

Better light a candle than curse the darkness

شکوہ ظلمت شب سے تو کہیں بہتر تھا اپنے حصے کی کوئی شمع جلاتے جاتے

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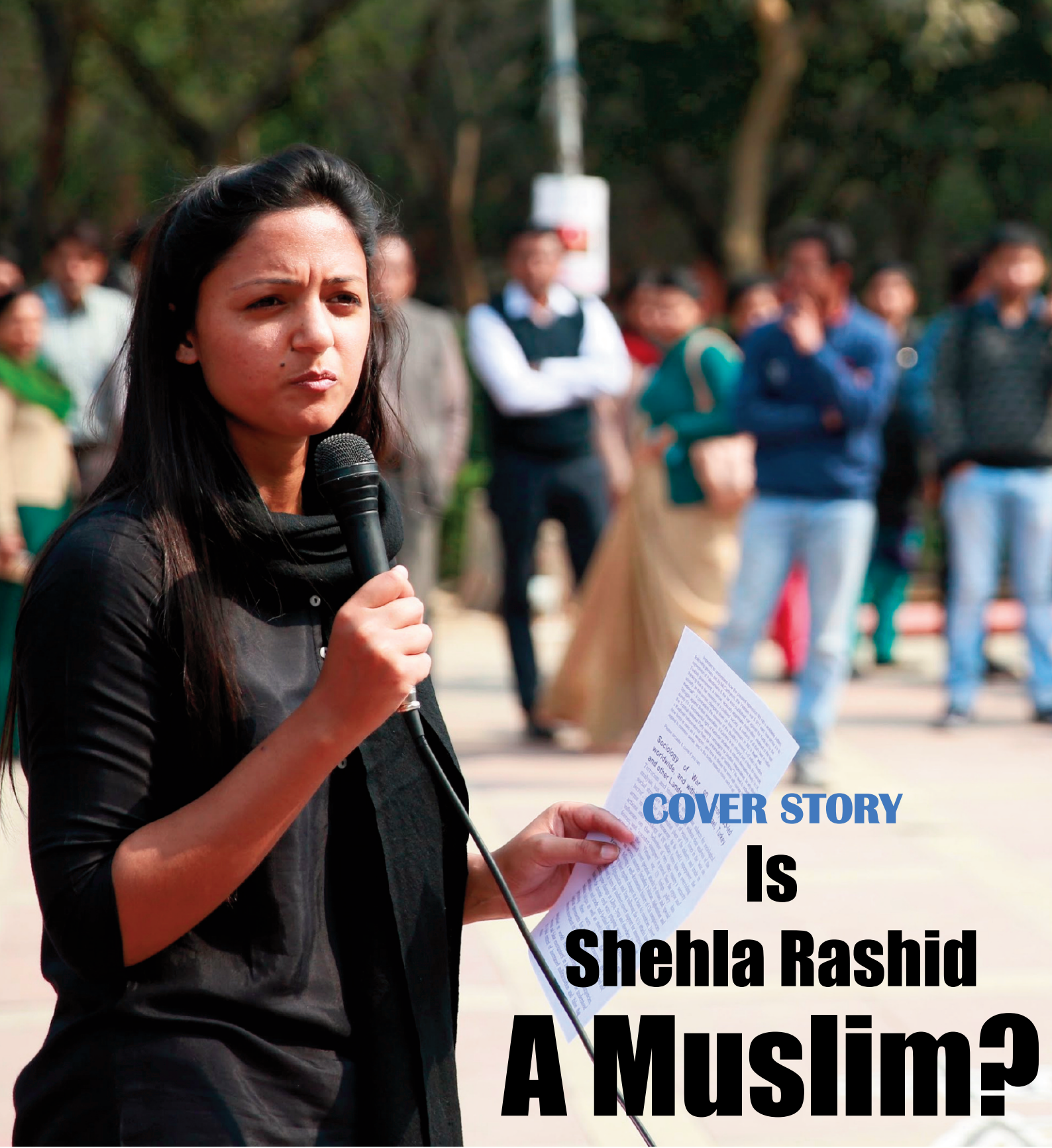
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BE AWARE, ALWAYS, EVERYWHERE

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COVER STORY

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Jai Hind

*Watan ki khaaq ban-ne waalon ka Jai
Hind Naara hai*

*Watan pe jaan dene waalon ka Jai
Hind naara hai.*

*Jo gardish mein hain unki aabroo se
koi na khele*

*Jo sahme dil hain unke lab pe ye Jai
Hind naara hai.*

*Utho in jaat, dharmon, naslon ke
firqon se tum ooper*

*ki apna mulk Hindostan hai, Jai
Hind naara hai.*

*Tafarka aur taassub ki hata do
saari zanjeerein*

*Mohabbat ke parindon ka yahi Jai
Hind naara hai.*

*Sachayee, dardmandi aur mehnat
desh seva hain*

*Yahi sachchi ibaadat hain yahi Jai
Hind naara hai.*

*Watan ki khaq se paida hua har
shakhs apna hai*

*Yahi ahsaas deta hai hamein Jai
Hind naara hai.*

ROLE OF ZAKAAT IN MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES

I By Asrarul Haque I

When we think of marriage of someone in the family and we look for families where relations can be established, we consider various issues like family background, education level, financial status, look of the person with whom matrimonial alliance is to be established etc. Certain families and individuals also look at the religious leanings of the families and the individuals. They try to find out if they perform canonical prayers or not, whether they observe fasting or not. If possible, assessment is also made through some means about the general relationships among the family members. Idea is to find if the members are at loggerheads to one another etc. Generally the quests end there. But we rarely try to find out whether the family where matrimonial alliance is to be made pays Zakaat or not? One reason given is that it is difficult to find whether the family is paying Zakaat. People desist from directly asking such questions. That is the reason that the matter remains unexplored.

My contention is that in the long run the attitude to avoid Zakaat can cause havoc. Most people will think of Jazaa and Sazaa on the day of Reckoning (Qayaamat). But I am referring to immediate future i.e. life in this world. That will include life after the proposed marriage is solemnized. There is nothing surprising in it although it seems a little different from normal thinking. Let me explain my idea in short.

Most of us might have experienced that many parents are well off but they try to behave niggardly. Children desire something and what they desire is not something prohibited or too costly. But they do not fulfill the demands. They try to give some illogical reasons for not fulfilling the demand. No doubt the children have no choice as they are dependents. But the children remain deprived from day to day simple pleasures which may be available to their relatives or friends. The feeling of deprivation may not be obvious in the children immediately but in their subconscious the feeling remains intact, whether they know about that or not is immaterial. At later



stage when the same children grow up and become independent and get opportunity to control their finance, their own earnings, and/or the inherited wealth, they generally become reckless. They overspend and overindulge. In a way they try to compensate for the sense of deprivation they suffered in their early days. Quite often such persons develop the habit of eating outside for no reason; they buy things without considering their utility etc. Many get in the habits of smoking, drinking etc. They consider the to be indicators of wealth and superiority. At some stage or the other the entire family suffers. In most cases the women suffer more as in our society generally they are not as independent as the men. So, they have to bear the brunt much more. Same is the case with girls in most families. They are given differential treatment (knowingly or unknowingly) on account of being girls, although the Qur'an and Ahadeeth do not permit the same. In fact the Allaah's instructions are the other way.

A question may be asked, why people behave as niggards and deprive their children from small pleasures. The answer is simple. They become slaves to money, or other similar things like property, business expansion etc. and practically 'worship' the same. The proof is in the saying of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam where he said: "Woe be to the 'abd (slave and worshiper) of the dirham, woe be to the

'abd of the deenaar (dirham and deenaar were the currencies and still are) ..." It may be asked how does this enslavement to money manifest itself, and what is its nature! It is when the heart becomes so in love with money, that it covers up, or suppresses the love for Allaah, This love can reach such an extent that a person desires to accumulate wealth by any means possible - neither caring whether the wealth comes through halaal (lawful) means; in obedience to Allaah and His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, or means that are haraam (unlawful and forbidden) in the Religion. When the person is so much in love with wealth, the person makes all possible excuses not to spend. The person will try to avoid Zakaat and also lawful expenses such as those required to fulfill the legitimate desires of his family members. No doubt such persons go on accumulating wealth and become 'happy' about the same, oblivious of the fact that others in the families remain deprived and unhappy.

We need to understand that every single heart has feelings, desires and inclinations. It has the desire to love, to gain good and beneficial things for itself, it can feel fear and terror, and it can also surrender and become submissive. Thus, when its feelings, desires and inclinations are all directed to and for Allaah, then it is a heart that truly worships, submits and surrenders to Allaah alone. However, when these feelings, desires and inclinations are directed to something other than Allaah, then it is a heart that is enslaved and worships objects which have captured and enslaved the heart.

The forbiddance of the heart submitting to other than Allaah should not be misunderstood to mean that Muslims must forsake the world and should not deal with it. Rather, the true position of a Muslim is that which was with the Sahaabah (Companions) radiallaahu 'anhuma. They held the wealth in their hands, yet none of it was in their hearts. Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullaah - said: "The position of wealth should be regarded like that of the toilet, in that there is need for it, but it has no place in the heart, and it is resorted to when needed."

I am not trying to say that it is forbidden for a Muslim to possess wealth or taking part in worldly transactions. Rather, it is obligatory for the Muslims to be the richest of people so that they may use the wealth as a means to worship Allaah and to help people. Zakaat is one of the manifestations of the same. If people can avoid Zakaat for the love of wealth, they can

go to any extent to save money and accumulate wealth.

At the time of marriages from grooms' side such manifestation comes out in the form of demand for dowry (openly or in hidden way). In case of bride side, in our society it is not possible to ask for dowry. But it is shown otherwise. People go beyond their known means to find 'better' and superior grooms by offering larger dowry as cash, property, jewellery etc. That happens at the cost of day to day living and by cutting expenses, even those which are essential. That affects the girl child most as that starts from very young age of the girl child in the family and continues unabated. Many a times the girl child has to bear the brunt without knowing the reason. She is often told by the parents that they are cutting corners for her marriage. No doubt marriages are solemnized. But in such cases both the men and women, when become independent, are likely to turn over-indulgent and over-consumptive. In the process they even ruin their health. They may gain weight and become victims of health problems. Also, they become too self-centered and do not take care of their relatives, including parents, even if they are in need. They are too involved in fulfilling their own desires, legitimate or otherwise. That is so as they could not fulfill their small desires during the childhood or during young age when they were not independent.

That is why it is advisable to look for families for matrimonial alliances, which readily and wholeheartedly pay Zakaat, not the way many of us do. When we find some beggars, we give few rupees or when some 'safer' from the Madarsas knock at our doors, we pay small amounts and consider that the obligation towards Zakaat is over. We do not calculate the actual Zakaat and thus remain debtor to Allaah in lieu of giving "Beautiful Loan" to Allaah, about which He has promised that He will return manifold in this world and also in the hereafter. To my surprise I heard from a relative about a well to do gentleman telling that if Zakaat was paid regularly every year as per Shariah, after few years the person could become a beggar himself. Obviously, he had no faith on Allaah and His promise. Should not we maintain safe distance from such kind of people, especially while looking for matrimonial alliances? After all the alliances will be long term relationships and they may not be successful in real sense.

Meaning of Dreams

Part 2

... Continued from March Issue of BaKahbar

GARDEN: Seeing a garden in a dream indicates the richness of Islam.

Based on: Abdullah ibn Salaam said: (In a dream) I saw myself in a garden, and there was a pillar in the middle of the garden, and there was a handhold at the top of the pillar. I was asked to climb it. I said, "I cannot." Then a servant came and lifted up my clothes and I climbed (the pillar), and then got hold of the handhold, and I woke up while still holding it. I narrated that to the Prophet who said, "The garden symbolizes the garden of Islam, and the handhold is the firm Islamic handhold which indicates that you will be adhering firmly to Islam until you die." [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 117 no 142]

GIFT: Recieving a gift in a dream may indicate a blessing of happiness. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 221]

Based on: "Indeed you are happy with your gift" [Surah an Naml (27): 36]

GOLD: Being given gold or finding gold may indicate finding a suitable wife or a successful marriage. The symbolism is derived when the Prophet restricted ornaments of gold to women.

Based on: Abdullah ibn Zurayr related that he heard Ali ibn Abi Talib say that the Prophet took some silk in his right hand and some gold in his left hand. Then he said, "These two are forbidden to the

males of my nation" [Sunan of Abu Dawood, vol 3 p 1133 no 4046; an Nasaee and Ahmad]

HAJJ: Hearing oneself congratulated on doing Hajj or Umrah indicates that it went well.

