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COVER STORY Love Jihad



Is it Real?

BAKHABAR

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Book Review

15



Emotional Intelligence,
Muslims, and Eid Al
Azha

24

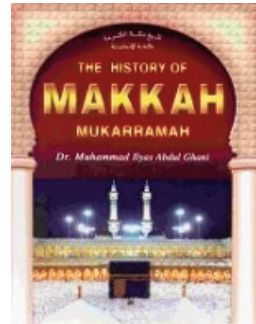
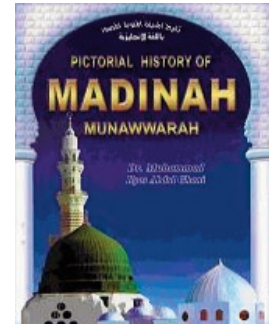
Sadbhav Mission
B16, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi 110017

The Boiling Frog Syndrome

32

Cover Story: Love Jihad

03



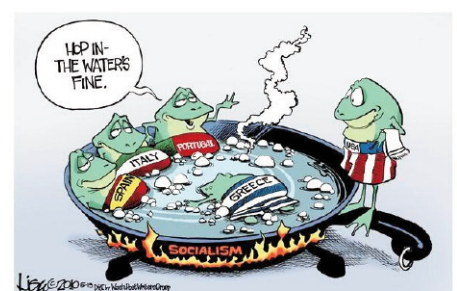
The Impact of
Islamic Environment

10



An Open Letter

31





Is it Real?

Who's afraid of love jihad?

I Aijaz Zaka Syed I

Study the past, advised Cicero, to know the future. But those who forever live in the past end up eclipsing their present and the future. No wonder the frequent word of advice from our elders is: Jo hua usey bhool jao. Don't obsess over the past. Let it go. Look to the future. A sensible advice certainly – especially for those whose past is like a festering wound.

Who's got the stomach, time or energy to dig up old ghosts and rake up one's wounds? But even if you are determined to get over the past and get on with your life, there are people out there whose sole life mission is to see you do not, in your luxurious existence, ever lose sight of the Original Sin. No, sir, as long as you live, like the generations before you, you are condemned to carry the cross of historic guilt – of dismembering the motherland.

It may have been some 67 years since Partition and those ostensibly guilty of this primordial crime may have long gone. However, anything goes wrong anywhere in India or Pakistan, and the ghosts of Partition are invoked and brought back from the dead all over again.

So the ceaseless anti-government protests across the border by Imran Khan and his unlikely bedfellow Tahirul Qadri move R Jagannathan, editor of Firstpost, India's leading online newspaper, so much that he must thank Lord Ganesha that Partition happened and that he does not have to suffer the barbarians bent on throwing out an elected government.

“What Pakistan's crisis tells all Indians: Partition was an excellent idea!” If you find the title of the piece evocative and enticing enough, what Jagannathan argues at the outset should leave you wanting for more.

“If one were to look at what's happening across our western borders – where an elected government is being sought to be ousted by street protests, possibly tacitly backed by the army – any sane Indian should be saying to himself: thank God for Partition”, writes Jagannathan before delivering the knockout punch: “The fact that we had some past civilization links to

the region now called Pakistan should not blind us to the reality that this link is dead. Islamic Pakistan and democratic India can never be friends – till Pakistan ceases to be Islamic!”

You do not find such ‘fair and balanced’ candour and incisive insight even on Fox News and from the likes of US televangelist Ann Coulter and Bill O'Reilly these days.

If you find this open, Islamophobic bigotry shocking, well, it is meant to be. Jagannathan's kind of ‘journalism’ is not an exception anymore; it is fast becoming the norm in a country once known for its fierce media freedom and secular, liberal idealism. Such venom against all things Islamic in the name of confronting and critiquing the troublesome western neighbour is all too common these days.

Firstpost has long been a trenchant critic of the previous Congress government and Dr Manmohan Singh and naturally a passionate supporter of Modi. Which makes sense considering it belongs, like much of India's corporate media today, to the Reliance group of Mukesh Ambani, a close friend of the prime minister since his good ol' Gujarat days.

In another gem this week, Jagannathan was on a proselytising mission exhorting Hindus to start mass conversions from other faiths to deal with the “Muslim problem” and their fast growing mythical numbers. Adding his voice to the call to arms by the BJP's Yogi Adityanath against the so-called love jihad, imploring Hindus to convert one hundred Muslims for every Hindu leaving the faith, Jagannathan admonishes Hindu society for its social and casteist aversion to opening its doors to outsiders.

In a piece tantalisingly titled, ‘The Real Threat to Hinduism is Patriarchy, not 'Love' or 'Sex Jihad'’, Jagannathan writes: “If Hindus believe that conversions are a threat to them, they have no option but to be more like the proselytizing religions of the world (read Islam) and start setting up institutional systems for expanding their reach. This will, of course, change the nature of Hinduism – but a religion that does not change will atrophy.”

Now who would have any issues with Hindu groups

going on a proselytising mission? India is a free country and everyone is free to believe in and practice the faith of their choice and invite others to their beliefs.

The trouble is, there is a dichotomy, if not duplicity, at work here. While Hindutva votaries like the VHP are busy aggressively proselytising and “bringing back Muslims and Christians to their original faith,” as they put it, they have been fighting for a ban on conversions by Christian and Muslim groups since an entire Dalit village down south, Meenakshipuram, converted to Islam in 1981.

Besides, as Dalit intellectuals like KanchaIlaiah argue, when upper caste Hindus still cannot share their social space, food and even God with brethren from a lower birth after 67 of Independence and socialist, secular democracy, how do they expect to welcome new faithful to the fold? But then that is, I guess, an internal affair of the community and best tackled by its own leaders and intellectuals.

What should worry us all though is the increasing radicalisation and communalisation of the intellectual space and intolerance of anything remotely resembling dissent or difference of opinion. As Prof Zoya Hasan lamented in The Hindu this week, it's not just that Indian politics suddenly has no use for the country's minorities, there's no room for minority opinion either.

