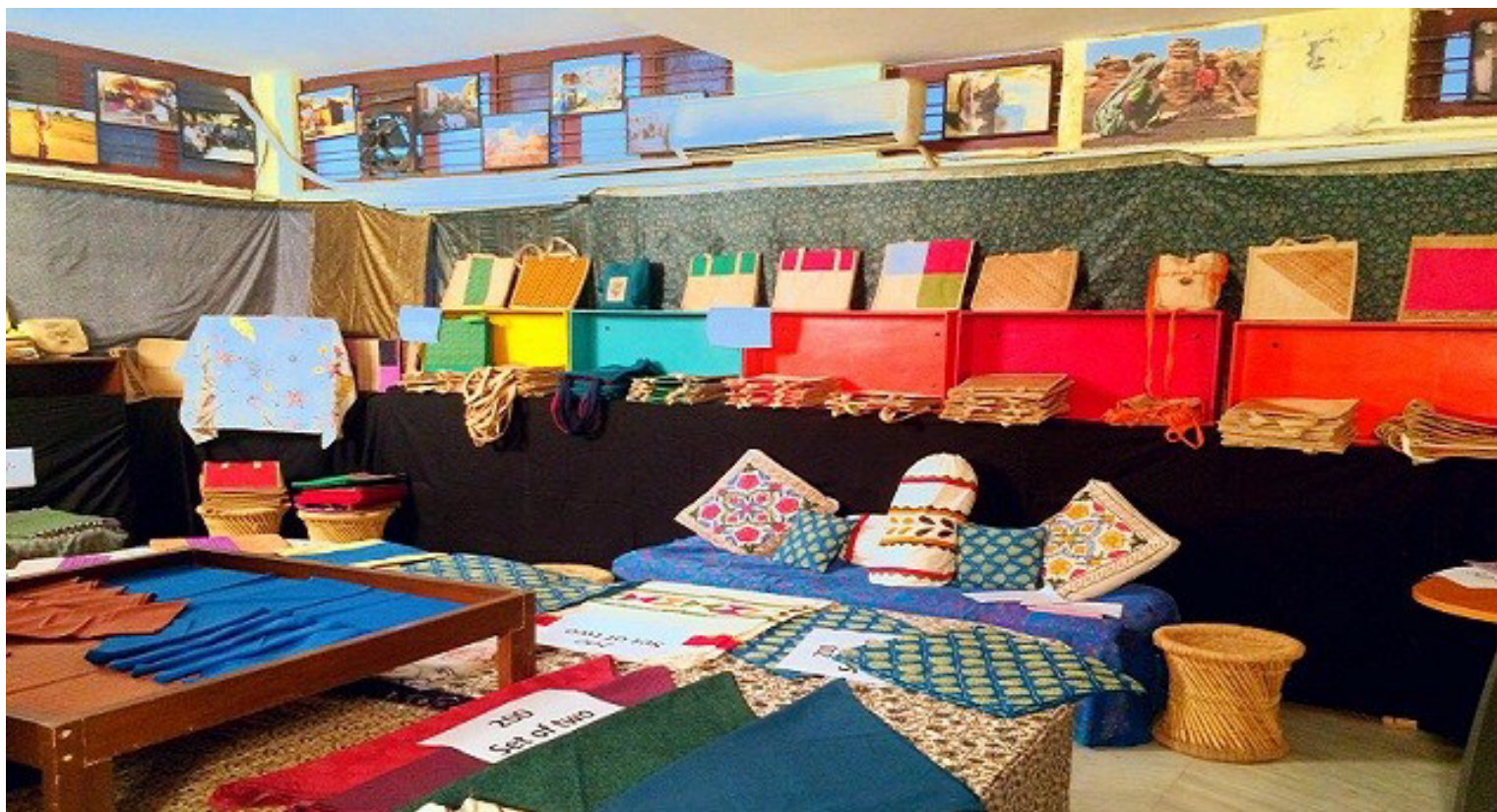
There is close to 80% migration in some of these areas. Villages are full of young women work force but in absence of opportunities, lack of exposure, rampant illiteracy, with no specific skill, unavailability of capital keeps them confined to their homes.

Products of Dhaani women at exhibition in Delhi on

The official figures for female literacy in Purina are 22.17% while in Araria it is 23.72%.

“We gave training to 550 women in making jute products over a period of three years. Then Dhaani - a producer company was formed to market the products and provide livelihood to

The products are in jute, silk other fabrics which women from Bihar, Gujarat, Kashmir and some parts of Delhi have made. The proceeds of course will go towards their empowerment, helping them to be independent and helping them to live because lot of them just live hand to mouth and helping them to educate their chil-



Products of Dhaani women at exhibition in Delhi on 23 March 2015.

the women. Now Dhaani is run by village women and professionals,” she informs.

Dhaani organizes exhibition every year in Delhi and put the products made by these women on sale. This year’s annual exhibition and sale was opened on Monday (23 March) at C 5, Basement, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi. The exhibition will remain open till 31st March from 10am to 8pm daily.

Inaugurating the Dhaani exhibition, eminent Bollywood actor Soha Ali Khan praised the work of ANHAD and Dhaani.

“I know ANHAD has done some very good works since 2002 when they started it in Bihar. The products which are sold under the banner of Dhaani are beautiful and I buy them all the time.

dren,” said Soha.

“I would recommend these products not only for their beauty because even though they might be lightly costlier than you might purchase in another market, I think the value that they add to the lives of these women is beyond measure,” she said.

Shabnam Hashmi also sought support to Dhaani initiative. “There are many people who want to do some good work but the busy life does not give them the opportunity to do so. By supporting Dhaani all those who want to support livelihood of rural women can contribute their bit,” she said.

Follow the writer on Twitter @MumtazAlam1978

Yearning for a better Environment with Earth Day

I By Sameen Ahmed Khan I



Introduction:

With growing population and technological progress, the biophysical environment is being continuously degraded—sometime permanently. This has been recognized by individuals and governments and there are efforts to save the environment from rapid degradation. There have been several movements to safeguard the environment such as the Earth Hour and the Earth Day aimed at creating an awareness of the various environmental issues. The Earth Hour started in 2007 in Sydney, Australia by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and involves a simple action: switching off the lights for one hour every year in March. Earth Day is an annual event, celebrated on April 22, on which day events worldwide are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It was first celebrated in 1970, and is now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network, and celebrated in more than 192 countries each year.

India has emerged as a decisive environmental, social, economic and political power. Earth Day Network's India Program, headquartered in Kolkata, is engaging partners to build and enhance the region's civic mobilization and leadership in the environmental movement.