Based on: Abu Jamra Nasr bin 'Imran Ad-Duba'i said, "I intended to perform Hajj-at-Tamattu' and the people advised me not to do so. I asked Ibn Abbas regarding it and he ordered me to perform Hajj-at-Tamattu'. Later I saw in a dream someone saying to me, 'Hajj-Mabrur (Hajj performed in accordance with the Prophet's tradition without committing sins and accepted by Allah) and an accepted 'Umra.' So I told that dream to Ibn Abbas. He said, 'This is the tradition of Abul-Qasim.' Then he said to me, 'Stay with me and I shall give you a portion of my property.'" I (Shu'ba) asked, "Why (did he invite you)?" He (Abu Jamra) said, "Because of the dream which I had seen." [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 2 p 373 no 638]

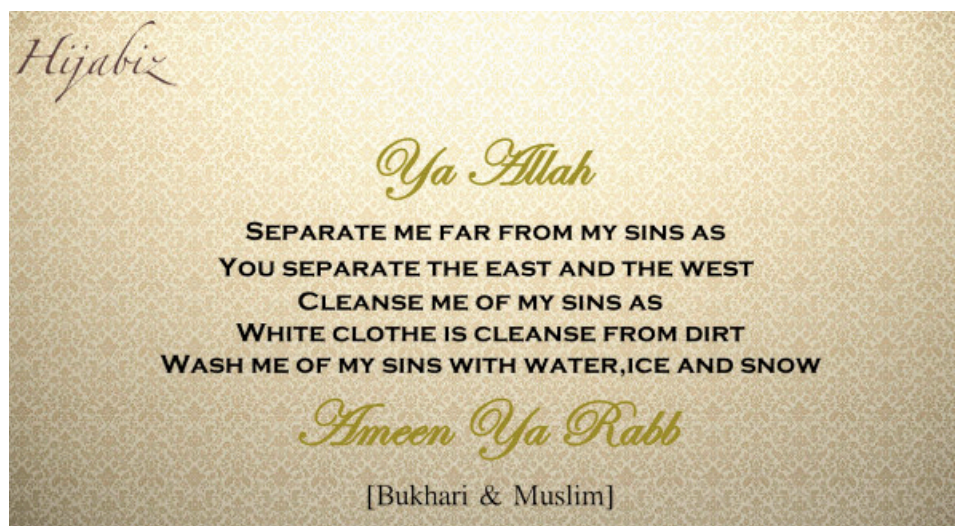
Hajj-at-Tamattu: this is Umrah combined with Hajj in which the pilgrim is allowed to leave his state of consecration (ihraam) after the completion of the Umrah

Hajj-Mabrur: which means 'may your Hajj be righteous'

Abdul-Qasim: this was Prophet Muhammad's nickname, derived from the name of his son, al Qaasim

HAND-HOLD: Grasping a hand-hold in a dream indicates that one will continue to hold firmly to Islam.

Based on: Abdullah bin Salaam said: (In a dream) I saw myself in a garden, and there was a pillar in the middle of the garden, and there was a handhold at the top of the pillar. I was asked to climb



it. I said, "I cannot." Then a servant came and lifted up my clothes and I climbed (the pillar), and then got hold of the handhold, and I woke up while still holding it. I narrated that to the Prophet who said, "The garden symbolizes the garden of Islam, and the handhold is the firm Islamic handhold which indicates that you will be adhering firmly to Islam until you die." [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 117 no 142]

KEYS: Seeing keys in one's hand, or receiving keys in a dream, indicates the receipt of administrative authority. [Saheeh Muslim: Sharh an Nawawee, vol 8 p 39]

Based on: Abu Huraira said: The Prophet said, "I have been given the keys of eloquent speech and given victory with awe (cast into the hearts of the enemy), and while I was sleeping last night, the keys of the treasures of the earth were brought to me till they were put in my hand." Abu Huraira added: Allah's Apostle left (this world) and now you people are carrying those treasures from place to place. [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 106 no 127; Sahih of Muslim, vol 1 p 266 no 1063]

LAUGHING: Dreaming of oneself laughing in a dream may refer to the arrival of good news, good times. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 221]

Based on: "Some faces on that day will be bright, laughing and rejoicing at the good news" [Surah Abasa (8): 38-9]

LEG IRONS: Seeing oneself bound in leg-irons indicates stability in the religion.

Based on: Muhammad ibn Seereen said: "Abu Huraira hated to see neck irons (metallic neck collars) in a dream, and people generally liked to see leg-irons. Leg-irons were said to symbolise one's constant and firm adherence to religion" [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 118-9 no 144] Imam an Nawawee noted that the reason shackles (qayd) on the feet were liked was because they indicate avoiding

sin and evil (i.e. the feet are prevented from taking the body to corruption). On the other hand, shackles (ghull) on the neck is one of the characteristics of those in Hell (Quran 13:5, 34:33, 36:8 and 40:71). [Sharh an Nawawee, vol 8 p 28]

MAKKAH: Seeing oneself entering Makkah in a dream may refer to a state of security and peace. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 221]

Based on: "Whoever enters Makkah will be secure" [Surah al Imran (3): 97]

MARRIAGE: Dreaming of oneself getting married may indicate an impending marriage. If there are no marriage plans at the time of the dream, one may propose to the women shown in the dream.

Based on: Aisha said: Allah's Apostle said to me, "You were shown to me twice (in my dream) before I married you. I saw an angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said to him, 'Uncover (her),' and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), 'If this is from Allah, then it must happen.' Later I dreamt of the angel carrying someone in a silken piece of cloth, and I said (to him), 'Uncover (her),' and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), 'If this is from Allah, then it must happen.' " [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 115-6 no 140]

MILK: Receiving milk in a dream means that religious knowledge has been granted.

Based on: Abdullah ibn Umar said: Allah's Apostle said, "While I was sleeping, I was given a bowl full of milk (in the dream) and I drank from it (to my fill) till I noticed its wetness coming out of my limbs. Then I gave the rest of it to 'Umar bin Al-Khattab." The persons sitting around him, asked, "What have

you interpreted (about the dream) O Allah's Apostle?" He said, "It is (religious) knowledge." [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 112 no 135]

MOUNTAINS: Seeing mountains



in a dream means that you are going to Canada. LOL ? just joking to see if anyone has made it this far. Seeing mountains in a dream may indicate the attainment of an administrative post.

Based on: Verses to Prophet David “Indeed, I made the mountains glorify our praises along with David in the evening and in the morning...and I strengthened his dominion” [Surah Saad (38): 18 & 20]

PEARLS: Dreaming of pearls may indicate Allah’s granting of a mater, male or female, which refer to the young men and women of paradise granted to the believers.

Based on: “And their will be large eyed maidens like hidden pearls” [Surah al Waqiah (56): 22-3]
“And there will be young men of perpetual youth serving them; if you saw the youths, you would think that they were scattered pearls” [Surah al Insaan (76): 19]

RECONCILIATION: Seeing a reconciliation in a dream may refer to a good settlement of one’s affairs. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 221]

Based on: “There is nothing wrong in making peace between themselves, for reconciliation is better” [Surah an Nisa (4): 128]

RIGHT SIDE: If one dreams of being led to the right side of a location, it indicates achieving a state of security or an escape from harm.

Based on: Ibn Umar said: Men from the companions of Allah’s Apostle used to see dreams during the lifetime of Allah’s Apostle and they used to narrate those dreams to Allah’s Apostle. Allah’s Apostle would interpret them as Allah wished. I was a young man and used to stay in the mosque before my wedlock. I said to myself, “If there were any good in myself, I too would see what these people see.” So when I went to bed one night, I said, “O Allah!

If you see any good in me, show me a good dream.” So while I was in that state, there came to me (in a dream) two angels. In the hand of each of them, there was a mace of iron, and both of them were taking me to Hell, and I was between them, invoking Allah, “O Allah! I seek refuge with You from Hell.” Then I saw myself being confronted by another angel holding a mace of iron in his hand. He said to me, “Do not be afraid, you will be an excellent man if you only pray more often.” So they took me till they stopped me at the edge of Hell, and behold, it was built inside like a well and it had side posts like those of a well, and beside each post there was an angel carrying an iron mace. I saw therein many people hanging upside down with iron chains, and I recognized therein some men from the Quraish. Then (the angels) took me to the right side. I narrated this dream to (my sister) Hafsa and she told it to Allah’s Apostle. Allah’s Apostle said, “No doubt, ‘Abdullah is a good man.” (Nafi’ said, “Since then ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar used to pray much.”) [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 127-8 no 155]

Hafsah was his sister and she was also one of the Prophet’s wives

Nafi was the freed slave of Ibn Umar, who became his student and one of the most outstanding scholars of his time

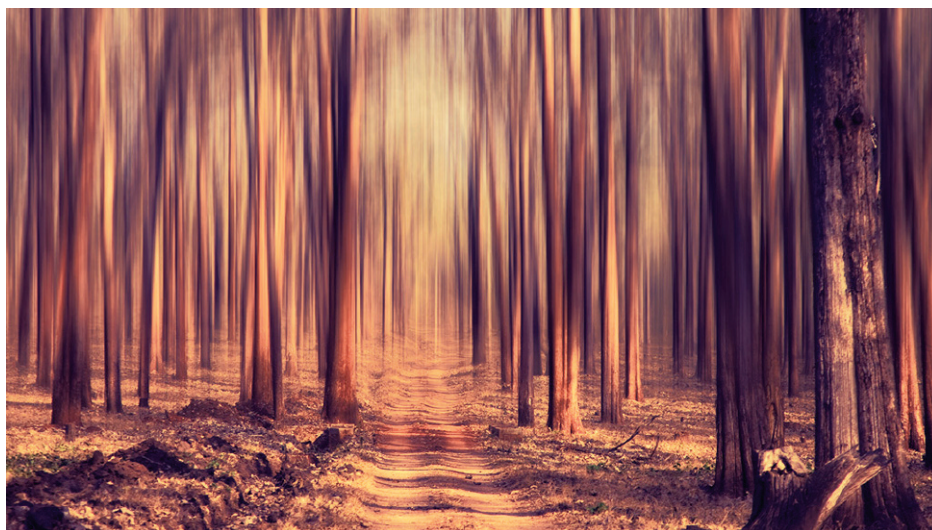
ROOM: Dreaming of oneself in a room or in different rooms, may refer to being safe from what one fears.

Based on: “They will reside in rooms in peace and security” [Surah Saba (34): 37]

ROPE: Seeing a rope in a dream and grabbing hold of it, may indicate one’s adherence to the covenant with God and Islam. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 220]

Based on: “Hold on firmly to the rope of Allah and do not become divided” [Surah al Imran (3): 103]

RULER: Being addressed by a ruler in a dream may refer to the at-



tainment of a high post or rank. [Sharh as Sunnah vol 12 p 220]

“When he (the ruler) spoke to him, he said, ‘Indeed, today you are considered an established, trustworthy person’” [Surah Yusuf (12): 54]

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE: Dreams of sexual intercourse are fundamentally satanic and therefore not interpretable. However, they may only be classified as good dreams if the people involved are married. If a person has an orgasm while dreaming, taking a complete ritual bath (ghusl) is obligatory on that individual to attain the state of purity (taharaah) necessary to make formal prayers.

Anas ibn Malik reported that Umm Sulaym came to the Prophet while he was with Aisha and asked him, “O Messenger of Allah, when a woman sees and experiences in a dream what a man does, what should she do?”. Aisha remarked, “O Umm Sulaym, you have humiliated women, May your righthand be covered in dust”. The Prophet said to Aisha, “May your right hand be covered in dust”. He then said to Umm Sulaym, “O Umm Sulaym, she should take ghusl if she sees any discharge” [Sahih of Muslim, vol 1 p 178 no 607]

Right hand be covered in dust: this is an Arabic statement of disapproval

SHIP: Seeing a ship in a dream may mean success or escape. [Sharh as Sunnah, vol 12 p 220]

Based on: Prophet Noah “Then I saved him and those with him in the ship, and made it a lesson for all of the worlds” [Surah al Ankaboot (29): 15]

SHIRT: Wearing a shirt in a dream indicates adherences to the religion. The longer the shirt, the greater commitment to Islam.

Abu Said ul Khudri said: I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, “While I was sleeping, I saw (in a dream) the people being displayed before me, wearing shirts, some of which (were so short that it) reached as far as their breasts and some reached below that. Then ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab was shown to me and he was wearing a shirt which he was dragging (behind him).” They asked. What have you interpreted (about the dream), O Allah’s Apostle?” He said, “The religion.” [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 113-4 no 137]

SILK CLOTH: Receiving or giving silk cloth in a dream may indicate impending marriage. Since silk garments are restricted to women, dreaming about

silk may be symbolic of a woman.

Based on: Aisha said “Allah’s Apostle said to me, “You were shown to me twice (in my dream) before I married you. I saw an angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said to him, ‘Uncover (her),’ and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), ‘If this is from Allah, then it must happen.’ Then you were shown to me, the angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said (to him), ‘Uncover (her),’ and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), ‘If this is from Allah, then it must happen.’” [Sahih of Bukhari vol 9 p 115-6 no 140]

Dreaming of oneself flying in paradise holding a piece of silk cloth indicates righteousness in the individual.