On the other hand, there is a calibrated and sustained campaign to wreck communal peace in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous and most sensitive state, and elsewhere with the rising crescendo of Goebbelsian propaganda targeting Muslims. Madrasahs are accused of sending Muslim boys to prey on Hindu girls, in an elaborate conspiracy by mullahs to change the demographics of India.

People like Yogi Adityanath, a senior BJP MP and its most rabid face today, have been on a rampage, spewing venom against an already terrified minority. He urges his followers to impregnate a hundred Muslim women for every Hindu girl falling for a Muslim.

BJP President Amit Shah has promised his cadres that if the current communal polarisation is maintained, the party could soon return to power in UP. No wonder in the past few months, more than 600 ‘communal incidents’ have been reported from UP



alone.

And it's not just UP that sits on powder keg, all set to blow up. A clever national pattern is emerging with numerous cases of ‘forced conversions of Hindu girls by Muslim boyfriends’ being reported from various parts of the country in sync with the ratcheting up of hysterics by Hindutva groups and their sophisticated collaborators in media.

Does it all have anything to do with the change of guard in New Delhi? There certainly seems no other explanation. As they say, Jaisa Raja WaisiPraja! (As the king, so the subjects) It's as though Modi's ascendancy has emboldened, if not given the go-ahead, to the Parivar to go berserk.

This even as the prime minister has been all sweetness and light, vowing ‘sab kasaath, sab kavikaas’ (participation and progress of all), projecting himself as a world statesman, in the mould of Nehru and Kennedy. His Independence Day speech warning the nation against the ‘communal poison’ and suggesting a moratorium on violence would have made Gandhi proud. What explains his deafening silence over the shenanigans of his own followers though? If he really means what he says, why doesn't he begin by cracking the whip against nuts like Adityanath?

Whatever the explanation, with all this talk of Indian Muslims joining the distant Isis and Al-Qaeda weighing in on with its own marketing pitch, it looks like it is open season for Indian Muslims.

Security and intelligence strategists cannot hide their glee as they conjure up frightening scenarios of global jihad against India. Things are heating up for India's largest minority. It's time for Indian Muslims to be afraid – very afraid.

The writer is a Middle East based columnist and editor of 'Caravan', an online news magazine.

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The real ‘love jihad’

KanchaIlaiah | September 24, 2014, 02.09 am IST

The debate on “love jihad” focuses on Muslim men seducing Hindu women across the caste spectrum and marrying them to propagate Islam and alter the religio-demographic profile of our country. The same forces have, often in the past, accused Christians of luring Hindus from the lower castes and tribals into the folds of Christianity.

But this is a new Hindutva-Brahminic theory — that through love, the religio-demographic profile of a country such as India — can be altered. Under the pretext of this new theory of “love jihad” any attempts at inter-religious marriages, which in any case are few and far between, are being blocked. Even now India is not a land where marriages of choice, or love marriages as we call them, are encouraged. Matrimonial partners are by and large still endorsed by families under our thriving “arranged marriage” system.

This arranged marriage system was institutionalised as it alone could nourish, feed and sustain the caste system.

And that’s the reason it continues even in this day and age. The arranged marriage mechanism put an effective full stop to inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.

Not only Hindus, but Muslims and Christians too endorse this pernicious system to conserve their family lineage, cultural and religious traditions.

Historically, the adoption of the religion of the spouse is well-known and documented. More upper caste Hindu women have married Muslim men, than upper caste Muslim women (there is caste among Muslims, too) have married Hindu men. In such

marriages, some Muslim women have changed their religion and some have not.

The most striking example of “love jihad” is that of Kamala Das (later Kamala Surayya) — an upper caste Hindu woman, a famous writer and a devotee of Lord Krishna, who lived in Kerala. According to a biographic source, “She was born in a conservative Hindu Nair (Nallappattu) family having royal ancestry. After being asked by her lover, whom she mentions as Sadiq Ali, an Islamic scholar and a Muslim League MP, she embraced Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name Kamala Surayya.”

Ali was said to be much younger than her and yet he was willing to marry her on the condition of conversion. This was a known case of real “love jihad”. At 65, she embraced Islam and chose to don the hijab, chucking her colourful designer wear.

The Brahminic lower caste Hindu women had been ostracised by society till the ChermanPerumal royals converted to Islam in the early 6th century. The pre-and post-AdiShankaracharya

Hinduism had forced lower caste women to be in a semi-naked state. This in addition to the pubertal, menstrual and child birth seclusions imposed on them.

Women who embraced Islam either by marriage or through other ways were immediately liberated from their semi-nakedness and various forms of untouchabilities. Though those who embraced Islam in Kerala in particular and south India in general took to the ways of the locals, rights accorded to women in the Quran changed their status instantaneously. Till medieval times Muslims were granted Quranic rights without any compromise.



However, the AdiShankaraAdwaitaschool did not liberate the upper caste or the lower caste Hindu women from Manu's brutal laws, dogmatic superstitions and caste-bound practices.

As a child I was pained to see the myriad forms of untouchabilities that the lower caste women had to suffer in the erstwhile Nizam's territory — Telangana. By then though the women were allowed to wear the upper garment, called ravike (a form of blouse), they could not eat with male members of the family. They were not allowed to cover their ankles with their sari, or comb their hair every day, or talk to their husbands in the presence of other family members. These practices were apparently adopted from TurkaSanskriti.

In Kerala, the right to the wear upper garment was granted to non-Muslim women in the late 19th and early 20th century. In such a situation, going into a Muslim house appeared to be a big relief for young women who desired the freedom to cover their bodies. Loving Muslim men, therefore, was a true jihad. Gradually the south Indian communities, across the caste spectrum, learnt from Islamic and Christianic ethic and improved the status of women — both within and outside the four walls of the house. Studies show that a Muslim woman's status within her house in south India is far superior to that of her Hindu counterpart.

In North India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the status of non-Muslim women is much worse than that of Muslim women. The ugly underdevelopment of these states is related to women's status, health, education and freedoms. In this situation "love" becomes a source of "jihad" against oppression.