An Islamic Perspective of Environment:

In Islam, the environment is a very broad concept and includes climates and its components; plants, animals, human beings and all things found in the ground, oceans and the atmosphere. Thus the concept of the environment is very comprehensive encompassing each and everything. Allah Almighty has created everything in balance. Utilizing the natural resources in the wrong way harms the balance. So, the human beings are totally responsible for

maintaining and conserving the environment. For instance the word water is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Quran in about fifty verses; this is in addition to the rain, clouds, rivers and oceans. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Don't waste water even you are on a running river', which shows the importance of water in the Islam. The Prophet further emphasized the conservation of the environment and the prevention of its destruction. It is forbidden to cut trees during the battles. Destroying the environment is encroaching on the rights of future generations. The environment must be maintained as it was found. People should consider the future of the next generations, which also have the right to benefit from the environment. According to the Islamic thought, benefits from the environment should not be limited to some people. Instead, it should be the source of life for all people at all times.

The issues related to the environment appear over hundred and fifty times in the Quran. The Islamic view of the environment extends to all things found on the grounds of the earth and in the atmosphere. Environmental protection is important in the Quran and Sunnah. Islam considers the people to be responsible for any damage done on earth. Therefore, people should protect the environment and conserve the natural resources. Maintaining the balance of the natural resources is the only way to guarantee survival. May Allah Almighty Guide us to serve the environment, Amen.

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Sameen Ahmed Khan
Engineering Department,
Salalah College of Technology
Salalah, Sultanate of Oman
(rohelaakhan@yahoo.com, <http://SameenAhmed-Khan.webs.com/>)

‘Education is the Key’ – Expatriate Organization Bihar Anjuman



RIYADH— More than 350 persons participated in "Shaam-e-Bihar 2015," the annual event organized by Bihar Anjuman, a premier welfare organization dedicated to educational upliftment in India.

Syed Muneer, president of the Riyadh Chapter of the organization, in his welcome address explained the various welfare activities in which organization is involved and sought the members and guest to further strengthen the cause.

Principal of International Indian School Riyadh (IISR) Dr. Shaukat Perwaiz appreciated the efforts of the organizers and said that the focus must be on education and we all shall help each other for this kind of noble cause of providing free education to the deprived children.

Prominent businessman and educationalist Nadim

Tarin was the chief guest of the event and a memento was presented to him for his contribution in the field of education. Nadim emphasized the importance of such welfare activities and ensure his support.

Rashid shaikh, another businessman was the guest of the honor of the event and said that he is touched by the cause which Bihar Anjuman is working and he requested the audience to be actively involved in this journey as education is the key for empowering the society.

Various educational activities including quiz and sports were also organized with the objective of motivating the children. Prizes were given to all the winners by the chief guest.

Many prominent Indian community leaders and lots of Bihar Anjuman volunteers attended the event and

were instrumental while organizing the event.

Bihar Anjuman thanks to all sponsors of this event: Jareer Medical Centre, Cocopalm Restaurant, Gulf Union Foods Co., Petro Institute of Technology and Abdul Aziz Hamad AlFares & Sons Company.



How ‘communalism’ hovers over the destiny of India

I By Ghulam Muhammed I

India is at the threshold of a historical breakthrough. It has potential for reaching heights of progress and development as well as challenges that can usher in a neo-colonial stranglehold on entire Indian economy as well as its cultural expanding into a well defined civilization. This time around, unlike British, Portuguese, French and Dutch colonizer trying their luck to conquer India through the force of arms in the 18th and 19th century, the neo-colonizers will lasso India with huge amounts of paper investments, in which they themselves will remain indebted to a world, that dare not name its name. Like the earlier wave of colonizers, Jews will be the lead strategists and funders to all such foreign enterprises and as in earlier phases, they are relentlessly committed to their own priorities in shaping the world to their own dreams of a World Order. Earlier they camouflaged their moves under assumed identities like British, French, Dutch et al. This time around they are sufficiently confident to come out openly to claim their victim's total surrender to their diktats.

In India, they are playing the game of divide and rule, by taking advantage of the communal divide that was planted by the British colonials in India and using this communal divide to subdue India.

While at face value judgment, President Obama praises for Modi's rag to riches story depicting India's dynamism and potential as a great nation, he has not find it convenient to analyze how Modi's rise in Indian politics differs from the normal opportunity-led nations' cleaner pathways.

Modi has shot up a communal hate-mongering fascist organisation on the basis of its 'triumph' in 'teaching a lesson to the uppity Muslims' in the post-Godhra state-wide genocidal pogrom. US Human Rights watch-dogs have appropriately kept alive the final verdict on how to deal with a supposedly state sponsored massacre of innocent civilians in Gujarat, by working against any lifting of the ban on Modi's visa to visit the USA. However, Obama disregarded the massacre as a minor blip in national or international historical events and lauded the assumption of power by Modi, strangely on that same murderous record of Muslim bloodletting that could not fit into Obama's own sense of dynamism and opportunities.

One can place this bloody event as one off happenstance, if it is not tied up to an ideology that can rival with Islamism in its worst avatar. 'The clash of civilization' that Jewish British Historian Bernard Lewis had first identified and named in his famous article published in 'Foreign Affairs' magazine, could hover over India's future in such a menacing scale that India's future development will assume the same scenario that Europe had gone through in last century. It is time that Modi should realize that the way his and his party's Hindutva is hiking the stakes in their Hindu-ization of India, is fraught with dangers that are not unknown in history.

Modi should not forget that while British were supposed to give up their colonial rule, they, Churchill in particular, came out with partition of India, as they wanted a part of India for their own strategic exigencies. Jinnah and Muslim League were minor details for them. Nehru, Patel and Gandhi thought once Muslims are out, they can rule India as their own undisputed property. They fought decades to nurse the dream. However, it was difficult to throw out the overpowering presence of the West, while we were trying to stand on our two feet. That partition of land has now gravely translated into partition of ideas. An Idea of India and an Idea of Pakistan! Both will be called upon to fight it out on our soil; while the neo-colonials will be there to pick up the pieces.

In his zeal to cut ribbons, hug opportunist friends and let international Zionist conspirators seep into nooks and corners of this vast country, like cockroaches in summer, he may push India into a big time arena, where its mettle may be tested much before it has gained strengths and stability.

Modi must realize that the term 'communalism' should not be treated as something long known to India and easily subject to taming; it can take many shapes as peripherals change all around us. In the kaleidoscope of events and characters, India is treading on a tapestry that is renewing itself time and time again. Modi must come to terms with his fellow countrymen, the Muslims. India should be a united India to face the rest of the world.

[Published in NRI Indians forum]

Is the Quran incomplete?

Why are hadiths needed?

By MDI • APRIL 9, 2015

There are some who claim that the Quran is incomplete, that the Quran does not explain all things, and that certain issues and subjects must be consulted from other sources to get a clearer picture, such as going to the hadiths and tafsir. An example would be the prayers, to fully understand and learn how to pray one must consult the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) which is to be found in the hadiths, hence the critics of the Quran argue that this proves the Quran is incomplete.

whom We have given the Book, that it hath been sent down from thy Lord in truth. Never be then of those who doubt.