Based on: Ibn Umar said: I saw in a dream a piece of silken cloth in my hand, and in whatever direction in Paradise I waved it, it flew, carrying me there. I narrated this (dream) to (my sister) Hafsa and she told it to the Prophet who said, (to Hafsa), “Indeed, your brother is a righteous man,” or, “Indeed, ‘Abdullah is a righteous man.” [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 118 no 143]

SWORD: Seeing a sword in a dream refers to one’s companions and supporters coming to their aid. [Sahih Muslim: Sharh an Nawawee, vol 8 p 38]

Based on: Abu Musa said: The Prophet said, “I saw in a dream that I waved a sword and it broke in the middle, and behold, that symbolized the casualties the believers suffered on the Day (of the battle) of Uhud. Then I waved the sword again, and it became better than it had ever been before, and behold, that symbolized the Conquest (of Mecca) which Allah brought about and the gathering of the believers.” [Sahih of Bukhari, vol 9 p 133-4 no 164]

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**If Jannah is
your dream,
hold tight to
your Deen!**



My house on fire or yours?

A man who has gone out of his town comes back and finds that his house is on fire.

It was one of the most beautiful houses in the town, and the man loved the house the most! Many were ready to give double price for the house, but he had never agreed for any price and now it is just burning before his eyes.

And thousands of people have gathered, but nothing can be done, the fire has spread so far that even if you try to put it out, nothing will be saved. So he becomes very sad.

His son comes running and whispers something in his ear:

"Don't be worried. I sold it yesterday and at a very good price — three times. The offer was so good I could not wait for you. Forgive me."

Father said, "thank God, it's not ours now!" Then the father is relaxed and became a silent watcher, just like 1000s of other watchers.

Please think about it!

Just a moment before he was not a watcher, he was attached.

It is the same house....the same fire.... everything is the same...but now he is not concerned.

In fact started enjoying it just as everybody else in the crowd.

Then the second son comes running, and he says to the father, "What are you doing? You are smiling — and the house is on fire?" The father said, "Don't you know, your brother has sold it."

He said, "we have taken only advance amount, not settled fully. I doubt now that the man is going to purchase it now."

Again, everything changes!!

Tears which had disappeared, have come back to the father's eyes, his smile is no more there, his heart is beating fast. The 'watcher' is gone. He is again attached.

And then the third son comes, and he says, "That man is a man of his word. I have just come from him. He said, 'It doesn't matter whether the house is burnt or not, it is

mine. And I am going to pay the price that I have settled for. Neither you knew, nor I knew that the house would catch on fire.'"

Again the joy is back and family became 'watchers'! The attachment is no more there.

Actually nothing is changing!

just the feeling that

"I am the owner! I am not the owner of the house!" makes the whole difference.

This simple methodology of watching the mind, that you have nothing to do with it..Everything starts with a Thought !

Most of the thoughts are not yours but from your parents, your teachers, your friends, the books, the movies, the television, the newspapers.

Just count how many thoughts are your own, and you will be surprised that not a single thought is your own. All are from other sources, all are borrowed — either dumped by others on you, or foolishly dumped by yourself upon yourself, but nothing is yours.

Sow a thought, you reap an action.

Sow an act, you reap a habit.

Sow a habit, you reap a character.

Sow a character, you reap a destiny..!

Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him BELONGS all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all surrender with obedience (in worship) to Him. (فرق بـ لا قروس, Al-Baqara, Chapter #2, Verse #116)

And to Allah BELONGS all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. He forgives whom He wills, and punishes whom He wills. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

(نارم ع لآ قروس, Aal-i-Imraan, Chapter #3, Verse #129)

Verily, Allah! Unto Him BELONGS the dominion of the heavens and the earth, He gives life and He causes death. And besides Allah you have neither any Wali (protector or guardian) nor any helper.

(تبوت لا قروس, At-Tawba, Chapter #9, Verse #116)

Contributed by SADATHULLAH KHAN

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Pollution

I By Hajira Khan I

These days the earth is being polluted in different ways. People only seem to care about themselves and not about the environment at all. Air pollution has always accompanied the civilizations. Pollutions started from prehistoric times when man created the first fires. It was the industrial revolution that gave birth to environmental pollution on a large scale as we know it today. There are many types of pollution, examples: air, light, littering, noise, thermal, water and plastic pollution. A pollutant is a waste material that air, water or soil.

Air Pollution: Air pollution occurs when unwanted chemicals, gasses, and particles enter the air and the atmosphere causing harm to animals and damaging the natural cycles of the earth. Some sources of air pollution come from nature. These include eruptions of volcanoes, dust storms, and forest fires. Human activity is a major cause of air pollution, especially in large cities. Human air pollution is caused by things such as factories, power plants, cars, airplanes, chemicals, fumes from spray cans, and methane gas from landfills. One of the ways that humans cause the most air pollution is by burning fossil fuels. Fossil fuels include coal, oil, and natural gas. When we burn fossil fuels this releases all sorts of gasses into the air causing air pollution such as smog. Air pollution can also make people sick. It can make it difficult to breathe and cause diseases such as lung cancer, respiratory infections, and heart disease. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 2.4 million people die each year from air pollution. Air pollution can be especially dangerous to children living in big cities with bad smog. Cigarette smoke is very dangerous as it can cause cancer. It is dangerous both for the smoker and the people around him.

One of the most precious and important commodities for life on planet earth is clean water. For over one billion people on the planet, clean water is nearly impossible to get. Dirty, polluted water can make them sick and is especially tough on young children. Some bacteria and pathogens in water can make people so sick they can die. There are many sources of water pollution. Here are a few of the major causes.

- **Sewage:** Even today sewage is flushed directly into streams and rivers in many areas around the world. Sewage can introduce harmful bacteria that can make people and animals very sick.
- **Farm animal waste:** Waste from large herds of farm animals can get into the water supply from the runoff of rain and large storms.
- **Pesticides and herbicides:** Pesticides are often sprayed on crops to kill bugs and herbicides are sprayed to kill weeds. These strong chemicals can get into the water through runoff of rain storms. They can also contaminate rivers and lakes through accidental spills.
- **Construction, floods, and storms:** Silt from construction, earthquakes, floods, and storms can lower the oxygen content in the water and suffocate fish.
- **Factories:** Factories often use a lot of water to process chemicals, keep engines cool, and for washing things away. The used waste water is sometimes dumped into rivers or the ocean. It can be full of pollutants.

We need to take steps to reduce air and water pollution. So, we should not waste water: both while using and from leaking taps etc. We should avoid using pesticides. We should avoid putting solid waste into the kitchen drain and use the dustbin instead. Best thing is to follow the motto: reduce-reuse and recycle.

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The Mad Rightward Rush

I By Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam I

First of all, my apologies for returning to you a little late with this column. I had been travelling much of the time. This column, for a change, talks less about our religious, social and cultural life as Muslims. It talks largely about the world, and also about our role in it, which is crucial, of course.

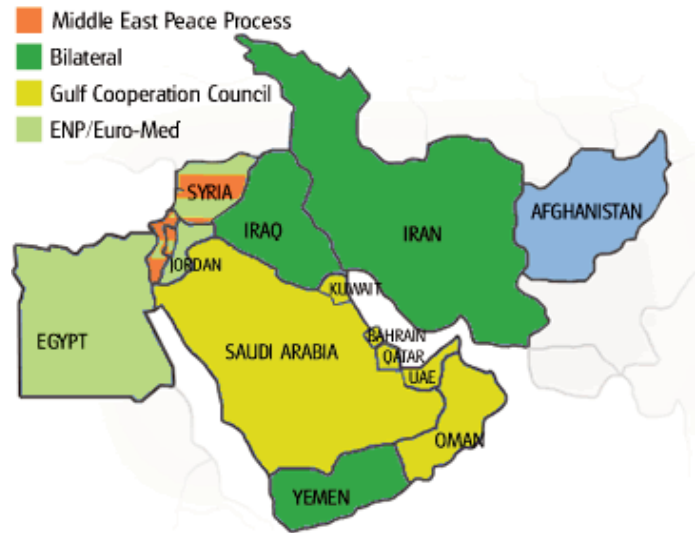
As the world was witnessing the fast spread of leftist ideas a century ago, it is moving in the opposite direction now with the same vigour. The rush towards the left had quickened after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 in Russia; we see the rise of rabidly rightist and paranoid leaders like Donald Trump in the United States and Marie Le Penn in France nearly a hundred years after that.

Today the dominant economic and political discourse in the West is not about welfare, inclusive growth, social justice, equality and public good. Today it is more about protectionism, anti-immigrant complaint, military dominance, anti-Indian grudge on outsourcing of jobs, the fear of the rise of China, Islamophobia. Across Europe leaders like Trump are rising.

Today, the world is moving towards the right for virtually the same reason as it did towards the left in the 20th century. People then were moving towards the left because they were fed up with the exploitative capitalist order, the remnants of feudal past in parts of the world as well as to create a better world which was more just, equitable and fair, and less exploitative.

The former US national security advisor and architect of Russian defeat in Afghanistan Zbigniew Brzezinski has rightly been regarded as one of the staunchest anti-communist leaders. But, even he admitted in his classic work on the collapse of the Marxist world order, *The Grand Failure*, that till the 70s of the 20th century the best and brightest young men and women (and the most noble and sympathetic souls among them) joined the left movement at an early stage in their life.

That Brzezinski was right could be known from a list of some of the best poets, writers, artists, philoso-



phers and activists who came from the left. Even in India, most of the best Urdu writers and poets were left-leaning. The great literary movement in Urdu, Progressive Writers Movement, was left-inspired, as was the highly influential theatre movement IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association). All of them were inspired by the ideals of a just and fair world.

Today's stampede towards the right is also driven by similar aspirations for a change to a better order. America is lurching towards extreme right of Trump because it is fed up with the growing injustice of the system. Their Occupy Wall Street movement was a simple reaction to one percent super-rich enjoying a life of ostentation and opulence at the cost of the preponderant majority's stagnant wages and shrinking real income like the sight of the opulence of a Vijay Mallya or Subrato Roy infuriates people working hard to make a living. Roy is in jail because he owes the public hundreds of crores of rupees, which he does not want to pay. Mallya, who owes much more to the people of India, is beyond the law's reach.

All this infuriates people, who want change—change for the better, if possible. If it can't be done, even change for the worse will do, as was the case in Modi government replacing Congress, which had done more for the people's uplift and inclusive growth and progress towards a just social order in its ten years than all previous governments since 1947 put together. People were seeing Congress in power for ten long years. They wanted change. They were also promised affordable prices of essentials, Rs. 15

lakh in every Indian's bank account, achche din, heaven on earth. Nothing came true because everything, every promise was a blatant lie, intended to cheat people.

People wanted a change, and they got it, even if they were cheated. People know that making false promises is unethical and a liar is a despicable person and he should never be believed, but they believed the most fantastic, incredible promises. They would have believed even more fantastic claims, not because they were credible, but because they wanted change. As a result, today we are being ruled by a rightist order which has facilitated some of the worst atrocities and witchhunts.

The shift towards the right is an interesting phenomenon. Today the false hope of Arab Spring has turned to dust and reactionary regimes are ruling everywhere. All this happened because immature leaders made promises that they could never fulfill. They were often so immature and foolish (like Mohammad Morsi of Egypt) that they tried to change the system in a haste, employing methods that were arbitrary, undemocratic and outlandish, even though the Turkish leadership had cautioned against it. That is why influential people, from the Salafi leadership to the Sheikh of al-Azhar, the head of the Coptic church and former International Atomic Energy Commission chief declared support to the military regime of General al-Sissi. Poor Egyptians' hopes were dashed, first by Morsi and then by the military.

It is important to remember here that after three decades of Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship people would have supported any alternative with a large backing, but Morsi got only 51 percent of the vote. That means had he got only one percent less, he would be equal to the opposition. Sadly, he overestimated his victory and landed himself in trouble. The entire Middle East is today a sorry spectacle of miscalculations and misadventures of incompetent politicians, ripe for violent uprisings and political turmoil.

The spill over of the foolish civil war in Syria-Iraq has flushed Europe with hapless refugees from this region. This extra economic burden on some countries has raised fears that these people would bankrupt them. Terrorist attacks traced to individuals from the refugee lot has antagonised people. This has led to further strengthening of the European right, which promises to flush these people out. Be-

hind the rise of the right are a lot of factors, one of them being the foolishness of Muslims who have turned their own lands unliveable and are seeking refuge abroad, which frightens the host populations and turns them against their liberal governments towards the right which promises to drive the "aliens" out. One way of turning the tide would be making Muslim lands peaceful and liveable so that nobody has to run away to Europe to save his life and that of this near and dear ones.

Another reason for this turmoil has been ascribed by Fareed Zakaria to the prosperity that most countries have experienced over the last ten years or so. That has raised the expectations of the common people (especially, the young middle class). It is a hot mix of too many factors which we have to try to understand. We can't turn our own lands into burning hells and run to others' countries for safety before turning them also into hells and leave no place for anybody to run, including ourselves. Before blaming the ill-mannered motormouth Trump, the undesirable Le Penn and other leaders like them, we have to look within and set our own house in order.