As far as I know no Hindu organisation has launched a campaign to promote equality of gender or to abolish oppressive practices. If they, indeed, want to stop "love jihad", they should take up massive social reforms amongst all castes. The reforms should be spiritual, cultural, and include the dimension of man-woman relationship. We have not heard of a single Sangh leader talking about family or social reforms. We cannot achieve "sabkavikas" without giving equal rights to women of all castes and religions and transforming cultural codes. In some castes women's oppression is in still in the primitive mode. In North India the condition of Jat and Yadav women is

telling of their status in the family and society. North India is still an unreformed den and the SanghParivarwalas want to push North Indian women into worse conditions. They have no agenda for social reform. The more they want the Indian women to be oppressed "Hindu naris" without rights, the more they will become "Muslim Begums" with rights. The real problem lies in equal rights and the modernisation of family. They need to realise this.

The writer is director, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

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times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2014

Interfaith marriages must not be politicised

readers write

The marriage of young boys and girls belonging to two different communities is not a new trend. In most such cases, either the boy or the girl changes his/her religion.

The late Union minister Sikandar Bakht, Nafisa Ali, Sunil Dut, Pankaj Udhas, Kareena Kapoor, BJP leaders Shahnawaz Hussain and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and many others married outside their communities, and had/have a very happy married life. The Constitution of India allows marriages between two mature boys and girls. These have been personal matters and rarely became a communal issue. But in the recent past, such interfaith marriages are being given the name of "love jihad" with the purpose of polarising the Indian society for political mileage, without realising that it is endangering communal harmony and peace in the country.

In the latest Ranjit Singh Kohli case, Ranjit wore a fake Muslim identity and reportedly used the name of Islam with an ulterior motive. There appears to be a deep conspiracy to

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malign the image of the Muslim community, which is condemnable. Today, the whole community feels hurt and insulted. Our children are asked questions about "love jihad" in schools and colleges. We are facing such nonsensical questions at the workplace. We are being looked down upon. This will take society on to the path of ill will and hatred. Hence, the government should initiate an unbiased probe into such cases and stern action should be taken against culprits.

Naushad Ansari,
secretary, Peace Foundation,
Anisabad, Patna

The myth of love jihad



I Charu Gupta I

Perhaps inter-religious marriages can be a way to produce cracks in orthodox Hindu mandates.

SUMMARY

In its orchestration and inflammatory appeal, the current campaign shares similarities with Hindu revivalist projects in the 1920s in UP.

“Love jihad” — a term floated by some Hindu organisations — has got firmly fixed on the agenda of the RSS and its rightwing affiliates like the Dharma Jagran Manch, even though the Uttar Pradesh unit of the BJP has formally dropped the phrase from its political resolutions. The last month has witnessed an aggressive, systematic campaign around “love jihad”, and in the coming days there are plans to hold continuous “awareness” rallies in UP against this alleged movement to forcefully convert vulnerable Hindu women to Islam through trickery and marriage. Portentously, this present movement has an uncanny resemblance in its idiom, language and symbols to an “abduction” and conversion campaign launched by the Arya Samaj and other Hindu revivalist bodies in the 1920s in UP, to draw sharper lines between Hindus and Muslims. This historical dimension brings out in sharp relief the orchestrated and fabricated nature of love jihad.

Romance, love and marriages, particularly those cutting across caste and religious boundaries, have always implicitly challenged certain customs and norms, and aroused deep passions. Simultaneously, religious conversions have traditionally been, and continue to be, one of the common expedients of those on the margins of Hinduism to reject hierarchies and reconfigure social boundaries. The inter-

meshing of romance, marriage and conversions has often produced increasing worries, deeply politicised representations and everyday violence, framed around the bodies of women. When Hindu assertion reaches new heights, as happened in UP in the 1920s, and again is happening in the present scenario, the Hindu woman’s body particularly becomes a marker to enthrone communal boundaries in ways more aggressive than before.

The 1920s in UP witnessed a flurry of orchestrated propaganda campaigns and popular inflammatory and demagogic appeals by a section of Hindu publicists against “abductions” and conversions of Hindu women by Muslim goondas, ranging from allegations of rape, abduction and elopement, to luring, conversion, love and forced marriages, although the term “love jihad” was not used at the time. Drawing on diverse sources like newspapers, pamphlets, meetings, handbills, posters, novels, myths, rumours and gossip, the campaign was able to operate in a public domain, and to monopolise the field of everyday representation. Pamphlets with provocative titles like “Hindu Auraton ki Loot”, which denounced Muslim propaganda for proselytising female preys, and “Hindu Striyon ki Loot ke Karan”, an Arya Samajist tract showing how to save “our” ladies from becoming Muslim, appeared at this time. The love jihad campaign of today, too, is using similar tropes.

The tales of the 1920s and of 2014 have certain common strains. Both campaigns are critically tied to a number-crunching politics and claims of Hindu homogeneity. In 1924, a pamphlet titled *Humara Bhis-han Haas*, published from Kanpur, constructed a picture of the terrible calamity of declining Hindu numbers due to increasing conversions of Hindu women to Islam. It claimed that a number of Aryan women were entering the homes of yavanas and mlecchas, reading nikah with them, producing gaubhakshak children, and increasing Muslim numbers. Hindu organisations of today, too, have claimed, without any evidence, that forced conversions of Hindu women in the name of love are part of an international conspiracy to increase the Muslim population. The issues at stake here are not only to construct a picture of a numerical threat from Muslims but also to lament the supposed decline in the

number of Hindus and mourn the potential loss of child-bearing Hindu wombs.