010.024 □ The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth- which provides food for men and animals: (It grows) till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is decked out (in beauty): the people to whom it belongs think they have all powers of disposal over it: There reaches it Our command by night or by day, and We



The critics also argue that the Quran is in contradiction as it claims to be a book that has explained things in detail:

006.114 □ Say: “Shall I seek for judge other than Allah? – when He it is Who hath sent unto you the Book, explained in detail.” They know full well, to

make it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who reflect.

030.028 He does propound to you a similitude from your own (experience): do ye have partners among those whom your right hands possess, to share as equals in the wealth We have bestowed on you? Do

ye fear them as ye fear each other? Thus do we explain the Signs in detail to a people that understand. So does the Quran get disproved when Muslims go to hadiths or tafsirs? Not really, because the Quran itself says:

004.080 □ He who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah: But if any turn away, We have not sent thee to watch over their (evil deeds).

So as you can see Muslims are commanded to obey the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and this verse explains the importance of obeying the prophet, that obeying the prophet is infact like obeying God since the prophet is conveying what God commanded. Hence when Muslims consult the hadiths and the sunnah of the prophet for explanations, this doesn't disprove the Quran, rather it is following the Quran's command. Because the Quran commands us to obey the prophet.

Here is another important verse:

2: 151- Similarly (to complete My Blessings on you) We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad SAW) of your own, reciting to you Our Verses (the Qur'ân) and sanctifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Qur'ân) and the Hikmah (i.e. Sunnah, Islâmîc laws and Fiqh – jurisprudence), and teaching you that which you used not to know.

As you can see the Quran says that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) teaches people the book, so when people consult the hadiths where they find the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) teaching us about the Quran, this doesn't disprove the Quran as being incomplete, rather it is following the Quran.

The Quran is indeed complete, because it tells us that we should obey the prophet, and that the prophet teaches the book, so when we learn the book and learn certain things from another source such as the hadith it is following the Quran's command. Remember the previous quoted verse, which stated that obeying the prophet is like obeying God, hence when one takes knowledge and wisdom about the Quran from the prophet it is like taking it from God since the prophet got his wisdom and knowledge about the Quran from God.

So the Quran explains to us that we should infact go to the prophet to also understand the Quran and its rulings and teachings.

Had the Quran not instructed us to obey the prophet and consult him for explanations and rulings then one could say the Quran is incomplete, yet the Quran explains to us that we should consult the prophet who teaches the book so that we may understand it better, hence the Quran explains everything for us.

And here is another verse:

4: 59- O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad SAW), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (SAW), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.

The Quran commands us to obey those in authority, such as the scholars and the ones of knowledge, hence when we don't understand something or need to have something explained to us then we should refer to these people in authority about the matter. The verse goes on to say that if we have any differences amongst ourselves then we should resolve this issue by first going to Allah, which means going to the Quran to see what Allah commands, and then secondly we should go to the prophet which means his sunnah which is to be found in the hadiths and see what it says. Hence in this verse the Quran is giving clear authority to the sunnah of the prophet which is to be found in the hadiths, only second to the Noble Quran.

So how can someone claim the Quran is incomplete when the Quran strictly commands us to refer to the prophet for guidance and instruction? How can someone claim the Quran is incomplete when it grants such a high authority for the prophet's teachings and guidance?

This verse basically sums it all up, that Muslims have two sources to refer to for explanations, one which is the Quran which comes first, and the second is the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), after this we can go to the ones in authority, the learned scholars and gather knowledge from them since the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets as the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught.

<http://thedebateinitiative.com/2015/04/09/is-the-quran-incomplete-why-are-hadiths-needed/>

Visiting the Mosque

I By Sameen Ahmed Khan I

The word mosque comes from the Arabic word, Masjid, which means a place where one prostrates oneself, or a place of worship. The Mosque is the base and the foundation stone for Muslim society and serves as the center for all social, cultural, political and other activities prescribed in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) always laid emphasis on the crucial role of the Mosque. In the very early days of his Prophethood (in Makkah Mukarramah), he used the house of Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam as a secret centre for prayer, preaching, education and training. Hazrat Arqam's house was strategically located at the foot of Mount Safa, only a short distance from the Kabah. The Dar Al-Arqam (House of Arqam) served as the centre as there was no Mosque in Makkah Mukarramah at that time. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to meet his Companions at Dal Al-Arqam and teach them the essential tenets of Islam. The Companions used the Dal Al-Arqam to perform the prayers in secret fearing wrath of the non-believers in Makkah Mukarramah. However, the Prophet (PBUH) would perform the prayers in open for all to see. As is well-known the Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Madinah Munawwarah. On the way he camped at the outskirts of Madinah Munawwarah at a place called Quba for four days. During this very brief period he laid the foundation of a mosque, now known as the Masjid Quba. The Prophet (PBUH) left Quba on a Friday to head into Madinah. About a kilometer from Quba he passed the village of Banu Salim bin Auf. There he offered the fir Jummah congregational Salaat. Approximately one hundred Muslims participated in this first Jummah Salaat. This is the second Mosque and known as the Masjid Jumhah and Masjid Bani Salim. After reaching Madinah Munawwarah, the first step by the Holy Prophet was to build one more mosque which is now known as the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid Al-Nabawi). There were many more mosques build by him and his blessed companions. These indicate the importance of mosques in Islam.

Masjid Al-Nabawi is a role model for all mosques. It was used by the believers for the congregational prayers. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) used it for delivering his sermons covering all aspects of life. He used to meet the visiting delegations and also sent

his delegations from Masjid Al-Nabawi. The functions of the mosque in the early period of Islam included:

1. Apart from the Jummah (Friday) congregation, the Muslims used to assemble in the mosque in difficult times and sorted out the issues confronting them.
2. The mosque was like a university to the grownups who acquired and imparted education and knowledge.
3. For the children, it provided elementary education where they were taught to read and write.
4. Literary gatherings and discussions were held in it.
5. Seminars were held to promote intellectual activities.
6. The Qazi (Judges) set up their courts to impart justice.
7. Sometimes the criminals and convicts were placed in custody.
8. It provided accommodation to the poor, needy, homeless and travellers.
9. Food was distributed among the poor and hungry.
10. At times it was also used as the state guesthouse.
11. It was also used as hospital for the sick.
12. Marriages were held in the mosques.
13. It was also the state armory where weapons were made and stored.
14. The Baitul Maal (House of wealth, used for handling financial matters) was also in it.
15. Any other matter of importance was discussed and resolved in it.