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



Among the BELIEVERS

I By AIJAZ ZAKA SYED I

The last time I had visited the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah was more than 10 years ago. But it seems like yesterday, with the memories of my young children circumambulating the Kaaba and earnestly praying still fresh in mind. My son looked cute in his ihram (the two-piece unstitched cloth that pilgrims wear during Haj and Umrah rites). It's a shame I couldn't capture those memories of a lifetime on camera. In the past few years, I have twice booked my tickets but couldn't go for some reason or the other. But, as they say in "unless He summons you, you can't make it on your own. That's why I had been breathlessly excited when the plane landed at Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport.

After what seemed like an endless wait on the tarmac in the airport shuttle, we were finally taken to the dedicated Haj Terminal where serpentine queues of pilgrims waited for their turn at the immigration counters.

Most of those manning the immigration counters were young Saudi men in khaki. 'Our' guy appeared to be particularly jovial with perfect bedside manners of a good doctor.

The official at the next counter

would excitedly come out of his cubicle to greet each pilgrim with a welcome grin and point to his wrist watch saying his shift was about to end and that they'd better hurry. The groups of pilgrims who were probably Palestinians or Syrians pleaded with him to let them in before leaving. He obliged by quickly photographing and fingerprinting them before excusing himself with a generous smile to a waiting family of Emirati pilgrims. The next batch of officials soon took over and elaborately went through the whole process of photographing and fingerprinting the new arrivals.

One saw throngs of pilgrims everywhere, men in stunning white ihram and women in traditional attire. Large queues of buses and vans were waiting to take the faithful to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.

An eager-looking, talkative Saudi came on to me as if he had been waiting for me for some time. He insisted on escorting me to his waiting cab. It took a while persuading him that my brother was waiting for me out there. Which he mercifully was, waiting

patiently with his young children in his car. The next day we all left for Makkah early in the morning hoping to catch the Friday prayers. The first glimpse of the Kaaba, the first house



of worship built by Abraham — his progeny propounded the three great monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam — and his son Ismail (Ishmael), is special, the moment when prayers are answered.

I was too awed by the breathtaking sight of the magnificent, black cubic structure to remember any prayers. The awareness that this is where the noblest of prophets, from Abraham to Ismail and the last link of the chain, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon them, worshipped bears down heavy on you. This is where Islam and its greats were born, faced existential struggles and eventually prevailed.

This is where Abraham left his wife Hajrah (Hager) and baby Ismail after being ordained by Allah when there was nothing here--literally.

There was no shade and no vegetation in sight and not a drop to drink. Ismail's anguished cries and hitting on the ground of his tiny heels brought forth Zamzam, the little stream that has flowed for thousands of years and continues to quench the thirst of millions of pilgrims each year and is one of Allah's living miracles.

This is where Ismail offered himself in sacrifice when Abraham was ordained to do so. The pilgrims and believers around the world celebrate the epic sacrifice of the patriarch and his son during Haj every year. This is where the Prophet, peace be upon him, after being hounded and persecuted for 10 long years, returned following the conquest of Makkah with a humility that remains unparalleled.

We started our Umrah soon after Friday prayers. The sight of thousands of pilgrims in white endlessly circling and surging around Kaaba perpetually chanting Labbaik Allah humma... is strangely moving. Men, women and children, black, brown and white and Arabs and Ajamis bound together in an invisible bond of faith and humanity. There are no distinctions whatsoever of color, birth or status.

It is the same at the Masjid Nabawi in Madinah which became the center of the new faith after the Prophet migrated to Makkah. Within 13 years, Islam conquered the whole of Arabia and beyond, humbling powerful empires like Persia and Rome. This is the mosque from where the Prophet's successors, the caliphs, ruled the world in utter simplicity.

In Madinah too the sea of humanity never seems to ebb. There is a distinct difference between Makkah and Madinah though. At the Grand Mosque, you are overwhelmed by the all-conquering majesty of God. On the other hand, Medina is the city of love and light, as the Arabic word Al Munawwara defines it.

The fact that the Last Messenger lies resting here makes Masjid Nabawi truly special. No wonder the faithful get incredibly emotional, especially those from the subcontinent. The Saudi Police have a hard time controlling the surging crowds of Indians and Pakistanis.

The knowledge that you are praying where the Prophet led prayers for years and who now lies buried only meters from where you are makes the whole experience surreal. A strange sense of peace and serenity descends on you.

Madinah is a state of mind. Few remain in control of their emotions or tears after entering the Prophet's city that welcomed him when his own people had rejected him. It still welcomes everyone with open arms. The past few days spent here among the believers have been some of the best in a long, long time. The open, balmy nights spent in the endless courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque and at the Grand Mosque watching the faithful at their pious best have been divine.

This is a world far removed from the maddening crowd of Daesh, Boko Haram and other abominations that claim to be the defenders of the faith although they are as different as chalk and cheese. What will it take for the world to discover the true, liberating message of the faith? Islam remains the fastest growing religion on earth and is set to overtake Christianity with the largest number of followers. Yet it is perhaps the least understood of all, largely thanks to its own so-called followers. Extremism has emerged as the greatest existential challenge to Muslim societies everywhere and a blemish on a faith that came as a blessing to all mankind and claims to have answers to all its problems. Those who came to serve and save humanity can never be the cause of its misery.

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<http://www.arabnews.com/news/903886>

Is Shehla Rashid A Muslim?

I By Dr. Asma Anjum Khan I

Bol ke lab azad hain tere! The level of Muslim Discussions

We Muslims, Moslems, Musalmans or Muhammedans are very interesting peoples. We have many nice habits. Like, we discuss a lot. We like to discuss, and we discuss for discussion's sake. We believe in aesthetic pleasure and practise the art for art's sake. After discussing an issue to its fullest, thread bare, postmortemmed, we do not heave a sigh of relief; but without wasting a second we jump on to the next topic.

This, you must accept, is an admirable quality amongst us folks.

Our discussions can be long, winding and yawn inducing.

What types and kinds of issues we discuss?

Oh, many.

Top of the list is cricket. We discuss it like anything or everyone else.

Our second top most topic of discussion is our religion, Islam. While discussing this chosen topic, we use choicest of verbal flavors. This is for the purpose of better explanation. It helps educating the parties in discussion. We swear and spout profane oaths, for truth must prevail. It also shows we are passionate about our causes and concerns. Our enemies [and we have not a few] call us names.

But often we don't care and name calling is a harmless activity, anyway.

See an example below for name calling:

What is your name, sorry your caste, sorry your sect?

Salafi.

Bastxxx, don't come in my mosque.



You, rascal, step out of your mosque and we will see you.

We often discuss our issues in such friendly banter. People make an issue of our issues.

Their problem.

During our discussions, frequently you will hear, words like, you kafir, you kafir. This too, as you know is for bringing some rhythm to the longish discourses. We adopt this strategy of screaming Kafir, when bored with discussions and want a way out.

After this, we go out and have a pizza.

This is our strategy for eating pizzas and nothing else, but we are damned for this purely innocent trick of takfeer-ing (an act of calling another kafir).

Secondly we discuss sects in Islam or Islam in sects. Anyone with a sharp wit, can see, the wisdom hidden. We fiercely stick to our points and whatever proofs one presents, we maul it bravely. We defend our sects, taking it to be our duty. Anyone talking about Islam in between, is regarded as a traitor to the cause or yes, called a Kafir. In return we too receive the same and take it to be a certificate of merit from the enemy. In the days of social media, we go on a liking spree and post stuff on sects in Islam or Islam in sects, always going emotional, with pics that warn, if you don't share /forward this, you will earn a sure fire Hot Seat in hell. If this doesn't work [usually it doesn't; people don't fear hell fire, imagine!] we threaten them.

Those who won't forward/share this post with their friends, relatives and relatives of relatives, then one of their close relative might die. [This usually works]. But once a guy wrote to us: I am forwarding your message, will my Ma in law, really die? After our assurance, he looked happy but returned with a complaint soon. The forward hadn't worked and his Ma in law was now kicking the butts out of him. We would laugh at the poor guy for months forward.

Our third topic of interest, a discussion for discussion's sake is, emotional posts on Iraq, Syria, Burma and such countries with pics of children; one who is sleeping inside the chalk drawing of his mother or a boy beside a grave. These are kinda popular posts with our folksies. Frequently or infrequently, we keep sharing posts on Palestine. It's our favorite wailing wall and a perfect metaphor for our numb senses.

Wow! If we can't speak on Kashmir, should we also stop talking about Palestine?

No way, no way. We will be speaking liking sharing Posts on Palestine, Syria, Burma. We believe in helping our brothers in distress.

The next best thing, that we discuss is to check on the availability or the level of eeman in one's heart. It's not very difficult to gauge. Those who oppose us, are devoid of or weak of eeman. It is as simple as that. The moment you turn against us; hmm...you know what you are.

Takbeer.....

Sssorry.

Takfeer.

As per tradition, we were recently discussing the faith of a young woman activist who was, brave

enough in Modi times to throw all caution to the wind and craved for justice. Yes, I am talking about immensely likeable, Shehla Rashid Shora, of JNU. She should be especially noted for being a mainstream activist in Indian politics, from Kashmir. Many Muslim bodies/institutions were mum on JNU issue when the national and anti-national debate was at its peak, or when Rohith Vemula was murdered. But that was not what we were discussing. There was another important topic.

Was Shehla Muslim? Does her heart sparkle with eeman?

This was all what we could think about.

All through this JNU saga, our lips were mummied with a palpable sticky fear. Though we had started hailing Kanhaiyya, yet we were cautious.

Now our hearts have become too sticky, to leap out and hail someone. They remain chipkoed and stubbornly refuse to untangle of the chipkiness. Hence when the tigress of JNU roars with anger:

Hum Adani-Ambani ke tukdon pe palne wale nahin hain, and Hum Adani ke hawai jahazon mein udne wale nahin hain;

You will find us, changing our sides.

Abruptly.

In our cushy sofas.

We feel awkward, we feel uncomfortable. We are stunned to see this dare devil girl, chirping.

Bol ke lab azad hain tere!

Now we start feeling more uncomfortable. [We, who don't want to disturb our equilibrium.]

We want some air.

At this point, our fertile mind snaps out a recipe to save us from this misery of thinking in a meaningful way.

We quickly don our sectarian religious gear and ask stoutly with a straight face.

Is Shehla Rashid a Moslem? Is she a Muslim?

Followed by

Is she a committed Marxist? [This we ask with a smirk.]

We know the answers, yet we ask.

It is for our own pernicious satisfaction.

By ensuring eeman in Shehla's heart, we actually put on display, our own.

Some Arastus among us can even go a step further and demand; where is Shehla's hijab? Is she even a Muslim?

So it must have become clear to you all now, how much we care, worry for and discuss our 'real' issues, that plague our peoples.

A battle of perceptions

I By AIJAZ ZAKA SYED I

Thanks to my solitary existence, I often end up spending endless hours watching television. I keep telling myself to get a life and do something useful and worthwhile like read a book or go for a walk. But, as many of you would agree, it's not easy resisting the charms of the so-called idiot box that has become an essential part of our lives.

I am mostly hooked to Indian and international news networks and Pakistani soaps. 'Mad Men' and 'Game of Thrones' are some of the other addictive weaknesses. They transport you to a fascinating world that is fantastic yet curiously believable.

In between sometimes I tune in to Murdoch's Star World and its staples like '24' and 'Homeland' starring Kiefer Sutherland and Claire Danes as their chief warriors, saving America — and the world — week after week.

True to what has become a permanent feature and trend of Hollywood productions over the past many years, both these primetime dramas are inspired by America's ceaseless war on terror.

Week after week, the battle-hardened crusaders of the twin thrillers put their lives on the line to go after baddies who are invariably Arabs and Muslims and are hell-bent on wreaking havoc on the poor America and the rest of the free world.

Plots are almost always predictable and storyline often flimsy, playing as they invariably do on the hackneyed, done-to-death stereotypes about crazy, bigoted Arabs and Muslim fanatics whose single mission in life is to wreak vengeance on the West and blow themselves up with the rest of the world. However, the slick execution and masterful storytelling by the best of Hollywood brains ensures that

the audience remains perpetually on the edge of the seat, panting for more, week after week.

Of late, our own Priyanka Chopra, the Bollywood heartthrob and dusky former Miss World from India, has jumped on the bandwagon with 'Quantico' in which she plays the lead of Alex Parrish, one of the few bright FBI agents training at the Quantico Base in Virginia.

No prizes for guessing that the predominant theme of 'Quantico' also remains the same — fighting the so-called Islamist terror.

The question is why the US and its dream merchants are so hopelessly obsessed with the bogey of "Islamic terrorism?"

You could argue that they are merely mirroring the reality of a world that is inhabited by the crazies of Daesh and their cousins and their antics around the



world, most recently in cities like Paris and Brussels. Of course, it's not possible to argue with the fact that extremist violence has emerged as a clear and present danger to the civilized world. But this is not the only existential threat facing humanity.

There are many, more problems out there that are far too serious in nature and totally outweigh the threat posed by extremists. The threat of nuclear holocaust, for instance, hangs like the Damocles' sword over the world what with the US, its NATO allies and Russia and China sitting over mountains of nukes. Each one of them is capable of destroying our world many times over. And we aren't even talking about late arrivals like Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea whose capacity to inflict grief isn't any less potent.