Campaigns like this are also predicated on exclusionary principles, which survive through constant and repetitive references to the aggressive and libidinal energies of the Muslim male, creating a common “enemy other”. They underwrite an exclusivist grammar of “difference” in the intimate regimes of love and marriage. Simultaneously, images of the passive, victimised Hindu women at the hand of inscrutable Muslims silence and erase female subjectivity and desire. Any possibility of women exercising their legitimate right to love, choice and conversion is marginalised. In June 1924, in Meerut, handbills and meetings claimed that various Hindu women were being lured and their pure bodies being violated by lustful and sexually charged Muslim men. The present campaign too, while focussing its anger on the Muslims, derives its emotional impact from the victim. It is impossible for Hindu groups to conceive that a Hindu woman can voluntarily elope or convert. While each case of violence against women, structured by larger patriarchal structures, whether within or outside a community, has to be trenchantly condemned, in this case every romance, love, elopement and marriage between a Hindu woman and a Muslim man is also rewritten by Hindu organisations as forcible conversion. There appears to be a consensus among Hindu groups against any exercise by women to convert as individuals, sans familial and community approval. Perhaps it might be better to see these women not so much as “vulnerable victims”, but as “risk-taking subjects”.

It is also assumed that the mere act of marrying and staying with a Muslim ensures that the woman is leading an unhappy and dreadful life. Fears of elopements and conversions also show the need felt not so much to protect the “Hindu kanya”, but to facilitate the domination of disciplinary regimes over a woman’s actions and choices. Such actions by women produce daily policing and everyday violence along the alliance model of sexuality, where, through the arrangement of marriages, relations and boundaries of religion are policed. Invocations and related concerns with Hindu female purity allow Hindu male virility and prowess to reassert itself.

As in the 1920s, today again conversions of Hindu women are represented as a general phenomenon. Different events are made to appear as following a similar pattern — a narrative of luring by a Muslim

male in the name of love, and of Hindu female victimhood. Hate speech is repeatable speech, drawing its strength from stereotypes. In replication and reiteration lie its strength, its ability to renew itself and its authority as supposed truth. In the love jihad campaign, representation, performance and events feed into each other, providing one of the primary sources of communal power.

Moreover, in comparison to the 1920s, new dimensions have been added to the love jihad issue. In the wake of terrorist threats and Muslim fundamentalism, anxieties have been created of a global Islamist conspiracy and foreign hand in such conversions. It appears that when confronted with the phenomenon of conversion from Hinduism to Islam, especially by Hindu women, certain kinds of Hindus lose their logical faculty. The politics of cultural virginity and a myth of innocence are combined with a perceived “illegitimacy” of the act, leading to rants of violation, invasion, seduction and rape. These politicised entanglements generate an “intimate politics”, an embodied struggle, in which Hindu communal agendas are reformulated through women.

Besides, such a hate campaign, while providing glue for claims to Hindu homogeneity, also underwrites certain fears and anxieties of some Hindu organisations. For all its limitations, some of these women are “breaking rules” through the highly ritualised act of individual religious conversion, guided in many cases by inter-religious romance and love marriages.

These localised and embodied practices of women can be a strategic manoeuvre with social ramifications. Ambedkar upheld inter-caste marriage as one way to annihilate caste, since it produced fissures in the maintenance of caste purity and control over women’s sexuality. Perhaps inter-religious marriages, too, can be a way to produce cracks in orthodox Hindu mandates and create ripples in codified definitions. Such an exercise of choice, even when partial, can perhaps also aid a transformative politics of intimate religious rights.

The writer is associate professor of history, University of Delhi

Posted By, Afzal Ahmad Khan
Lucknow, India
The Indian EXPRESS
August 28, 2014

The Impact of Islamic Environment

I have this friend of mine whose daughter is only 7 years old but whenever someone rings the doorbell, the young girl quickly rushes in the bedroom to wear a head scarf. This is the impact of Islamic Environment at home. Another friend of mine has a huge drawing room furnishing not only sofas and a large dining table but also large show case filled with Islamic books rarely read. Books are not meant to be kept just like furniture and status symbols for people to see. No wonder this friend of mine, in spite of having Islamic books could not manage to cultivate an Islamic environment.

It was an introduction of Islamic environment for the war captives of Badr that caused many of them accept Islam, while some of them were tied up to the poles of Masjid-e-Nabwi just observing the royal Islamic brotherhood and experiencing extra ordinary warm hospitality from the Muslims, for whom they had come to kill all the way from Makkah.

In my school days, I had a Non-Muslim friend who was also my neighbor. He used to visit us during Ramadan, and got a chance to see Islam in our Iftar, Eid, mutual dealings. It took him just few months to become a Muslim and he is a practicing Muslim till today. When he became a Muslim, he was in Yemen as a helper in one of the companies. He recited the shahadah in the Masjid after the Jumua prayers and experienced a warm hospitality by the localites. People flocked to greet him, welcome him; someone handed over a hundred dollar bill quietly and went away without being noticed. His words, "This welcome left a deep mark of Islamic brotherhood in my heart never to be rubbed off."

Two decades back, the Mumbai airport was not a very safe place to catch a taxi as stories of passengers being robbed at a knife point or charged higher rates than normal rates were common complains. It was during those days that once I was at the airport to receive my editor and it was midnight when he walked out along with his family. My editor looked for a taxi but did not settle for any till he came across a Muslim taxi driver with a beard and a cap on his head. He quickly rushed to the taxi and hired it. On the way he pressed my hands affectionately and said, "The Muslim taxi drivers with beards are



the only fellows who can be trusted at midnight if you are with your family. They are religiously honest and safe."

They are religiously honest and safe! These words still echo in my mind, a certificate of merit awarded by a customer who had met the taxi driver for the first time yet he was aware of his honesty before he walked out of the airport. When I visited Surat for a lecture tour, I was shown to a petrol pump that belonged to a Muslim who was famous for selling petrol without adulterating it. "People queue up and do not mind waiting," said my host. This was a mass approval of an honest Muslim merchant who was identified by his religious values.

When was the last time that you or I were a part of an Islamic environment that promoted Islam through our dealings or are we merely like that book shelf with books for show but no one to use? Fortunately, Islam is not only talking big about Islam but a display of affection and security towards your fellow humans which reflects your noble religion in your dealings with the people. Only then you have submitted to Allah.