May Allah Almighty help us to realize the importance of Masajid and make us its obedient servants, Amen.

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My Hijab... My Choice

When I First Put On Hijab

The Experience of a New Hungarian Revert

By AyaTimea

http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/living-islam/personal-stories/in-their-own-words/461296-when-i-first-put-my-hijab-on.html#at_pco=smlwn-1.0&at_si=551911603539abe4&at_ab=per-2&at_pos=0&at_tot=1

Putting my hijab on wasn't actually a hard decision for me.

Since I took my shahadah, I was always dreaming of wearing it outside as well.

For some Muslim women, it is a real jihad as they can't imagine themselves wearing a veil and covering their hair.

I met many Muslim women who were praying, fasting, going to lectures, seeking knowledge, yet they always found excuses why not to wear their hijab. But Al-Hamdulillah, in my case I was very attracted to hijab.

I can't describe how much sadness and jealousy I felt when I saw a Muslim woman on the street walking with her beautiful hijab. On one hand, I was so happy to see her because in Budapest it is pretty rare to see a Muslim woman with hijab but on the other hand, I felt so disappointed as I was a Muslim too, yet I feared she will never recognize me and greeting me with "Salam"; rather she'll simply walk away not even thinking of that she just passed by a Muslim sister. I was so disappointed as I felt "out of the group."

Hijab was a sign of a real Muslim woman for me and

I felt I am like in between: A Muslim as I already declared my faith, but still "not a real one".

Hardships of a New Convert

This time I was almost seventeen years old. Everyone knows that assuming the faith in Islam in the West is like throwing a sheep to the wolves; it will cause many days and months of struggling and fighting with the family and friends, basically about any issue. But insha' Allah, Allah will reward you for these hard moments and soon comes the ease.

I guess my faith was just not strong enough to bear

fighting for my hijab as well; it kept on burning in side

During my last high school year, I just felt it is impossible to walk in with hijab. No way. My class already excluded me; they attacked me every day with some hurtful comments and couldn't leave a minute without making fun of me. When I returned home, the story continued with my family. I could only find real peace while listening to the Holy Quran lying on my

bed.

So, after all of this I guess my faith was just not strong enough to bear fighting for my hijab as well; it kept on burning inside.

However, I took every chance to wear hijab. When I attended any lecture of a Muslim community or visited the mosque, I quickly put it on at the entrance as I felt too embarrassed to step into the House of Allah without it, especially in front of Muslim men.

I'll never forget when a young Arab man saw me in front of the mosque putting the hijab on. He came to me and called me a hypocrite and that I am not a real



Muslim if I was not wearing the hijab properly. I got too shocked and shy but I wished to tell him what a convert is going through for Islam and wished that he understood me and gave me some kind words to encourage me, and not attack me!

Unfortunately, it is such a common mistake among Muslims in the West. All the time, we give other Muslims a good telling-off if we see they are doing something we learned differently or we've never seen it before so we think it's wrong. The problem is not informing another Muslim, but the way we do that.

you interact with other Muslims the more you realize that you are just dreaming and it's time to wake up. Muslims are human beings as well with the same good and bad characters as anyone else. Finally!

Going back to the issue of hijab, naturally this incident fastened the guilt in me. Al-Hamdulil-Allah, after high school Allah responded to my supplications and helped me to finally wear the hijab. Next to my studies, I decided to work and find a job. It was spring holiday and I got an interview to a multinational call center. I can't lose anything. I need



In my situation, this guy was right: I was wearing my hijab only in the mosque, which is wrong of course, and I was completely aware of that. I didn't do it out of ignorance or lack of knowledge. But why did he have to use such harsh and hurtful words with a new Muslim without even asking about her circumstances?!

As a new Muslim, especially in the West, when you're already the target of almost every member of your society and the most beloved people, your family is against you, a world collapses in a newly convert when she even gets such a "nice" treatment from her brothers and sisters in faith!

When you embrace Islam and discover the beauty of it, you think all other Muslims see it as you see. You think all other Muslims are struggling to follow the right path and that they'll be all so kind and so nice to you. That they are your real brothers and sisters! And the more you go to the mosque and the more

to do it. I need to go with my hijab and if I am accepted in this workplace than that is it; no excuse anymore, no more procrastination. It's time to assume my hijab

I woke up in the morning of the interview with some fear but I confidently tied my hijab, took a big breath and stepped out of the home, the first time with my hijab. I was so worried about people's reaction what they will do, what they will say and how they will look at me. I went to the bus stop; an elderly lady was standing there staring at me as if I was an alien as I walked toward her.

'Everything is going to be just fine' - I thought to myself.

And it actually was. The bus came full of people, of course staring at me with the elderly lady, but I was just thinking about Allah that now He is pleased with me, insha' Allah, and proud of me that I finally did it. I was overwhelmed with joy and gratefulness toward Allah that He made my dream come true. I put my

headset and just listened to the Quran the whole way until reaching the place of the interview while trying to ignore the staring eyes.

Alhamdulillah Allah, I did great in the interview!

Moreover, I didn't get any hurtful comment or strange question. They treated me as a human being, as anyone else in the interview and it pushed my low-confidence up to the sky!

But what would be the best way to make my parents accept my hijab?

Please, forgive me for everything and look at who I became since I am a Muslim; I am more kind to you. That question was still unanswered. I didn't see any point to talk to my mom face-to-face as I already did many times before and we always ended up in a huge, long fight. As I am terrible in expressing my deep thoughts and honest feelings, I decided to write out everything in a long letter telling her everything that was hidden inside me.



An Honest Letter to my Mom

After 4 years, it is hard to remember what exactly I wrote in that letter, but I know I wrote it from my heart. I only remember one part clearly which was something like this:

"Aren't you grateful to someone when he gives you a present or does for you a favor?

Won't you be particularly kind to him after that, thank him and always look for an opportunity to please him?

Well, God gives us everything. Just look around: we're alive, we're healthy, we have a nice home, a car, work - I just got a job - my sister is a great student at school ... we've got everything and if we want something, we ask God to help and grant it to us and in sha' Allah, He will. Then, shall we not be grateful to Him?

And He can do anything! He can change anything!

Shall we not try to do as He asked us to do in order to please Him? You're trying to please dad, your boss, your children, your parents, even your neighbors. So why wouldn't we want to please God who is actually the only One who can give us or take it away in the blink of an eye.

Hijab belongs to me; it is part of me, part of being a Muslim. As you cover an expensive jewel from the inquiring looks, women in Islam (and not just in Islam) are wearing the veil and covering themselves for the same purpose because women are precious. Please, understand that it is very important for me, I am really suffering from not wearing it and I can't endure it anymore. Please, forgive me for everything and look at who I became since I am a Muslim; I am more kind to you; I am helping you in everything you ask for. Don't look at what I can't please you with because I can't take off my hijab. It is something beyond me and it is only for God. But look at what I do for you and insha' Allah, I will do even

more than that."