No one is underestimating the threat posed by terrorist groups like Daesh and Al-Qaeda, whose acts are actually against Islam and doing more harm to Mus-

lims than anybody else. But the total number of lives that extremists have claimed, beginning from 9/11 to the recent Brussels bombing, does not go beyond a few thousands. The twin US nuclear strikes, on the other hand, managed to kill hundreds and thousands of innocent unsuspecting people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Even after all the elaborate farce of nuclear disarmament agreements and non-proliferation treaties, the deadly arsenal that is at the disposal of the world powers represents a threat which is unimaginable and on a scale that is incomparable with the one posed by terrorism. There's simply no comparison. Yet you have no spooks chasing the baddies threatening to wipe out the world with nukes, or plotting against each other's military installations and WMDs as had been the case throughout the Cold War. Clearly, as Samuel Huntington effectively argued, with the demise of Soviet Union and Communism, the only threat that matters to the West is that of Islam.

Another existential threat that remains largely ignored by the creative minds of Hollywood dream machine is that of global warming and how humanity is marching, eyes wide shut, to its extinction, thanks to the reckless abuse of natural resources by the industrialized world. The alarmingly fast rising global temperatures and sea levels, melting polar ice and the chaotic global weather patterns all point to the fact that our time is nearly up. Yet none of these threats seem to matter to those tasked with the responsibility of saving the world. More important, for all the havoc unleashed by the extremists, it is nothing compared to what the Western wars and 'interventions' have visited on the Middle East and rest of the Muslim world.

The Iraq invasion alone claimed more than a million lives, leaving behind a country that is still reeling from the shock and awe of 'liberation' and 'human freedom' gifted by Bush and company.

Secondly, notwithstanding America's grand, enduring obsession with 'Islamist terror', there has been no major terror attack on the US soil since 9/11. Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda has been nearly wiped out.

Indeed, if it's any consolation, it is Muslim countries like Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and now even Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which have been

bleeding at the hands of extremists on a daily basis.

Yet in the world of alternate reality spawned by the thrillers like 24, Homeland, Quantico and their European and Indian versions, it is always the Muslims who are the aggressors and villains.

There is no attempt to balance their narrative and 'storytelling' either by trying to explore and explain the motives and causes of radicalization of their uni-dimensional Muslim characters. Always fierce and fearsome with ridiculously long beards, they are more like caricatures, forever spewing venom and mouthing hateful inanities.

Following the glorious tradition of Hollywood, India's Bollywood has also been churning out similar apocalyptic fare for some years now. In Indian cinema's case though, the imagined threat is more immediate and from across the border. Of course, all good art is inspired by life. And it's perhaps only natural that reel life is beginning to reflect real life. However, what if this so-called reality is dangerously twisted and distorted, perpetually demonizing a particular faith and community?

If Islamophobia has emerged as a serious problem in the West and elsewhere, a great deal of credit goes to dramas like '24' and 'Homeland' and the 'war on terror' Hollywood style.

The history of caricaturing Arabs and Muslims is almost as old as Hollywood itself and this is no time to go into it. Right now though it's as if there is a feeding frenzy, with just about everyone jumping in to fight the specter of 'Islamist terror'.

The question is, how do we check this willful vilification of an entire community in the name of fighting terror? The victims themselves have done little so far to confront the trend despite its visible, catastrophic consequences. There are 56 Muslim countries and there is no dearth of financial or human resources in the Muslim world either. Why then has this critical front been so neglected for so long?

Today, battles of perceptions and hearts and minds are almost as critical as those fought on the battlefield. No individuals or groups can afford to remain mute spectators as they are portrayed as bloodthirsty fiends, week after week.

<http://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/907336>

The Power of forgiveness

God has granted intellect to human beings. The intellect entails responsibility. The more intellect a person has, the more he/she is responsible.

When the intellect is missing, the responsibility is also not there. Little children are not held responsible, because their intellect has not yet developed. The insane are not responsible, because they have lost the intellectual capacity. However, part of our being human is also that we make mistakes. Sometime we make mistakes without deliberation and intention. But sometime we knowingly and deliberately sin and do wrong to others.

It is said: "To err is human and to forgive is divine." Both parts of this statement are very true. As human beings we are responsible, but we do also make mistakes and we are constantly in need of forgiveness. Islam speaks about two elements of forgiveness: a) God's forgiveness; b) Human forgiveness. We need both, because we do wrong in our relations to God as well as in our relations to each other.

There are many names of God given in the Qur'an. They are called "Most beautiful names" and they indicate many different and diverse attributes and qualities of God. Some of these names are related to His mercy and forgiveness. Let us look at some of these names:

1. Al-Ghafoor (The Most Forgiving): This name occurs in the Qur'an more than 70 times. There are other names from the same root, such as Ghafir and Ghaffar. The meaning of the Arabic word "ghafara" is to cover, to hide and from it comes the meaning "to excuse," "to pardon," "to remit" and "to forgive." God does all these things. In the Qur'an, it is mentioned that God does not forgive the Shirk (without repentance) but He may forgive every other sin for whomsoever He wills. (4:116) We must turn to God to seek His forgiveness.

2. Al-Afuw: This has another part of forgiveness. This name occurs in the Qur'an five times. Literally, the word 'Afw means "to release," "to heal," "to restore," "to remit." Thus in relation to God it means "to release us from the burden of punishment due to our sins and mistakes; to restore our honor after we

have dishonored ourselves by committing sins and making mistakes." Sometimes in the Qur'an both names, Afuw and Ghafoor, come together.

3. Al-Tawwab (The Acceptor of Repentance): This name of God is mentioned in the Qur'an about 11 times. Allah accepts repentance of those who sincerely repent and turn to him. The word "tawwab" gives the sense of "oft-returning," which means that He again and again accepts the repentance. We make sins and mistakes then we repent, He accepts our repentance. Then again we commit sins and make mistakes and when we repent, He again very kindly accepts us and gives us another chance.

4. Al-Haleem (The Clement): This name is mentioned fifteen times in the Qur'an. This means that God is not quick to judgment. He gives time. He forebears and is patient to see His servant return to Him.

5. Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim (The Most Merciful and Compassionate): These names are the most frequent in the Qur'an. Al-Rahman is mentioned 57 times and al-Raheem is mentioned 115 times. Al-Rahman indicates that God's mercy is abundant and plenty and Al-Raheem indicates that this is always the case with God. God is full of love and mercy and is ever Merciful.

The Qur'an teaches that God is a Judge and He also punishes, but God is not bound to punish. The justice of God, according to Qur'an is that God does not and will not inflict undue punishment on any person. He will not ignore the good of any person. But if He wishes to forgive any sinner, He has full freedom to do that. His mercy is unlimited and His love is infinite.

There are many verses in the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on God's love, mercy and forgiveness. In one of the prayers that the Prophet taught, he said: "O God, You are most Forgiving One, You love to forgive, so forgive me." (At-Trimidhi & Ibn Majah). We need God's mercy and forgiveness all the time. It is wrong to assume at any time that one will find eternal salvation without the forgiveness of God.

Just as it is important to believe in God's mercy and forgiveness, it is also necessary to base human relations on forgiveness. We cannot expect God's forgiveness unless we also forgive those who do wrong to us. Forgiving each other, even forgiving one's enemies is one of the most important of Islamic teaching. In the Qur'an, God has described the Believers as: "those who avoid major sins and acts of indecencies and when they are angry they forgive." (42:37)

In the same chapter, God says: "The reward of the evil is the evil thereof, but whosoever forgives and makes amends, his reward is upon God." (42: 40) In another place the Qur'an says: "If you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, indeed it is better for the patient. Endure you patiently. Your patience is not except through the help of God..." (16:126-27)

In one of the famous sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) it is reported that he said that God commanded him about nine things. One of them he mentioned was "that I forgive those who do wrong to me."

Prophet Muhammad was the most forgiving person. He was ever ready to forgive his enemies. When he went to Ta'if to preach God's message to its people, they mistreated him. They abused him and hit him with stones. He left the city humiliated and wounded. When he took shelter under a tree, God's angel appeared to him and told him that God was very angry with the people of Taif and sent him to destroy them because they mistreated God's beloved Prophet. The Prophet prayed to God to save the people of Ta'if, because what they did was out of their ignorance. He said: "O Allah, guide these people, because they did not know what they were doing." (Al-Bukhari)

When he entered the city of Makkah after the victory, the Prophet had in front of him some of his staunchest enemies. Those who fought him for many years, persecuted his followers and killed many of them. Now he had full power to do whatever he wanted to punish them for their crimes. It is reported that the Prophet asked them: "What do you think I shall do to you now?" They expected nothing but retaliation and pleaded for mercy. The Prophet said, "Today I shall say to you what Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) said to his brothers: 'No blame on you today. Go, you are all free'." (Al-Albani) Soon they all came and accepted Islam at his hands.

He forgave even Henda who had caused the murder of his uncle Hamza. After killing him, she had his body mutilated and chewed his liver. When she accepted Islam, the Prophet even forgave her.

A very striking example of forgiveness we find in the Qur'an in reference to the most unfortunate event of "Slander of Aisha." Some hypocrites of Madinah accused her. They tried to put dirt on her noble character. One of the slanderers turned out to be Mistah, the cousin of Aisha's father Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr used to give financial help to this young man. After he slandered his daughter, Abu Bakr vowed not to help him anymore. But God reminded Abu Bakr and through him all the Believers:* "Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want and those who migrated in the path of God. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that God should also forgive you. Indeed God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (24: 22)*

Abu Bakr came out of his home and said: "Yes, indeed, I do want God's forgiveness. He did not only continue to help him but he increased his allowance. Islam emphasizes justice and punishment of the wrong doers, but it equally strongly emphasizes mercy, kindness and love. Justice, law and order are necessary for the maintenance of a social order, but there is also a need for forgiveness to heal the wounds and to restore good relations between the people. We must keep in mind that as much as we need God's forgiveness for our own sins and mistakes, we must also practice forgiveness toward those who do wrong to us.

Courtesy of www.forgivenessworks.org



The Stories Of Akbar And Birbal

We read Akbar and Birbal stories throughout our childhood. They always ended with a sweet little moral that taught us a thing or two about life. Today, we are revisiting those stories and taking out some essential work advice from them. Read on as we tell you some simple messages that could help you at your work place.

1. You don't have to believe everything you hear

One day Akbar asked his courtiers if they could tell him the difference between truth and falsehood in three words or less. The courtiers look at each other in bewilderment, but couldn't find an answer. The emperor finally turned to Birbal. 'Four fingers' said Birbal. The emperor was confused, but Birbal elaborated. 'That's the difference between truth and falsehood, your Majesty. Everything you see with your own eyes is the truth. But what you hear with your ears may or may not be true. More often than not, it's likely to be false.' But Akbar didn't get the point of 'four fingers.' To which Birbal replied – 'The distance between one's eyes and one's ears is the width of four fingers.'

The moral of the story is to trust your eyes and nothing else.

2. When you're stuck with something on an important assignment, think calmly and you'll figure a way out

One day, Emperor Akbar and Birbal were taking a walk in the palace gardens. Suddenly Akbar asked Birbal how many crows were there in his kingdom. Birbal replied, 'There are ninety-five thousand four hundred and sixty-three crows in the Kingdom.' Akbar tried to test him again, 'What if there are more

crows than you answered?' Without hesitating Birbal replied, 'If there are more crows than my answer, then some crows are visiting from other neighbouring kingdoms.'

'And what if there are lesser crows?' Akbar asked.

'Then some crows from our kingdom have gone on a holiday to another place.'

It's simple. There is always a way if you think with ease. Always.

3. Sometimes, all you need is a great idea

Once there was a complaint at King Akbar's court. There were two neighbours who shared a garden. The garden had a well that was owned by Iqbal Khan. His neighbour, a farmer wanted to buy the well for irrigation purpose. Therefore, they signed an agreement between them, according to which the farmer owned the well. Even after selling the well to the farmer, Iqbal continued to fetch water from the well. Angered by this, the farmer came to King Akbar. Akbar asked Iqbal the reason behind fetching water from the well after it had been sold. Iqbal replied that he had sold only the well to the farmer and not the water inside it. The matter went to Birbal who solved it in less than a minute. He said, 'Iqbal, you say that you have sold only the well to the farmer. And you claim that the water is yours. Then how come you can keep your water inside another person's well without paying rent?' Iqbal returned home speechless. Sometimes, matters at work need to be denkg with with a presence of mind and little trickery.

4. Don't kiss your boss's A*s, it may backfire!





One day a man stopped Birbal on the street and began narrating his woes to him. 'I've walked twenty miles to see you, and all along the way people kept saying you were the most generous man in the country,' he told Birbal. Birbal knew the man was going to ask him for a favour. He replied, 'While going back on the same way, please deny the rumour of my generosity,' said Birbal, walking away.