Muslims We Are, But Why?

Question and answer details

Name of Questioner: Asif

Reply date: 2014/08/13

Question: As-salamu `alaykum. Why should anyone choose Islam as a religion and as a way of life? In other way: Why are we Muslims?

consultant: Ahmad Kutty

consultant: On Islam Fatwa Editing desk

Answer

Wa `alaykum as-salamu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All thanks and praise are due to Allah and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

Dear questioner! Thank you very much for the great confidence you place in us and the apparent interest you show in having a clearer understanding of the teachings of Islam. May Allah guide you to the best of deeds and help us render this work purely for His Sake! Amen!

Above all, it is to be stated that Islam is the very nature of man. It is the religion and the Path chosen by Almighty Allah for him so as to gain happiness in this life and Paradise in the life-to-come. Sometimes, a question may raise in our minds, why are we Muslims? What are the very characteristics of this religion that has led us to choose it as a way of life? In what way Islam is better than other religions?

A True Muslim will cry proudly:

"I'm a Muslim for all to see,
So very glad and proud to be.
Your temptations try to turn my head,
But I have chosen Islam instead.
Sure I am not like all the rest,
I don't eat pork, wear a mini dress.
I am special, I'm not the same,
My appearance is different, even my name.
My God gives me strength, He makes me strong,
He guides me right when I go wrong.
I am a Muslim for all to see,
Islam guides me wherever I be."

In this context, Sheikh Ahmad Kutty, a senior lecturer and an Islamic scholar at the Islamic Institute

of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, states, Islam is the rational choice for anyone who wishes to have a faith that does full justice to the demands of the three faculties of man: physical, intellectual and spiritual. Here is a concise listing of Islam's unique features for which Islam is chosen as a way of life:

1-Islam is the only religion whose sources are authentically preserved and thus remains immaculately free of all human tampering and interpolations.

2-The Islamic scripture is free of mythical elements that are incongruous with modern man's understanding of the world.

3-The Qur'an, the Islamic scripture, is fully compatible with the established facts of science; it clearly contains the signature of the author of the universe, as attested to by many objective seekers of truth, coming as they were from diverse religious and intellectual backgrounds. It also movingly records natural phenomena and enjoins the followers of the faith to respect and preserve nature and the creatures with whom we share the planet.

4-The Qur'an upholds the role of reason and equates those who fail to use their reason as being intellectually imbeciles; this is a far cry from the teachings of many religions which assume incompatibility of reason and revelation.

5-Islamic beliefs and practices are simple, natural and appeal to both reason and common sense.

6-In regards to most of the teachings of Islam, their benefits can be easily demonstrated by evidence of the human experience and by the objective observation of facts. Take for instance Islam's ban of alcohol: statistics reveal that abstention from intoxicants alone could spare humanity from untold misery and

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suffering. The valuable resources squandered for intoxicants can alone solve all poverty related problems of the world. Add to this, the Islamic pillar of Zakah. If only the world's rich were to part with 2.5 % of their excess wealth, humanity would have tackled the problem of poverty very easily.

7-Islam takes into account all of the Allah-given instincts and faculties of man/woman and therefore gives us a balanced program of life that caters to all of the basic needs of humans - physical, intellectual and spiritual, unlike many religions and ideologies which exaggerate one at the expense of the other.

8-Islam provides for us a living example of such a balanced role model in Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whose life, unlike those of the great heroes and Prophets of other religions, is an open book easily accessible for anyone.

9-The Islamic story of creation is free of any of the consequences of the stigma of original sin which has weighed heavily in the consciousness of a large segment of humanity, often proving to be highly volatile, and resulting in hysterical explosions in both the individual and collective dimensions.

10-The Qur'an is anti-classical in its approach to knowledge, and stresses experiential knowledge, a fact which combines authentic science with authentic spirituality.

11-The Qur'an provides answers to questions that haunt every intelligent person, questions related to life after death, an area which is almost totally mysterious in other traditions.

12-Islamic teachings about the essential identity of human beings and its stress on human brotherhood can break the barriers separating humans from one another. This can save humanity from the dire consequences of nationalism and racism which tend to break up humanity artificially by creating and sustaining perpetual conflicts.

13-Islam promises us nothing but total freedom, liberation and bliss and the highest fulfillment and contentment that humans are capable of attaining.

14-Islamic history has provided us with a model society where justice, compassion, truth and transparency of justice were implemented at the human and natural levels.

15-Islam dispenses with all intermediaries between man and God and allows all humans to freely contact God, thus eliminating hierarchies and other sources of religious exploitation that has characterized religious history throughout the ages.

Excerpted, with slight modifications, from:
www.muslims.ca

For all these reasons, we are Muslims!

Here, we would like to cite for you the following testimony of one of the new converts- Ibrahim Jagersky from Pennsylvania- showing why he has chosen Islam as a religion:

Islam has done a lot for me. More than I could have ever guessed. And every day, it just gets better. I went from living my life on a trial-and-error basis to embracing guidance, and now knowing what the best choices are for me to make. From seeking who I am and spending a life in confusion, I am being guided. I can't find the words to say what its like, but I'll try again: Allah reveals to me what life is. I don't have to guess anymore.