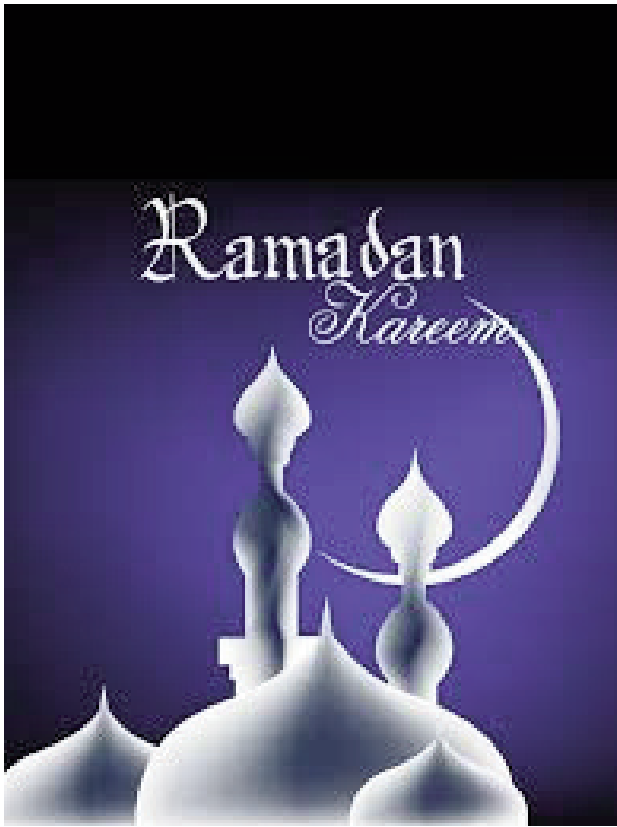
At the end, I asked my mom to accept me with hijab because I can't come home without it. I left the letter on the dining table. I took some clothes as well with me as I decided to spend the next few days at the home of one of my best Muslim friends to give her some time to think.

Al-Hamdulil-Allah, nothing can destroy the love a mother feels towards her child. She called me immediately that night crying that of course she accepts me with or without hijab; it doesn't matter as long as it makes me happy.

So never lose hope in anything and put your full trust in Allah because He is the Most Powerful and the All-Knowing.

If you keep asking Him and you're sincere in your supplication, Insha' Allah He'll always be there for you!

Ramadan at last!!! But...



Hajira Khan
Indian School Salalah
Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

There once a lived girl named Maryam. She was very excited as the month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak was approaching. She was planning to fast in the holy month. She had seen her friends and neighbours' kids fast the previous Ramadan. Her parents had agreed. Her parents were also looking forward to it. One fine evening, just before the Ramadan her father's elder brother visited them. He was affectionately called Hajji-Abba by Maryam and other kids in the family. Hajji-Abba enjoyed a lot of respect and at times dominated the whole clan. When he learned that Maryam was about to fast, he forced her parents saying that do not allow Maryam to fast this Ramadan as she is young.

Eventually, the month of Ramadan arrived to which Maryam was eagerly looking forward for more than a year. In the previous Ramadan she used to get up almost every day for the Suhoor (the pre-dawn meal). She used to eat well along with her brother and parents hoping to keep fast. Her parents would



request her to have lunch if not the breakfast. He parents had assured her that the half-day exercise of not eating will prepare her to fast completely. The previous Ramadan Maryam had attended the Roza-Rakhai (also called the Roza Khushai is a function to mark the first fast of a person) of several of her classmates. But alas!!! All the preparations and eagerness are yet to be materialized into her first fast. Thanks to the domination of Hajji-Abba.

The funny thing in the episode is that elders at times are overprotective and consequently, delay the activities of children whom they love; fasting and school admissions are prime examples of the delayed activities.

This article is based on the sad situation of the writer's classmate.

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Recognizing Armenian Genocide: 1915 tragedy and short memory

I By AIJAZ ZAKA SYED I

I am an admirer of all things Turkish. I have fond memories of a few days spent in Turkey, exploring its rich tapestry of history and heritage, especially in Istanbul. I have yet to come across a more fascinating city. Muslims in the subcontinent share strong cultural and historical ties with Turkey thanks to the long Muslim and Mughal rule in India. The founder of Mughal dynasty Babar was of Turkish stock and wrote his fine memoirs, *Tuzk-e-Babri*, in the language that came naturally to him — Turkish.

Why are we talking about Turkey though? With the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide approaching (April 24), this seems to be open season on Turkey. This week, an angry Ankara summoned the Vatican ambassador and recalled its own to register its protest after Pope Francis uttered the ‘G’ word to describe the Armenian tragedy.

“The first genocide of the 20th century struck Armenian people,” said the pontiff during a mass in St. Peter’s Basilica to mark the centenary of the tragedy in which a million Armenians are said to have perished at the hands of the Ottoman army of course.

Turkey however rejects the charge arguing that thousands of Turks died as well in civil strife when Armenians rose up against the Ottoman rulers and sided with the Russian and Western forces. Ankara argues that hundreds of thousands of Muslim besides Armenians were killed in conflicts that engulfed the eastern Ottoman Empire during WWI.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan responded angrily to pope’s comments on Tuesday: “We will not allow historical incidents to be taken out of their genuine context, and be used as a tool to campaign against our country. I condemn the pope and would like to warn him not to make similar mistakes again.”

On Wednesday, the European Parliament joined Pope Francis in urging Turkey to recognize the 1915 events as genocide, prompting another rebuke from Ankara. Turkey baulks at attempts to put the Ottomans in the same category as Nazi Germany and a string of dictators from Stalin to Pol Pot.

Some 20 nations however recognize the 1915 killings as genocide. In 2008 Barack Obama condemned them as such although in 2009 as president he was more circumspect in his speech commemorating the tragedy: “My interest remains the achievement of a full, frank and just acknowledgment of the facts. The best way to advance that goal right now is for the Armenian and Turkish people to address the facts of the past as a part of their efforts to move forward.”

Exactly! The two sides need to move on and it cannot happen without Turkey acknowledging the past. Excesses may have indeed been committed by a dying empire, desperately trying to hold on to its fast slipping dominions. Confronted with the Russian aggression and combined onslaught of European powers, the receding Ottoman Empire had been fighting for its survival.

The Battle of Gallipoli saw the entire West, including forces from as far as Australia, ganged up against the world’s only surviving Muslim empire, eventually dismembering it into bits and pieces. And like all empires under siege, the Ottoman troops were guilty of excesses in Armenia, just as they had been in other parts of the crumbling caliphate. And it is about time modern Turkey acknowledged it. There is no point in living in denial about it.