5. You can always find a quirky way to work on something that's boring

On a hot day, Akbar was travelling to a distant place along with some of his courtiers. Tired and angry, Akbar gave up and asked, 'Can someone shorten this road for me?' Birbal said he could. The other courtiers were shocked at Birbal's response. Akbar asked Birbal to go ahead. 'I will, but listen to this story I have to tell, said Birbal. Riding beside the emperor's palanquin, he launched upon a long and intriguing tale that held Akbar and all those listening, spellbound. Before they knew it, they had reached the end of their journey. Akbar was amazed at how time had passed so quickly. This is how Birbal had shortened the road for Akbar. Before you give up on that project because it's boring, think of a way to make it more interesting! There' always be a way.

6. Completing the task is not important, how well you do it is what matters

One day Emperor Akbar was inspecting his kingdom. One of his ministers, who was jealous of Birbal, complained to the Emperor, saying he gave importance only to Birbal's suggestions, ignoring all other courtiers in the court. Akbar then decided to tell the court how wise Birbal was. There was a marriage procession going on. The Emperor ordered the ministers to find out whose marriage it was. The minister found out and returned with extreme pride.

But when Birbal went there, he asked all the details about marriage, where they were headed and what the couple's future plans were. Akbar had proved his point. It's necessary to understand the difference between doing a shoddy job and doing a good job. Because sometimes it's not enough to meet deadlines. It's equally important to use your intelligence to make that work stand out.

7. If your boss makes a mistake, tell him without embarrassing him

It was peak winters and the ponds were frozen when Akbar asked Birbal if a man would be inside the frozen pond throughout the night, without any attire for money. Birbal agreed. The next day, Birbal came to the court along with a poor Brahmin whose family was starving. He agreed to be in the pond all night. The whole night he was inside the pond, shivering. He returned to the durbar the next day to receive his reward. The king asked how he managed to withstand the extreme temperature all through the night. He replied, 'I could see a faintly glowing light a kilometer away and I withstood with that ray of light.'

Akbar wasn't convinced and refused to give him any reward. The Brahmin went to Birbal asking for help. Thereafter, Birbal stopped coming to the durbar and sent a messenger to the king saying that he would come to the court only after cooking his khichdi. After a few days, the king himself went to Birbal's house to see what he was doing. Birbal had lit the fire and kept the pot of uncooked khichdi one meter away from it. Akbar questioned him, 'How will the khichdi get cooked with the fire one meter away?'

Birbal replied, 'When it was possible for a person to receive warmth from a light that was a kilometer



away, then it is possible for this khichdi, to get cooked too. Akbar understood his mistake and rewarded the Brahmin man with 2000 gold coins.

It's possible to handle such situations without anger or frustration. If Birbal could make Akbar realise his mistake without making him feel embarrassed, so can you.

8. People might not be their original selves at the workplace, so be careful of what you tell them.

There lived a blind saint in an ashram in the kingdom of Emperor Akbar who predicted the future correctly. Once, he had visitors who had come to treat their niece. The child's parents were killed in front of the girl's eyes. Once she saw the saint, she started to scream loudly saying that that saint was the culprit.



The couple went to Birbal to seek help. In front of all the ministers, he drew a sword and neared the saint to kill him. The saint in bewilderment immediately drew another sword and began to fight. Thus, everyone found out that he wasn't blind.

At a workplace, people sometimes try to manipulate others, so be wary of them.

9. Don't ask your colleagues to do something that you wouldn't do yourself. nkgough, you can ask for help!

One day, one rich man wanted to punish a man named Hasan. He blamed him for stealing a necklace from his house. The rich man forced Hasan to put a red hot iron in his hands to prove his innocence. Hasan, on the other hand, refused to do it. Birbal intervened, suggesting the rich man to put the red hot iron on his bare hands as well. This would help him prove his innocence. The rich man refused to do it,

and decided against it. Thus, the court knew Hasan had not stolen the necklace.

There will always be assignments or duties that you won't enjoy doing, but to transfer them to someone else isn't fair either. Don't force other people to do things you wouldn't do yourself.

10. Sometimes, all you need is a different perception

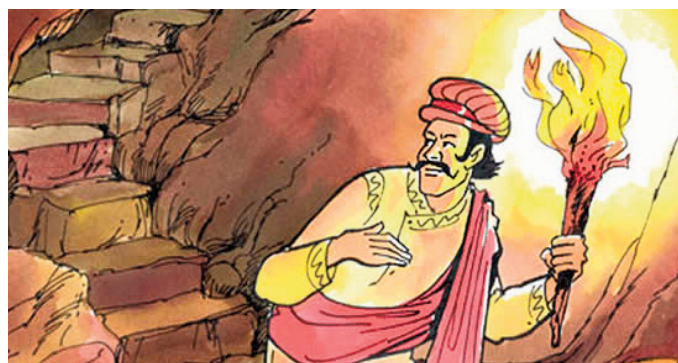
Once, Akbar asked Birbal if it was possible for a man to be the lowest and the noblest at the same time. Birbal said it was possible. Akbar demanded to meet such a person. Birbal went out and returned with a beggar. Birbal then told Akbar, 'He is the lowest among your subjects.' But Akbar wasn't convinced if he was the noblest. To which Birbal replied, 'He has been given the honour of an audience with the emperor,' said Birbal. 'That makes him the noblest among beggars.' And Akbar was convinced.

There are days we all feel burdened with work, and saturated. On those days, maybe we just need to look at things differently.

11. Confidence is great, overconfidence is not

A man who made spears and shields once visited Akbar's court. He said, 'Your Majesty, nobody can make shields and spears to equal mine. My shields are so strong that nothing can pierce them and my spears are so sharp that there's nothing they cannot pierce.' Birbal was sure that he could prove him wrong, but the man thought it was impossible. Birbal finally said, 'Hold up one of your shields and I will pierce it with one of your spears,' said Birbal with a smile.

Confidence is a great quality, but overconfidence is equally bad. It's impossible to know everything and that's the reason we should never stop learning.



TOWARD UNDERSTANDING ALLAH'S NAMES:

God's Name Al-Mujeeb (The Answerer of Prayers)

I By Salman Al-Oadah I

“Ask forgiveness of Him, and turn to Him (in repentance): for my Lord is near, the Answerer (of prayers).” (Hud 11: 61)

This name of Allah is found in the following verse of the Qur'an:

{Ask forgiveness of Him, and turn to Him (in repentance): for my Lord is near, the Answerer (of prayers).} (Hud 11: 61)

{He it is Who enables you travel by land and sea; yet when you are in the ships, and they sail on with them in a pleasant breeze, and those (on the ship) rejoice, a violent wind overtakes them and the billows surge in on them from all sides, and they become certain that they are encompassed about, they pray to Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, saying: “If You deliver us from this, we will most certainly be of the grateful ones.” But when He delivers them, behold! they transgress insolently throughout the Earth in defiance of right!} (Yunus 10: 22-23)

Allah answers the prayers of those who beseech Him. He relieves those who seek refuge in Him and He placates their fears. He even answers the prayers of the unbelievers and those who are heedless when, in the throes of despair, they call out to Him: Allah answered Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, in his distress, saving him and his followers in the ark when He drowned the sinful people in the flood: {Noah did certainly call to Us, and We are the best to answer prayers.} (As-Saffat 37: 75)

Allah answered the prayers of Job, peace be upon him: {(Remember) Job, when He cried to his Lord, ‘Truly distress has seized me, but You are the Most Merciful of those who are merciful.’ Then We heard his prayer and removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his people to him, and doubled their number, a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers.} (Al-Anbiya' 21: 83-84)

Allah answered the prayers of Jonah, peace be upon him, when he cried out from the belly of the whale: {And (remember) Jonah, when he went off in anger and deemed that We would not straiten him. But he cried through the depths of darkness, saying: ‘There

is no god but You, Glory to You: I was indeed wrong!’ So We answered him and delivered him from grief, and thus do We deliver the believers.} (Al-Anbiya' 21: 87-88)

They beseeched their Lord with utmost humility and sincerity, so He, in His infinite grace, safeguarded them

Likewise, Allah answered the prayers of Abraham, Zechariah,

John the Baptist, Jesus, and indeed every one of His prophets and messengers, peace be upon them all. They beseeched their Lord with utmost humility and sincerity, so He, in His infinite grace, safeguarded them, guided them, honored them, and accepted their appeals.

Allah is the one who answers the prayers of those who beseech Him and place their hopes in Him. Allah alone is the one to whom all prayers and sup-



plications are to be made.

{And your Lord says: “Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!”} (Ghafir 40: 60)

Allah has enjoined supplication upon us and He has promised to answer our prayers. This is why `Umar used to say: “I do not worry that my supplications will be answered. I worry about my supplications themselves.”

In other words, when a person is blessed to beseech the Lord, this itself is the benefit. As for the answer, that is something which has already been granted. Allah is the one who removes our distresses. He reminds us: {It is Allah who delivers you from these and from every distress, but again you set up others (with Him).} (Al-An‘am 6: 64)

How God is Al-Mujeeb

Our supplications to Allah are a means to dispel calamities and hardships, and to draw blessings and opportunities to us. However, supplications are not the only cause for these desired effects. There are other causes that need to be acknowledged as well, including natural cause-and-effect relationships.

He has made our supplications one of the influences that affects our lives, and He has promised to answer our prayers

Allah, in His wisdom, knows what is best. He has made our supplications one of the influences that affects our lives, and He has promised to answer our prayers. This means that sometimes He answers us with precisely what we ask for. At other times, He might prevent a calamity from befalling us that we would otherwise have been destined to suffer from.

Also, He might postpone granting us the answer to that prayer until the Day of Resurrection, and reward us with the blessings of it on that day in terms of our judgment and reward in the Hereafter, through having it weigh in our favor on that day when our deeds are weighed. This is guaranteed for all who beseech Allah with sincerity and devotion. As for the answer to our prayers coming in this world with precisely what we ask for, this is usually the case.

When we read about the lives of the prophets, we witness many cases where Allah answered their

prayers. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, beseeched Allah on behalf of a number of his companions. He beseeched Allah about Ibn 'Abbas asking: “O Allah! Make him deeply knowledgeable about the religion.”

He prayed that Anas ibn Malik would have a long life and many children. He prayed that `Umar ibn al-Khattab would embrace Islam and add his strength to the Muslim community. He beseeched Allah on behalf of many of the tribes he interacted with, and He beseeched Allah for all of the Muslims throughout the ages.

We find many accounts, past and present, of how Allah answered people's prayers. Wherever people believe in Allah, even if they might be sinful in their deeds and misguided in their religious understanding, we find them speaking about how Allah answered their prayers and removed their woes.

This is something that cannot be denied, a further proof attesting to Allah's existence and His mercy. This is the reason why we scarcely find anyone, when faced with a great calamity or woe, who refrains from turning to Allah to relieve his or her distress.

The Benefit of Knowing Allah, Al-Mujeeb

Awareness that Allah is the Answerer of Prayers is a comfort and source of strength for those who are cut off from all other hope or recourse, with only Allah to turn to. At this time, they turn to Allah with the sincerest and most devoted heart, so Allah quickly relieves their burdens and removes their afflictions.

Such is the experience of those who are languishing in prison without anyone to come to their defense. Such is the experience of the person lost alone the wilderness. Such is the experience of the sailor whose ship is being tossed at sea in a violent tempest. Such is the terminally ill person whom doctors have given up hope for and who recovers after turning to Allah. Such is the oppressed who is victimized by the mighty, about whose prayers Allah says:

“By My Might and Majesty, I will grant you victory, though it be after a time.” (Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah)

<http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/understanding-islam/belief/allah/457546-gods-name-al-mujeeb-the-answerer-of-prayers.html>

AL-MU`ADHDHIB - The Punisher

That Day, no one will punish as He punishes and no one will shackle as He shackles. (Surat al-Fajr, 89:25-26)

Despite all of the surrounding evidence, those who have no faith in Allah and who insist upon disregarding His grandeur and power surely deserve a great punishment, for Allah created us, placed us on Earth, and provided us with whatever we need. However, despite all of these blessings, some people insist on denial and even hate believers and try to destroy their faith. No doubt, such people will be repaid both in this world and beyond.

Allah directs some affairs in this world through His Messengers and sometimes punishes unbelievers in this world through the hands of His Messengers.