Almighty Allah says:

"By the morning hours. And by the night when it is stillest. Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee nor doth He hate thee. And verily the latter portion will be better for thee than the former. And verily thy Lord will give unto thee so that thou wilt be content. Did He not find thee an orphan and protect (thee)? Did He not find thee wandering and direct (thee)? Did He not find thee destitute and enrich (thee)? Therefore the orphan oppress not. Therefore the beggar drive not away. Therefore of the bounty of thy Lord be thy discourse." (Ad-Duha: 1-11)

That is what I went through, what Allah did for me - what I am. So here is my proclamation to the world. Islam is more than you think it is, in fact more liberal than most would wish it to be. But do not only listen. Study all views for yourself...and come to your own conclusion. Allah says:

"And whomsoever it is Allah's will to guide, He expandeth his bosom unto the Surrender; and whomsoever it is His will to send astray, He maketh his bosom close and narrow as if he were engaged in sheer ascent. Thus Allah layeth ignominy upon those who believe not." (Al-An'aam: 125)

Excerpted, with slight modifications, from: www.islamfortoday.com
Almighty Allah knows best.
<http://www.onislam.net/english/ask-the-scholar/dawah-principles/175564-muslims-we-are-but-why.html>

The Birth of a Narrative

I Mirza Yawar Baig I

Looking at the headlines it appears that a story is being built – gradually one article at a time; linking one incident to another, using conjecture in the place of hard evidence – to create the new bogeyman – the Indian Muslim as a ‘fifth column’. A simple search for the meaning of the term revealed this: A fifth column is any group of people who undermine a larger group—such as a nation or a besieged city—from within. The activities of a fifth column can be overt or clandestine. Forces gathered in secret can mobilize openly to assist an external attack. This term is also extended to organized actions by military personnel. Clandestine fifth column activities can involve acts of sabotage, disinformation, or espionage executed within defense lines by secret sympathizers with an external force.

This trend is nothing new of course but it is certainly something that has taken a new energy today from tragic happenings in the Middle East – in particular, the rise of the ISIS – the so-called Islamic State. I say so-called because strangely or not so strangely come to think of it – it contradicts every criterion of a true Islamic state, yet it calls itself that. So I gave it another name - Isn't Isn't - It isn't the Islamic State by any stretch of the imagination.

The problem of course is that discourse belongs to those who choose to speak and so those who are silent are to blame if the discourse takes a turn they don't agree with or accept. When the truth must be spoken, silence is culpable. Add to this the problem that apparently some young people who don't have the ability or knowledge to understand international politics are getting taken in by the propaganda of the ISIS and are tending towards it. that is why I love Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s wonderful reminder: “Cowardice asks the question - is it safe? Expediency asks the question - is it politic? Vanity asks the question - is it popular? But conscience asks the question - is it right?”

And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; But one must take it because it is right.”

I, as a common man, have the same access to news – papers and TV news – as anyone else. I don't spend

time on social media as I really don't have time for chatting and whatnot that happens there. But I have read enough and do have enough of a world view to know that anyone who goes by ‘official statements’ of any political organization or by newspaper or TV headlines, without asking some critical questions, is bound to head off in the wrong direction. If there ever was a time to which the adages – deceptive appearance or wolf in sheep's clothing – could be applied, it is this time. It appears as if all wolves are wearing sheepskin and bleating like lambs while sharpening their fangs for the fatal bite. Anyone who falls for that, needs a brain transplant. So what are the questions that I asked and suggest those who think, should ask?

1. How is it that in a world, if you transfer anything over \$ 5000 through a perfectly legal bank transaction, you are asked for justification; an entire war is being funded by a lot more than \$5000 and those funds are not being frozen?
2. How is it that when a single individual who dares to call himself a ‘mujahid’ – is immediately labeled a ‘jihadist’ and is tracked, arrested and incarcerated – an entire army is allowed to be recruited and equipped and is allowed to plunder and murder at will and no action is taken?
3. How is it that someone who calls himself Amir-ul-Mumineen – Leader of the Believers – he and his people - go against all rules of the Shari'ah and murder innocent Christian and other civilians, kill journalists and non-combatants, shamelessly publish videos of these despicable, Haraam actions, destroy churches, desecrate and destroy tombs of Muslim scholars and even Prophets?
4. Whose interests are really being served to have something like the ISIS operating in that theatre – the interests of Muslims globally or the interests of those who are famous for fighting proxy wars seeking the portraying and labeling of Muslims in highly negative terms?
5. Finally how is it that someone who claims to be the Khalifa (Ameer-ul-Mumineen) is silent about the genocide in Gaza? I won't venture to speculate on the reasons. Actions speak far louder than any words possibly can.

The History of Makkah Mukarramah and The History of Madinah Munawwarah

by Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Abdul Ghani

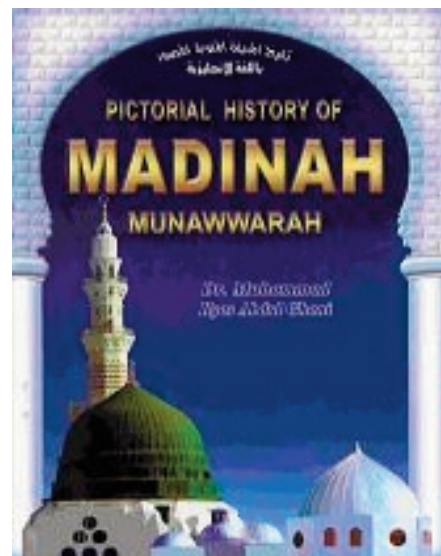
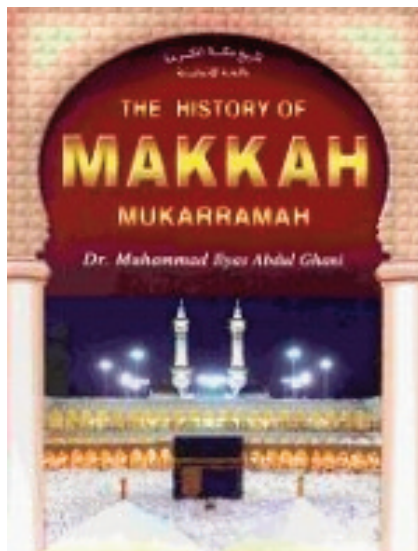
Reviewed by: Sameen Ahmed Khan

The religious and historical significance of Makkah Mukarramah can be judged from the fact that the creator of the universe, Allah Almighty has selected it to be the location of His most sacred house, the Kabah. This blessed city was home to Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) and his mother Hazrat Hajirah (PBUH). Countless Ambiya and pious servant of Allah have undertaken journey to visit the House of Allah. The city houses the Masjid Haram in which the rewards of a single salaah in multiplied by a hundred thousand. The city has the location of Qiblah, a direction towards which every person performing salaah (namaz, prayers) must face. The city also had the privilege of being the birth-place of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), the final Rasul and guide of the worlds. It is in Makkah where the well of Zamzam is located, whose water is better and more blessed than the waters of the universe. Besides, there is a long history predating Hazrat Ibraheem (PBUH). Hazrat Adam (PBUH) and Hazrat Hawwa (PBUH) spent time in Makkah when they arrived to earth from the Jannah. It is this city which Allah has made obligatory to travel and fulfill the rites of Hajj. Makkah has a very long history and numerous religious places in it.