But while what happened in Armenia was truly horrific, was it a coldblooded and calculated genocide along the lines of Jewish Holocaust at the hands of Nazis, the Rwandan genocide and the ethnic cleansing of Balkan Muslims at the hands of Serbs in 1990s?

The Armenians may have borne the Ottoman wrath for siding with the invaders but were they picked and eliminated for what they were and believed in as had been the case with Jews and Muslims in the Balkans?

If it is any consolation, the Ottomans weren't any less brutal in dealing with the seditious subjects in Muslim lands. The Egyptian soldiery was dispatched to deal firmly with the rebellious Arabs. So the attempt by Pope Francis to give this whole issue a religious overtone comparing it with Christians fleeing oppression at the hands of IS is absurd. Equally over the top has been Turkey's reaction to the pontiff's comments.

Whatever the historical circumstances, what happened in 1915 resulting in the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives was unfortunate and unconscionable and deserves to be condemned in strongest terms.

War crimes and crimes against humanity are among the gravest crimes in international law and they are to be dealt with as such no matter who the victims and their tormentors are. Martin Luther King rightly argued that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

More often than not though, it's not genuine humanitarian concerns but realpolitik and hypocrisy that dictate such denunciations. We are selective in our collective outrage and choosing our victims. So has been the case with the Armenian tragedy. It has become an annual ritual for Western politicians and media to beat Ankara with this big stick.

To be fair to Turkey, in the past few years it has gone out of its way to reach out to its neighbors, including Armenia and Greece, in an attempt to heal the past. Erdogan surprised everyone, including his own people, in 2009 when he acknowledged Turkey's troubled past: "Those with different ethnic identities were expelled from our country. This indeed was the consequence of a fascist approach."

In the same year, in what came to be known as the soccer diplomacy he famously invited Armenian President Serge Sarkisian to Turkey to watch a

football match between their national teams. Last year, Erdogan sincerely apologized and offered condolences for the loss of hundreds of thousands of Armenian lives in 1915, something unimaginable for many Turkish politicians. So here is a nation that has had the courage to own up to its past.

On the other hand, those rushing to condemn and burn Turkey at the stake hardly come across smelling of roses. Who can feign ignorance of Europe's own illustrious past in the last three centuries? Almost every single European power once boasted of and benefited from its rich colonies in Africa, Asia and Americas.

Besides raping and denuding Africa of its fabled riches, they stole its most precious resource by enslaving millions of its people and selling them like cattle around the world. Don't we know how Americas and Australia were won for the West, nearly wiping out their indigenous populations? Thousands were hanged in India when it rose in revolt against the empire in 1857.

In the last century alone, millions were killed in the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Cambodia, as part of the colonial project. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed and millions driven from their homes after their country was generously gifted away to European Jews.

We have seen more than a million people killed in Iraq and Afghanistan in the last one decade alone as part of Western wars, not to mention the chaos unleashed across the Muslim world. Who will account for all these crimes? How would the European Parliament describe what some of its member states visited on their former colonies?

The Pope is right in cautioning humanity against forgetting the 'senseless slaughter' of Armenians 100 years ago. But while doing so, let's also spare a thought for millions of victims of Western wars and historical wrongs. Selective memory, like selective justice, does more harm than good. Without acknowledgement, there is no reconciliation or redemption.

<http://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/733741>

Report: National Urdu Science Congress

Sameen Ahmed Khan

Engineering Department,

Salalah College of Technology (SCT)

Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

(rohelaakhan@yahoo.com, <http://SameenAhmed-Khan.webs.com>)



Logo: Zakir Husain Delhi College

The very First National Urdu Science Congress, was organized by the Anjuman Farogh-e-Science (Organisation for Science Promotion, Delhi), at Zakir Husain Delhi College, Delhi, India during 20-21 March 2015. The inaugural session was presided by Dr. Khwaja Mohd. Ekramuddin who is the Director of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL, <http://www.urducouncil.nic.in/>). This very first event had over a hundred delegates from across the nation with over twenty-five presentations. The conference had successfully attracted scientists; renowned scholars of Arabic Urdu and Persian languages; educators; writers; poets; historians; heads of institutions; science reporters and Islamic scholars.

Science Congresses have been around over a century and play an important role in enabling science communication and collaboration across the scientific community. The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA, <http://www.sciencecongress.nic.in/>) is a premier scientific organisation of India with headquarters at Kolkata, West Bengal. The association started in the year 1914 in Kolkata and it meets annually in the first week of January every year. The Indian Science Congress Association owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of two British Chemists, namely, Professor J.L. Simonsen and Professor P.S. MacMahon. It was modeled after the successful British Association for the Advancement of Science. Today, ISCA has a membership strength of more than 30,000 scientists. The 102nd Indian

Science Congress was held during 3-7 January 2015 in University of Mumbai (<http://www.isc102.in/>). The long tradition and the grand success of the Indian Science Congress have inspired other initiatives such as the National Children's Science Congress (NCSC, <http://www.ncstc-network.org/>). The Na-



Logo: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language

tional Children's Science Congress provides the children of 10 to 17 years from all over the country a unique opportunity to use their scientific temperament and knowledge to make their own dreams come true. The program was initiated in 1993, with the following objectives. It provides a forum to the young scientists. NCSC is held annually from December 27-31. After a scrutiny at district and state levels, about 500 children take part in this five day long deliberations and fun-filled science activities (<http://www.ncstc-network.org/>).

The first Urdu Science Congress aimed to foster communication between scientists and researchers interested in presenting their works in Urdu language. The Conference covered the following topics:

1. The Problem of Teaching Science in Urdu Medium Schools
2. General Understanding of Scientific Literature in Urdu
3. Environment and Scientific Literature
4. Scientific Experiments in Urdu
5. Teaching and Learning of Science in Madrasas
6. Modern Medical Knowledge and Scientific Literature
7. Islam and Science

The conference had a very rich programme including: keynote talks by renowned speakers and oral presentations. A brief documentary with the title 'Muslim Heritage in our World' was also screened.

At the end of the two day Congress, there were several recommendations. The first and foremost recommendation was to recognize and give credit to the place of Urdu in the Indian society. It is to be recalled that the Urdu is the official language of five Indian states (Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Jammu and Kashmir). It is to be noted that Urdu along with intelligible sister language Hindi the percentage of native Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu) speakers becomes 50% of India's total population. It was recommended that the basic education of children should be done in their mother tongue. It was further said that in the Urdu Medium Schools, should have a strong programme in Hindi and English languages; this will enable the students to pursue higher studies in can continues in other mediums of instruction.

Anjuman Faroghe-Science (Organisation for Science Promotion, Delhi), is a registered non-governmental organization (NGO) NGO, established in 1992. The NGO works towards the promotion of sustainable development. Since, 1994, it has been regularly publishing a popular science monthly magazine, Urdu Science Mahnamah (Urdu Science Monthly). It has also held science popularization conferences in Urdu. It organizes an award giving function, recognizing school students with highest scores in science subjects.