Allah reveals this fact in the Qur'an, as follows:

If the hypocrites and those with a sickness in their hearts and the rumor-mongers in Madina do not desist, We will set you upon them. Then they will only be your neighbors there for a very short time. They are an accursed people. Wherever they are found, they should be seized and mercilessly put to death. This is Allah's pattern with those who passed away before. You will not find any alteration in Allah's pattern. (Surat al-Ahzab, 33:60-62)

Their fearsome punishment in the Hereafter will continue to exist, unless Allah wills otherwise, for all eternity. Allah created various forms of psychological and physical punishments, for He knows each person's most secret weaknesses. Thus, He is the One Who can give the most suitable punishment. According to the following verses:

But as for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Surat al-Isra', 17:10)

But as for those who are deviators, their refuge is the Fire. Every time that they want to get out, they are put straight back into it again and are told: "Taste the punishment of the Fire, which you denied." We will give them a taste of lesser punishment before the greater punishment, so that hopefully they will turn back. (Surat as-Sajda, 32:20-21)

Tell My servants that I am the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful, but also that My punishment is the Painful Punishment. (Surat al-Hijr, 15:49-50)

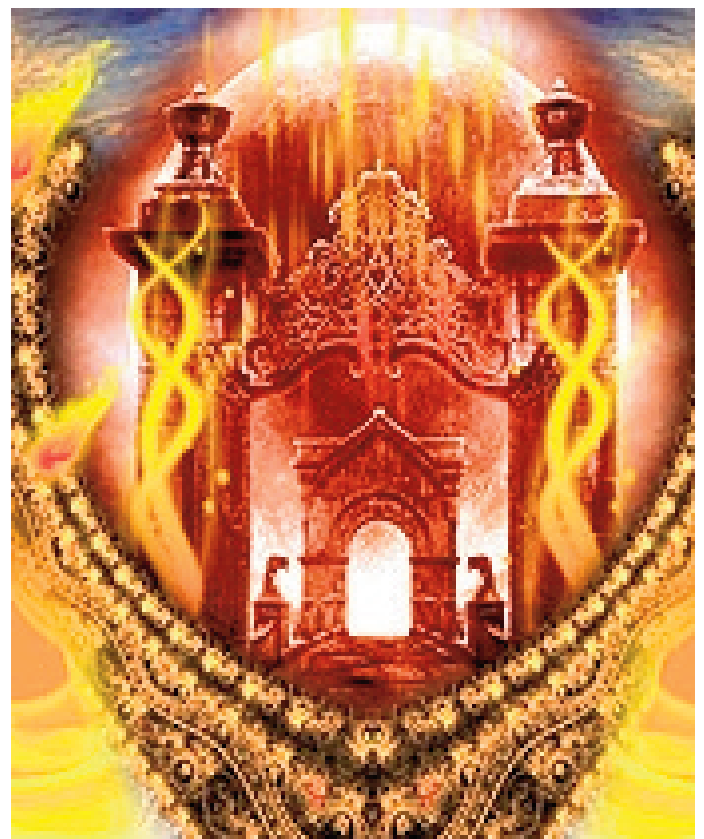
Those before them also plotted, and Allah came at their building from the foundations and the roof caved in on top of them. The punishment came at them from where they did not expect. (Surat an-Nahl, 16:26)

As for those who were unbelievers and barred access to the way of Allah, We will heap punishment on top of their punishment because of the corruption they brought about. (Surat an-Nahl, 16:88)

However, we need to remember that Allah creates infinite opportunities for each of us to repent and take refuge in His mercy. When we turn to Him in sincere repentance we will find our Lord to be the most merciful and compassionate, regardless of what type of sins one has committed. Allah gives the good news of His infinite mercy to His servants who sincerely repent:

But if anyone repents after his wrongdoing and puts things right, Allah will turn toward him. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 5:39)

But I am Ever-Forgiving to anyone who repents, believes, acts rightly, and then is guided. (Surah Ta Ha, 20:82)



What is 'Togetherness' in a Marriage life?

I By Nissar Nadiadwala I

When Adam, peace be upon him, was created he was alone. Allah did not give him a video game to play and pass his time with. Allah did not give him friends to have fun, play football and wander around in Jannah. Right? He gave him a wife. This itself is enough to show the importance of a spouse in our life.

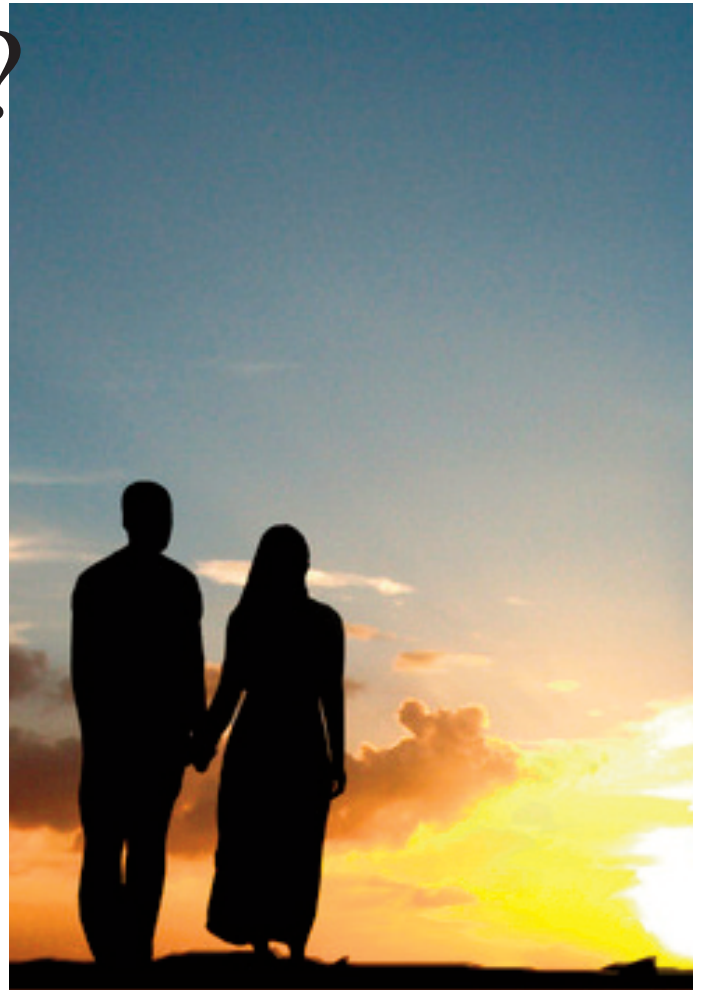
When Adam's wife committed an error and Adam to followed it and then realised their mistake he did not blame his wife nor did he divorce her. Right? Rather, Adam learnt words of repentance from Allah and then both of them repented together.

The Prophet, (peace be upon him) took his wife along during his journeys even when he went to the battle.

This is 'togetherness of a couple' that the Qur'an calls it 'Hunna libasa lakum wa antum libasu la hunna'. They are your garments and you are their garments. Don't ever think that a marriage without fight can exist. Allah has so many varieties in his treasure that no two person's finger print match, not even eyes. The same is with nature, habits and style. They have uncountable variety. Yet we search for similarities. "Our thoughts don't match" are common dialogues we hear from many couples who are unhappy with each other. Many proposals are rejected on the basis of "our ideas don't match".

A man like Umar bin Al Khattab (r.a.) tolerated the shouts of his wife. A complainer who approached him to complain about his own wife heard loud voice of Ameerul Mo'mineen's wife, so he went back.

Looking for an ideal spouse is certainly not like looking for a gold coin in the dark with the help of a torch. Rather it is picking up from what is available and be content with her/ him. Well I don't mean that you may even marry an 'ultra unIslamic' person. If you marry a person who is spiritually inclined to-



wards deen and still raw then it can be like a raw gold and you may polish it to increase its value. I know couples who were not too Islamic in their early marriage life but later on both of them learnt and grew together in Islam. My friend Faisal Akhunzada is a very fine example. The husband and his famous model wife walked out of stinking glamour world together and today they are still together learning deen.. Mashallah.

So keep your eyes open and also your heart broad and over look the weakness of your life partner because after all you have to stay together in Jannah to..for ever...

Sa'ad bin Ubadah was a sahabi.. his gheerah was unmatched... If any of his wife sat on his horse he would never sell this horse. If any of his wife sat on a camel he would make sure that he would slaughter his camel. He was a man of gheerah. He would not tolerate any one to sit on the horse or camel on which his wife sat. His gheerah was admired. People honoured his gheerah so much that if he divorced any of his wives, no sahabi would marry that lady. RadiAllahu anhu ..Allah be pleased with him.

Who is bothered when boys attain puberty?

When a female child in a Muslim family gets her first menses, the whole family gets to know about it! Boys in the family start giggling that something has happened to their sister or cousin. Some shameless Muslim families even 'celebrate' the occasion! 'Our daughter has attained puberty'!

In case of boys, neither the boy knows the Islamic indication and implication of attaining puberty nor his parents bother to teach him the etiquette of puberty and the responsibilities it brings alongside.

Attainment of puberty means start of accountability. A boy or girl who has come of age must take care of hijab, learn about taharah, observe awrah in all strictness, refrain from haram things and all things obligatory in Islam will start applying henceforth. He or she even gets the right to disobey parents, or anyone for that matter, when they order him or her to go against the teachings of Islam. He or she must know what his religion tells about sex and marriage etc.

As this post is not about sex education, I will restrict the discussion to matters relating to puberty and cleanliness.

On puberty:

In case of boys, parents take things for granted. Some parents feel shy to talk about certain things to their children. This type of shyness is nothing but a misunderstanding!

Our Prophet sal-lal-laahu-alaihi-wa-sallam was the shiest of all men in history. But he never found shyness coming his way in clarifying things related to puberty and hygiene. Even female companions

used to go to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and ask him questions about menstruation, ghusl janabah etc.

What is the sign of attaining puberty?

Puberty is reached when one of three things happens in the case of boys:

1. Wet dreams, that is ejaculation or emission of mani with desire when awake or asleep.
2. Growth of coarse hair in the pubic area
3. Reaching the age of fifteen (15 according to hijri calendar)

If one of these three things occurs, then the boy has reached puberty. In the case of girls, there is a fourth sign as mentioned above, namely the onset of menstruation.

Please know that Puberty is related to the growth of coarse hair in the pubic area, that is around penis in case of boys and vagina in case of girls. With regard to hair other than pubic hair, such as the hair of the beard or moustache or armpit hair, it is of no significance even if it is abundant, because Islam connects puberty only to the ruling related to the growth of pubic hair.

Basic teachings with regard to physical cleanliness after puberty

Cleanliness is half the faith. It is one of the basics of Islam. Parents must take care to teach their children about matters concerning taharah,



purification. This is a very serious issue. Without proper purification, no prayer is valid!

1. Things that make bath compulsory in case of unmarried boys and girls:

a. Ejaculation or emission of maniyy (semen) from its exit in the male or female, which happens either when one is awake or when one is asleep.

If it is emitted when one is awake and it was emitted out of pleasure, then ghusl is required. If it was emitted without pleasure, then ghusl is not required.

Emission may be due to sickness also.

If it is emitted when one is asleep – and this condition is called ihtilaam, erotic or wet dream – then ghusl is required, whether it happened due to pleasure or not as one is not sure about it.

If a sleeper wakes up and finds traces of maniyy, then he must do ghusl. If he had an erotic dream but no maniyy came out and he does not find any trace of it, then he does not have to doghusl.

b. Ghusl is obligatory on girls upon the completion of her monthly cycle, that is at the end of menstruation.

I request all girls/women reading this post to visit this Girls Only page, InshaaAllah.

2. Shave pubic and armpit hair:

It is from the established sunnah that a Muslim male or a female must shave armpit and pubic hair preferably once in forty days.

Important Points related to bath, that is ghusl:

a. Essential Requirements of Ghusl/bath

There are two essential requirements which need to be fulfilled for Ghusl to be valid. These are as follows:

1. Intention to perform Ghusl is necessary because it is the dividing line between acts performed as a mere custom and deeds which are rewardable acts of worship. However, the intention is only by heart and need not be uttered.

2. The entire body should be washed. Water should reach and flow freely over every part of the body.

b. How Ghusl is Performed

Besides the above two essential requirements, there are also other voluntary acts recommended for Ghusl. Both the essential and the voluntary acts are now integrated here below to demonstrate how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform the

Ghusl:

1. Intend by heart to perform Ghusl.
2. Wash both hands up to the wrists three times.
3. Wash the private parts properly.
4. Perform Wudhu/ablution as usual except, that the washing of the feet would be delayed until later when all the rest of the body is bathed.
5. Pour water over the head three times, massaging the hair to allow water to reach its roots.
6. Pour water liberally over the entire body, beginning with the right side and then, the left side ensuring that no part of the body is untouched by water such as the armpits, inside the earlobes, inside the navel, between the fingers and toes, etc.
7. Finally, move a little further from where you were and wash your feet, beginning with your right foot and then, the left.

May Allah guide us on the Right Path. May He bestow upon the Community the blessings of knowledge and wisdom, and the grace to understand the difference.

Sal-lal-laahu Ala Muhammad, Sal-lal-laahu-alaihi-wa-Sallam.



Without legs, became MBBS doctor, Roshan Jahan also has golden voice

I By Zohair Mohammad Safwan Faizee I

Having lost both legs in a train accident, facing acute poverty, studying in a Urdu medium school and belonging to a conservative Muslim family. She would not have needed any other excuse if she had decided to resign. Yet, fighting all odds and overcoming physical and language barrier, she cracked the MBBS exams and is now preparing for post-graduate entrance.

The inspiring story of Roshan Jahan, the 23-year-old Muslim girl who hit the headlines after passing this year's MBBS finals, was viral on all platforms - print and electronic media, internet and social networking sites, with each minute details, except for one thing that she also a golden voice.