Madinah Munawwarah is the city to which Allah's Messenger emigrated and it gave him refuge, embraced his preaching and supported his religion, and its people defended him with their lives, their wealth and their sons until Allah made him victorious. Madinah possesses virtues which are well known and an influence which none disputes. It is the city where the Holy Prophet made the first mosque (Masjid Quba). It contains the Prophet's Mosque the

Masjid Nabwi, where the rewards of each prayer are multiplied by a thousand. Masjid Nabwi hosts the sacred chamber where the Prophet and the first two caliphs are buried.

Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Abdul Ghani is the author of numerous books related to the history of the holy sites in and around Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah. The titles include: (a) The History of Makkah Mukarramah; (b) The History of Madinah Munawwarah; (c) History of the Prophet's Mosque (Tarikh Al-Masjid An-Nabawi); (d) Pictorial History of Madinah Munawwarah; (e) The Houses of the Companions around the Prophet's Mosque; (f) Historic Mosques in Madinah Munawwarah. All these books are now available in numerous European and Asian languages including Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and Pilipino. In this review, we shall cover only the first two books, which are representative of the common theme in all his books. Dr. Abdul Ghani has very successfully undertaken the task of presenting a concise history of the sacred cities of Makkah



Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah, tracking their histories from the earliest times in the light of authentic narration and books. Both the books have several maps, sketches and numerous pictures. He describes in

very intricate detail the extensions since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the large-scale construction activities in the recent decades. Both the books are not purely historical (as their names may suggest). The books shed light on the various aspects of the two holy cities, with references to the Quran and Ahadith. It is essential for everyone to know the most important historical events that have direct effect on the establishment and sacredness of Makkah and Madinah, as well as their religious weight. The above books provide an excellent starting point in this direction, enabling an integrated picture of each holy city. In the books the various years are given both in the Hijri and Christian calendars. May Allah Almighty increase his Grace upon the author, publisher and readers of these books; may

Allah enable us to make journeys to the sacred cities and Guide us to conduct ourselves in a manner which pleases Him, Amen. Following is the outline of each book:

The History of Makkah Mukarramah

Chapter-1: Location and Virtues of Makkah: The book begins with the location of the city of Makkah in terms of the latitude and the longitude along with the sea-level. There is a complete section describing the superiority of Makkah and its virtues in the light of Ahadeeth. One learns numerous facts; for instance Makkah is known by Bakkah (Surah Al-Imran, 3:96) and City of Security (Surah Al-Tin, 95:3). The author describes the prayers of Hazrat Ibraheem (PBUH) and the saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), at the time of hijrat to Madinah, when the inhabitants of Makkah had forced him to leave the sacred city. The author then describes the different names of Makkah and their significance. The various boundaries of the Haram are described, which enclose an area of approximately 550 square-kilometers. The chapter has a brief but very informative coverage to the period prior and after to the conquest of Makkah. In the process there is a brief description of the Pledge of Ridwaan; Treaty of Hudaibiyyah; and the Demolition of the Idol Uzza.

Chapter-2: Miqaat: When any person sets out to do Hajj or Umrah, he/she has to enter the state of Ehraam at the prescribed boundaries. These boundaries are described by several location points known as miqaat. They cover all possible directions from which a person can reach Makkah. For the residents of Makkah their home is to be treated as miqaat. This chapter gives a detailed list of the various miqaat in terms of the latitudes and longitudes. Some of the miqaat have additional names. The distances from the miqaat to Kabah are neatly presented in a table. The mosques at each miqaat are described in some detail paying attention to the historical aspects and the architectural details such as the size of minarets/domes and their current capacities. This is relevant as the travelers use these mosque complexes for changing into the two unstitched sheets of ehrram. The miqaat for the residents of Madinah is Dhul Hulayfah (about ten kilometers from Masjid Nabwi), which is probably the most used (due to the large number of pilgrims visiting Madinah just before Hajj). The mosque at this miqaat is known by several names including, Masjid Dhul Hulayfah, Masjid Miqaat and as Masjid Shajarah. The Holy

Prophet (PBUH) used to perform salah at the location of Masjid Shajarah. Now, there is a very large mosque complex with facilities for ghusal etc., for tens of thousands.

Chapter-3: Names of Kabah and Builders of Kabah: This chapter begins with the names of Kabah as they appear in the Quran. They are Al Kabah, Al Baytul Haraam, Baytullah, Al Baytul Ateeq and Qibla. The corresponding Ayaat are explicitly given with some commentary. The sanctity of the Kabah is further highlighted from the fact that Allah Almighty addresses Kabah as “My House”, in Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:125. The Commentators have emphatically pointed to the grammatical first person “My House”, in the above Ayat (verse). As expected, an entire chapter of the book is devoted to the Kabah and discusses its origins and construction/rebuilding, tracing the list of Khadimeen throughout the ages. The Kabah was rebuilt twelve times, starting with the angels; Hazrat Adam (PBUH); Hazrat Sheeth (son of Adam); Hazrat Ibraheem and his son Hazrat Ismael; Amaaliqah People; Jurhum Tribe; Qusay bin Kilaab; Quuraysh Tribe; Hazrat Abdullah bin Zubayr (65AH); Hujjaj bin Yusuf (74AH). Kabah existed prior to Hazrat Ibraheem (Surah Ibraheem, 14:37 and Bukhari Hadeeth 3364). The author points out that when the floods came during the time of Hazrat Nooh, the house was raised to heavens. Allah identified the location of Kabah to Ibraheem, who then with his son Hazrat Ismael raised its foundation (Surah Baqarah, 2:127). They used rocks from five mountains to raise the foundation. After that all the rebuilding has been done only on the parts above the original foundation laid by Hazrat Ibraheem.