Zakir Husain Delhi College, formerly Zakir Husain

College, Anglo Arabic College and Delhi College, founded in 1692, is the oldest existing educational institution in Delhi, and is a constituent college of the University of Delhi, offering undergraduate and post graduate courses in Arts, Commerce and Sciences. It has had a considerable influence on modern education as well as Urdu and Islamic learning in India, and today remains the only Delhi University College offering BA (Hons) courses in Arabic and Persian (<http://www.zakirhusaindelhicollege.in/>).



Dr. M. Aslam Parvaiz, Principal Zakir Husain Delhi College is to be congratulated for creating the National Urdu Science Congress. Dr. Parvaiz, is also the

founder and Honourable Editor of the Urdu Science Mahnamah (Urdu Science Monthly), the only monthly popular Science and Environment monthly published in the country. The First National Urdu



Science Congress is a major step and a milestone for the Urdu Community and far beyond. By the Grace of Allah Almighty and his efforts, a new situation has been brought into being, which augurs to be

the starting point of a cultural and intellectual renaissance, the nature and magnitude of which cannot be fully foreseen at the present time. We are eagerly looking forward to the Proceedings of the National Urdu Science Congress the defining Blue Print of the various programmes it envisages.

Xerography the Science of Photocopying

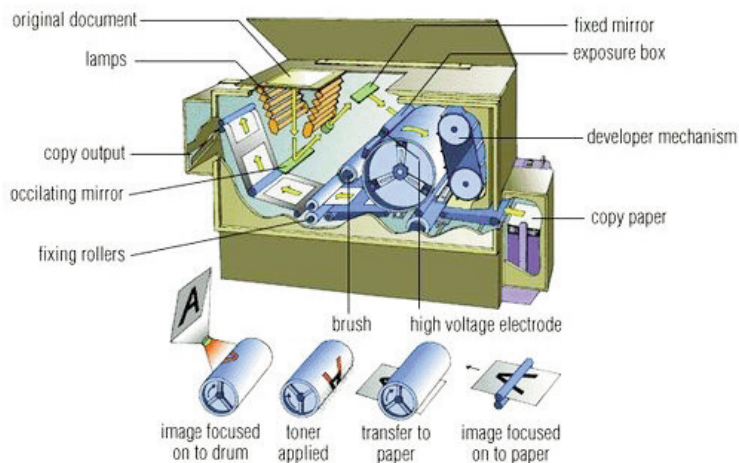
Sameen Ahmed Khan

Engineering Department

Salalah College of Technology,

Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

(rohelakhan@yahoo.com, <http://SameenAhmed-Khan.webs.com/>)



The Xerography Process

The process of xerography is widely used for making photocopies. The basic idea behind the process was developed by Chester Carlson of USA. Carlson developed the technique in 1938 and was granted a patent for his invention in 1942. Carlson originally called his invention electrophotography. It was later renamed xerography. In 1947, the Xerox Corporation launched a full-scale programme to develop automated duplicating machines using Carlson's process. Carlson's original process was cumbersome, requiring several manual processing steps with flat plates. It took almost two decades to develop a fully automated process. A dozen companies showed no interest and had rejected Carlson's idea. This first commercial automatic copier, the Xerox-914 was released in 1960. The huge success of that development is quite evident. Today, practically all offices and libraries have one or more duplicating machines and the capabilities of these machines continue to evolve.

The basic principles of the xerographic process are based on simple concepts from electrostatics (a branch of physics dealing with the phenomenon involving stationary or slow-moving electric charges)

and optics. What makes the process unique is that it uses a photoconductive material to form an image. Recalling that a photoconductor is a materials that is a poor conductor of electricity in the dark and becomes a reasonably good conductor in the presence of light. The widely used material is selenium or one of its compounds.

The steps involved in the xerographic process are as follows. First the surface of a plate or drum is coated with a thin film of the photoconductive material and it is given a positive charge in the dark. The page to be photocopied is then projected onto the charged surface. The photoconductive surface becomes conducting only in areas where light strikes. The charges remain on those areas of the photoconductor not exposed to the light. This creates a hidden image of the object in the form of a positive surface charge distribution. Next, a powder called toner is negatively charged and dusted on the photoconducting surface. The negatively charged powder adheres only to the areas that are positively charged image. At this stage the image becomes visible. It is then transferred to the surface of a sheet of positively charged paper. Finally the toner is fixed to the surface of the paper by heat. This results in a permanent copy of the original. The whole process is done within fraction of a second, as we know from our experience.

The steps for producing a document on a laser printer are essentially similar to those used in a photocopying process. There is one basic difference. The difference between the two techniques lies in the way the image is formed on the selenium-coated drum. In a laser printer, the command to print the letter A for instance, is sent to a laser from the memory of a computer. A rotating mirror inside the printer causes the beam of the laser to sweep across the selenium-coated drum in an interlaced pattern. Electrical signals generated by the printer turn the laser beam on and off in a pattern that traces out the letter A in the form of positive charges on the selenium. Toner is then applied to the drum and the transfer to paper is accomplished as in a photocopy machine.

Empathy in Marriage: How to Connect Emotionally with Your Spouse

... By Sheima Salam Sumer



Photo Credit: AJ Mangoba at flickr[dot]com/photos/ajmangobaimages

We are all aware that the marital relationship is regarded as extremely important in Islam. In addition to fulfilling half our deen, marriage is a safeguard, a place to find peace, and also a strongly recommended sunnah.

Our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

“Marriage is part of my sunnah, and whoever does not follow my sunnah has nothing to do with me.” [Ibn Majah]1

But why is it that so many Muslims are dissatisfied with this huge part of their lives and religion? I think it is because our marriages lack empathy, or in other words, emotional understanding. **Empathy is simply the act of feeling your spouse’s emotions**; joining emotionally with him or her, as if “walking in his or her shoes.”

I will discuss how Islam encourages empathy in marriage, how it can transform your marriage, and how you can practice it yourself to improve your relationship with your spouse Insha Allah!

Emotions within marriage in the Qur’an

The Holy Qur’an reminds us about the importance of emotions in marriage:

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.” [Qur’an: Chapter 30, Verse 21]

“It is He who created you from one soul and created from it its mate that he might dwell in security with her.” [Qur’an: Chapter 7, Verse 189]

As we can see from the above verses, marriage is ideally meant to be a source of emotional comfort to us. Marriage allows us to experience love, mercy, understanding and peace from someone who is a companion for life.

Empathy in marriage in Islam

Our blessed Prophet ﷺ showed emotional understanding towards his wives in many ways. He was known to express his love unabashedly for his wives and showed us several examples of how to kindly and thoughtfully treat our spouses.