Roshan Jahan was in Malegaon on Sunday when she left hundreds of students who had gathered at Zaini Basheer Hall mesmerised, and teary eyes, by singing in her golden voice a poem written and composed by herself.

The poem is dedicated to her mother, who Roshan Jahan said, deserved, after Allah the Almighty, all credits for her extraordinary success.

"It is because of my mother, after Allah, the Almighty and the most Merciful, that I am standing here in front of you as a role model", she said amid applause from hundreds of students.

She said after losing her both legs in the train accident, there were times, ample number of, when she had lost all hopes. But, it was her mother, she said, who enlightened hope every time she was in dismay. "After I survived the train accident, my mother would say think over.... Think over why Allah, the Almighty, gifted you the 'second life'. It must be for something really very big. She used to say finding me in despair", she recalled.

Roshan Jahan's legs had to be amputated after she fell off a local train in October 2008 while travelling from Andheri to Jogeshwari. She wore prosthesis since April 2009. She was returning home after writing her college exam papers at Anjuman-i-Islam

Girl's college, Bandra. When she neared the door at Andheri station, she could not control her balance and fell onto the tracks and her legs came under the moving train.

"I was in the first compartment when I fell off the train. I could see one of my legs completely damaged with the train running inches close to my body. I was screaming like any thing. But no one pulled the chain to stop the running train", she recalled.

Recounting her ordeal, she said, "Orthopedic surgeon Dr Sanjay Kantharia who operated on me helped me like I was his daughter. Even after the accident in 2008, I did not drop out and studied at home and appeared for exams.

"I cleared the state's medical entrance exam, MHCET, and was later asked to go for a medical test for the handicapped at JJ Hospital. The doctors there said that as per the rules, only students who had between 40% to 70% disability could be given admission in the MBBS course. I was denied admission as I had 88% disability."

She said Kantharia then suggested she move court. "We met senior lawyer V P Patil, who took up my case for free. During the hearing I would go to the court with my relatives. Justice Shah, after hearing my petition and seeing me visiting the court, directed the college authorities to admit me," Roshan said while sharing her story at a felicitation program jointly organised by Muslim Reservation Forum (MRF), Falah-e-Ummat Trust and Malegaon Jamiat-e-Ulema.

The students were hooked up to her speech, with frequent clapping and applause. They gave standing ovation after she finished off her one and half hour speech.

Source:

<http://ummid.com/news/2016/April/03.04.2016/roshan-jahan-feleicited-by-people-of-malegaon.html>

Honey for Health

I By Hajira Khan & Sameen Ahmed Khan I

The living things are classified into plant kingdom and the animal kingdom (including birds, fishes etc.) respectively. There are some microorganisms, which do not fit precisely into the either. About twenty fruits and fruit bearing plants have been identified in the Holy Quran. The twenty plants mentioned in the Holy Quran include: date palm, fig, ginger, grape, garlic, henna/camphor, lentil, manna, olive, onion, pomegranate, summer squash, sweet basil, athel tamarisk, tooth-brush tree, arak, mustard, acacia, cucumber, gourd, leek, cedrus (cedar or Lote-tree) and Euphorbia. The Bitter Thorn and Blessed Tree are yet to be identified. The Bitter Thorn is the tree in the Jahannum (hell) and is mentioned in Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88, meaning The Overwhelming Event): 6-7. The Blessed Tree is mentioned in Surah Al-Ra'd (13, meaning The Thunder): 29. The Quranic botany continues to be an active area of research. Likewise, over forty animals and a dozen animal products (such as milk, wool, honey, leather, pearl, silk, musk etc.) are mentioned in the Holy Quran. In this article, we shall focus on the honeybee and the honey. The honey bee and honey are mentioned in the following Ayaat (English Meaning by Muhammad Asad from <http://www.IslamiCity.com/>)

1. And [consider how] thy Sustainer has inspired the bee: "Prepare for thyself dwellings in mountains and in trees, and in what [men] may build [for thee by way of hives]; and then eat of all manner of fruit, and follow humbly the paths ordained for thee by thy Sustainer." [And lo!] there issues from within these [bees] a fluid of many hues, wherein there is health for man. In all this, behold, there is a message indeed for people who think! [Surah Al-Nahl, 16:68-69]

2. [And can] the parable of the paradise which the Allah-conscious are promised - [a paradise] wherein there are rivers of water which time does not corrupt, and rivers of milk the taste whereof never alters, and rivers of wine delightful to those who drink it, and rivers of honey of all impurity cleansed, and the enjoyment of all the fruits [of their good deeds] and of forgiveness from their Sustainer -: can this [parable of paradise] be likened unto [the parable of the recompense of] such as are to abide in

the fire and be given waters of burning despair to drink, so that it will tear their bowels asunder? [Surah Muhammad, 47:15]

Biologically bees belong to the class of insects. There are about six to ten million types of insects. Very few insects have been studied in detail. Millions are yet to be named! There are over 20,000 known species of bees. Bees are found in all continents except Antarctica! They are identified by their wing veins, structure of the moth parts and other micro-features related to behavioral peculiarities. A honey bee (or honeybee), in contrast with the stingless honey bee, is any bee member of the genus *Apis*, primarily distinguished by the production and storage of honey and the construction of perennial, colonial nests from wax. Currently, only eleven species of honey bee are recognized, with a total of 44 subspecies. Honey bees represent only a small fraction of the roughly 20,000 known species of bees. Some other types of related bees produce and store honey, but only members of the genus *Apis* are true honey bees. The study of bees is known as melittology. The study of honeybees is called Apiology/Apidology and this term is often used interchangeably with melittology.

Honey is a sweet food made by honey bees foraging nectar from flowers. Honey is as old as history is itself. The Romans used honey to heal their wounds after battles. The ancient Egyptians not only made offerings of honey to their gods, they also used it as an embalming fluid and a dressing for wounds. Honey use and production has a long and varied history. Honey collection from the wild bees is a widely practiced ancient activity, and there are records that are over 15,000 years old. Beekeeping (or apiculture) is the maintenance of honey bee colonies, commonly in hives, by humans. A beekeeper (or apiarist) keeps bees in order to collect their honey and other products that the hive produces (such as: beeswax, propolis, pollen, and royal jelly). Beekeeping in pottery vessels began about 9,000 years ago in North Africa. Domestication of honeybees is shown in Egyptian art from around 4,500 years ago. Now bee farming is an established science and widely practiced because of the economic returns.

The possible health benefits of consuming honey

have been documented in early Greek, Roman, Vedic, and Islamic texts and the healing qualities of honey were referred to by philosophers and scientists all the way back to ancient times. Because of its rich chemical content the honey has been used in all civilizations since ancient times. Honey contains a treasure chest of hidden nutritional and medicinal value for centuries. Hence, it is also called as liquid gold. The sweet golden liquid from the beehive is a popular kitchen staple loaded with antibacterial and antifungal properties that has been used since the early days of Egyptian tombs. Honey's scientific super powers contribute to its vastly touted health benefits for the whole body. The healthy natural sweetener offers many nutritional benefits depending on its variety.

Honey offers incredible antiseptic, antioxidant and immune boosting properties for our body and health. It not only fights infection and helps tissue healing but also helps reduce inflammation and is often used for treating digestive problems such as indigestion, stomach ulcers and gastroenteritis.

The individual behaviour and organizational behaviour of several insects has drawn the human attention since ancient times. The colonies of ants and bees are prime examples of strong social behaviour among the insects. The 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded jointly to Karl von Frisch, Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen 'for their discoveries concerning organization and elicitation of individual and social behaviour patterns' in insects. Karl Ritter von Frisch's work centred on investigations of the sensory perceptions of the honey bee and he was one of the first to translate the meaning of the waggle dance. Waggle dance is a term used in beekeeping for a particular figure-eight dance of the honey bee. By performing this dance, successful foragers can share, with other members of the colony, information about the direction and distance to patches of flowers yielding nectar and pollen, to water sources, or to new nest-site locations. Researchers from around the world are discovering new and exciting medical benefits of honey and other healing items produced in the hive such as propolis, royal jelly and bee pollen. As stated in the Hadeeth, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said, Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: (The Prophet said), "Healing is in three things: A gulp of Honey, cupping, and branding with fire (cauterizing)." But I forbid my followers to use (cauterization) branding with fire." [Sahih Bukhari, Book #71, Hadith #584]. Nutritious, health, medical and industrial value of the honey is not fully recognized. The researchers all over the world are searching and investigating in the matter.

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Honey Nutritive Value per 33g (100g)		
http://nutritiondata.self.com/facts/sweeteners/000001/1/000001		
Principle	Nutrient Val	Percentage of
Energy	1031	52%
Water	58 g	
Carbohydrates	279 g	93%
Protein	1 g	2%
Total Fat	0	0
Cholesterol	0	0
Dietary Fiber	0.7 g	3%
Sugars	278g	
Ash	0.7g	
VITAMINS		
Vitamin A	0.0 IU	0%
Vitamin C	1.7mg	3%
Vitamin D	--	--
Vitamin E (Alpha Tocopherol)	0.0µg	0%
Vitamin K	0.0µg	0%
Thiamin	0.0 mg	0%
Riboflavin	0.1 mg	8%
Niacin	0.4 mg	2%
Vitamin B6	0.1 mg	4%
Folate	6.8µg	2%
Vitamin B12	0.0µg	0%
Pantothenic Acid	0.2 mg	2%
Choline	7.5 mg	
Betaine	5.8 mg	
ELECTROLYTES		
Sodium	13.6 mg	1%
Potassium	176 mg	5%
MINERALS		
Calcium	20.3 mg	2%
Copper	0.1 mg	6%
Iron	1.4mg	8%
Magnesium	6.8 mg	2%
Manganese	0.3mg	14%
Phosphorus	13.6 mg	1%
Zinc	0.7 mg	5%
Selenium	2.7 µg	4%
Fluoride	23.7 µg	--
RDA: Reference Daily Intake or Recommended Intake, which is considered sufficient to requirements of most individuals.		



Hundreds of Indian Expatriates mainly belonging to the eastern state of Bihar & Jharkhand gathered at a Function organized by the Riyadh & Khair chapter of Bihar Anjuman on Friday, 29th April 2016. The event, with a theme "Importance of Education" highlighted the accomplishment of Bihar Anjuman since its inception in 1999 and its new areas of activity.

Salahuddeen Manzari, Saudi national, native of Bihar was guest of honor. He praised the effort of Bihar Anjuman for supporting poor and giving rays of hope by free coaching centers in Bihar & Jharkhand. He said that "I was obsessed with the idea of opening a coaching center for the poor Muslim children in each and every part of Bihar & Jharkhand and now I am amazed to know that this has become a reality and these coaching centers are working with great success in 21 Districts of Bihar". He commended the Founder of the Bihar Anjuman and its core group for their dedication, team work and selfless service to the community.

Earlier, Engr. Shakeel Ahmad, Dubai based IIT graduate and the Founder of Bihar Anjuman presented to the audience, the accomplishment of Bihar Anjuman and its future plan in an hour long slide presentation. He said that efforts are on to establish our centers in each and every districts of Bihar with the help of its members and philanthropists who support the cause of Bihar Anjuman. He further said that Bihar Anjuman has dreamed to eradicate illiteracy and will continue to strive to achieve its objective. He explained the importance of sponsoring poor students for engineering and diploma and requested for support for new target of Bihar Anjuman to sponsor 150 students for engineering.

Mr. Syed Muneer Ahmad explained the importance of supporting needy students and requested that everyone should realize the social responsibility to increase education in society. The response of audience was very encouraging, 27 students confirmed by the audience immediately and expecting for more confirmation.

Vice president BA Riyadh Mr. Mohammad Shahin who anchored the program jointly with Abid Hussain also presented an informative presentation "Watch and Win" which sponsored by Petro Institute of Technology - Patna which was oriented with the importance of education. He highlighted that when Shah Jahan was building the Tajmahal in India, Harvard University was being made in USA in same era. This was the difference of two societies about importance of education which result is very clear now.

Flower Bouquet and memento was presented to the Founder of the Bihar Anjuman Engr. Shakeel Ahmad in recognition of his service in the field of education.

Prominent Bihar Anjuman core group members who were instrumental in organizing the event were Mohd. Shaheen, Seraj Akram, Muneer Ahmad, Abul Farah, Azhar Hussain, Mohd. Abid, Dr. Aleemuddin, Kaunain Shahidi, Mohd. Amanullah, Sajid Idris, Nusrat Khan, Amanul Haque, Shakeel Durrani, Anzarul Haque, Anisur Rahman, Asif Iqbal, Md. Shabbeer, Tauqeer Nasir, Mohd. Afaq and Mohd. Faisal. The event was anchored jointly by Mohd. Shaheen and Abid Hussain.

Mr. Kaunain Shahidi, highlighted the importance of education and the responsibility of society to support needy people to bring changes in society.

Bihar Anjuman, which has chapters across the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and India, is a premier welfare organization dedicated to helping poor and spreading education by free coaching across Bihar and Jharkhand. The foundation for Bihar Anjuman was laid on March 11, 1999, with some people joining hands to help those who may be in need of financial help, or in need of a job.

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