Consider the following ahadith:

1. His wife, Aisha رضي الله عنها, narrated:

"It was the day of 'Id, and the Ethiopian people were playing with shields and spears; so either I requested the Prophet ﷺ or he asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then the Prophet ﷺ made me stand behind him and my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying, "Carry on! O BaniArfida," till I got tired. The Prophet ﷺ asked me, "Are you satisfied (Is that sufficient for you)?" I replied in the affirmative and he told me to leave." [Bukhari]

This hadith shows that our beloved Prophet ﷺ considered his wives' emotional need for happiness and enjoyment through halal entertainment.

2. Al-Aswad رضي الله عنه said:

"I asked 'A'isha رضي الله عنها 'What did the Prophet ﷺ do when he was with his family?' She replied, 'He would do chores for his family, and when it was time for the prayer, he would go out.'" [Bukhari]1

This hadith shows that our beloved Prophet ﷺ helped his family with their chores, indicating that he was always thoughtful and cared about easing things for his family in any way he could.

3. Narrated by Anas رضي الله عنه:

"It reached Safiyyah that Hafsa called her: 'The daughter of a Jew,' so she (Safiyyah) wept. Then the Prophet ﷺ entered upon her while she was crying, and he said: 'What makes you cry?' She said: 'Hafsa said to me that I am the daughter of a Jew.' So the Prophet ﷺ said: 'And you are the daughter of a Prophet, and your uncle is a Prophet, and you are married to a Prophet, so what is she boasting to you about?' Then he said: 'Fear Allah, O Hafsa.'" [Tirmidhi]

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ cared about the feelings of his wives and would console them with humor and caring words, without hurting anyone in the process.

How empathy benefits your marriage

When you practice empathy in your marriage, you will transform your marriage into a stronger, more real and more enjoyable union. Spouses will actually know and love each other for who they truly are. Insha Allah, when they are able to bond at an emotional level.

Most people agree that open communication is the cornerstone of a healthy marriage. However, marriage therapists believe that ordinary communication is not enough. What a marriage really needs to thrive is emotional understanding, or empathy.

Usually, the more recognized problems in a marriage are only surface issues. Couples need to dig deeper to uncover the real underlying problems in their marriages. These tend to be emotional problems, such as not feeling respected or not feeling appreciated.

Furthermore, empathy can save your marriage from infidelity problems. Megan Wyatt, life coach and founder of wivesofjannah.com, teaches that the no.1 reason that marriages face infidelity problems is a lack of emotional connection.

How can we practice empathy in our marriages?

1. Empathizing with others starts with self-empathy

Train yourself to be more aware of your own feelings. This in turn will help you recognize the feelings of your spouse¹ and will also improve your communication. Your ability to feel empathy towards your spouse depends on how much empathy you are able to show to yourself.

Example: A wife realizes that she is feeling unhappy because her husband seems too tight with the family budget. She respects her husband's desire to save money, but she also feels that he is

unnecessarily frugal. She decides to address the issue and talk to her husband about her mixed feelings, while showing understanding of her husband's point of view.

2. Recognize and validate your spouse's feelings

When your spouse is emotionally distraught, show that you understand your spouse's feelings. Your spouse wants to feel heard and understood by you. You play one of the most important parts in their lives, so what you say to them matters immensely.

Action tip: When your spouse is sharing his or her feelings, show that you understand by naming their feelings. For example one could say, "I understand that you feel hurt right now."

While doing this, resist the urge to give advice or a solution. That is not what they are after. They simply want someone to relate to them.

True story: A friend of mine had been feeling resentful towards her husband because he never showed any caring or understanding when she talked to him about the pain of her father's death when she was a child. Finally, she told him how upset she felt about his lack of empathy for her loss. Eventually, her husband validated her feelings by visiting her father's grave with her, which transformed her resentment into love.

3. Help your spouse empathize by genuinely expressing your feelings




Your spouse is not a mind reader. Share your thoughts and feelings about your inner world. Even if you are not sure how you feel, you can and should share your mixed feelings with your spouse till you are both able to understand your feelings better.

Example: Many Muslim couples struggle with issues of physical intimacy in their marriages. They may feel shy to talk about their physical intimacy problems, but how will your spouse know what you truly think and feel about this topic if you do not tell them?

4. Use empathy during disagreements

As mentioned above, self-empathy is extremely important in resolving conflicts with your spouse. If you are feeling angry, you should be aware of your anger and wait until you feel calmer before talking to your spouse.

Narrated by Abu Huraira :

A man said to the Prophet , "Advise me!" The Prophet  said, "Do not become angry and furious." The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet  said in each case, "Do not become angry and furious." [Bukhari]¹

Action tip: The next time you are feeling a negative feeling, such as anger, remind yourself that this is not the time to talk to your spouse. Wait until you feel calmer to discuss issues with your spouse.

When you are calm enough to talk about disagreements with your spouse, strive to empathize with him or her. Ideally, you should summarize his or her point of view to show that you truly understand, before trying to make your case.

Real counselling technique: Many therapists ask family members to talk about an issue from the point of view of another family member. The goal there is to build empathy and to "feel" the issue from the other person's perspective. Practicing empathy is a way to show that you care about your spouse.

Therefore, by practicing empathy you will be able to build a deeper relationship with your spouse, handle conflicts with more understanding and be loved for who you truly are, Insha Allah.

I hope that this article will help us actualize this Qur'anic verse in our marriages:

"Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." [Qur'an: Chapter 25, Verse 74]²

I hope I have shown you how practicing empathy can improve your marital relationship, Insha Allah. If you have any of your own tips or stories about empathy in marriage, please share them in the comments section!

Fairyland

Hajira Khan
Indian School Salalah
Salalah, **Sultanate of Oman**



Once upon a time there lived four friends named Alina, Azora, Tracy and Loura. They were all best friends. They used to have lot and lot of fun together. They had a secret place called *Fairytopia*. Every day they used to go to Fairytopia for tea. There used to be muffins, cookies, candies and lot of other things. They also used to go to Fairytopia for vacation and slumber parties. Then after tea they used to play lot of games and have a nice chat. The fairies were the friends of the four girls. They gave each of them a pair of wings and a magic wand of their favourite colours. Then one day they got the shock when the four friends came to Fairytopia. They saw a bad fairy; she did not belong to Fairytopia. She was jealous when she heard that the four humans were the friends of the fairies. She used to tease them a lot but the good fairies always came rushing and saved them from the bad fairy Laverna. One day the fairies and the four girls had a plan to fight with Laverna and send her back from where she had come. After the fight Laverna lost her power and vanished for good. The enchantress was very happy with the fairies and the four girls. She rewarded each of them a butterfly locket. And they all lived happily.