The changes in the design of Kabah by the Quraysh are described in detail. These include the Hateem; the raising of the Kakkah door; roof and ceiling; the second door in the opposite wall; raising the walls of the Kabah; first to put a roof on the Kabah; and the water outlet (Mizaab Rahma). The eleventh and twelfth are the Turkish Sultaan Muraad (1040AH) and King Fahad bin Abdil Azeez (1417AH). The reader should not be surprised with the above names in the list of builders of Kabah. The most recent renovation included strengthening the foundation; reconstruction of the three pillars (inside the Kabah) with new wood; and reconstruction of the roof and ceiling. Besides, the door was changed with the lock.

In this chapter the author has given the dimensions

of Kabah in gory detail. The four sides of Kabah are unequal requiring different figures for each side. There are figures for Shaadharawaan (the bottom of the Kabah wall that juts out from the rest of the wall), the roof and the three wooden pillars inside the Kabah. All these are described with historical and architectural details. The history of the door, lock and the key of the Kabah are described in detail with the inscriptions on each. The gory details presented are beyond the scope of this review. These are sure to satisfy even the very curious readers, ever craving for the minutest details!

Chapter-4: Hajar Aswad, Multazam and Hateem: There are complete sections describing the Hajar Aswad (black stone); the Multazam (portion of Kabah between Hajar Aswad and the Door of Kabah); and the Hateem. Hajar Aswad was brought from Jannah and presented to Hazrat Ibraheem to be placed on the corner of Kabah. When the Quraysh reconstructed the Kabah, it was replaced by the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). By facing (kissing subject to feasibility) this sacred stone, the Tawaaf is started and ended. Over time the colour of Hajar Aswad changed to black from white and it broke into eight pieces. The largest of these pieces is the size of a date fruit. These eight pieces are attached to a single flat stone which is encased in a sliver frame. The chapter further discusses the virtues and etiquette of kissing the Hajar Aswad. A section describes the acceptance of the prayers at Multazam.

Hateem is the crescent-shaped area adjacent to the Kabah. It is also known as Hijr Ismael, because that was the place where Hazrat Ibraheem had constructed a small shade for Hazrat Ismael and his mother Hazrat Hajirah. Some portion (about three metres) of the Hateem definitely belongs to Kabah, since it was separated from Kabah during the time of Quraysh. The Quraysh were short of righteously earned funds. For this reason an area of approximately three metres could not be included in the walls. They demarcated this area by building the low wall called Hateem. The Quraysh, though in the period of ignorance, were very particular to use only the righteously earned money (without looting or usury) to build the Beloved House of Allah.

Chapter-5: Ghilaaf-e-Kabah: The history of Ghilaaf goes back to Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) who was first to shroud the Kabah in a Ghilaaf. It was also the practice of the Holy Prophet and the Khalifae Rashideen.

After the Abbasi Khilafat came to end in 656AH the Ghilaaf came either from Egypt or Yemen. At some stage around 900AH it started coming only from Egypt and the tradition continued till as recently as 1342AH. Then the King Abdul Azeez established a factory in Makkah to manufacture the Ghilaaf. The production was stopped in this factory and the Ghilaaf supply from Egypt was resumed from 1355AH to 1381AH. A new factory was established in 1392AH. Since then to the present all the Ghilaaf are made there. The sixteen pages are filled with the various ayaat inscribed on the Ghilaaf. Besides, there are pictures of Kabah without the Ghilaaf.

Chapter-6: Maqaam Ibraheem: The Maqaam Ibraheem refers to the blessed stone which was brought by Hazrat Ismael for his father Hazrat Ibraheem to stand on, while building the wall of the Kabah. The greatest virtue of Maqaam Ibraheem is that Allah has instructed muslims to perform salaah near it. Following the Quranic injunction (Surah Baqarah, 2:125) one performs two Rakaahs of salaah behind Maqaam Ibraheem after the Tawaaf. Over the centuries the Maqaam Ibraheem was preserved in a silver box, which was housed in a huge domed hall. The hall occupied a lot of space in the Mataaf, and hence it was demolished in the year 1387AH. The Maqaam Ibraheem was fixed in exquisite crystal and encased in a sturdy steel cage. The casing was then mounted on a marble platform and a dome was used to cover it. The imprints of Hazrat Ibraheem can be clearly seen in this way. The chapter continues the tradition, and there are figures for the size of the dome, and the distances of Maqaam Ibraheem from Hajar Aswad, and various parts of Kabah.

In the periods of ignorance the Arabs worshipped the stones; but no one ever worshipped the Hajar Aswad or Maqaam Ibraheem even though the Arabs revered it.

Chapter-7: Well of Zamzam, Mount Safa and Mount Marwah: About twenty-one metres away from Kabah and seven metres away from Maqaam Ibraheem, is the oldest well and the most celebrated source of water. This chapter focuses on the well of Zamzam whose water is the best of the waters in the universe. The well originated as a miracle to quench the thirst of Hazrat Ismael when he was a baby and his mother Hazrat Hajirah. This chapter describes the virtues of Zamzam in detail along with the etiquette of drinking it. There is coverage to the recent research on how the water gushes from the springs

within the well. Interestingly, the water from these springs gushes in the direction of Hajar Aswad, Safa and Marwah respectively. The well had dried up during the times of ignorance and even its location had been lost. Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) received guidance in his dream to locate the well. Since then it has been in regular use. Water was first drawn from it using electric pumps in 1373AH. With numerous extensions, the well is now below the Mataaf. A few kilometers away from Masjid Haraam, there is a tank with a capacity of 150 million litres. Water is distributed by tankers to various places including the Masjid Nabwi and other Masajid.

Mount Safa is a little hill from which one of the important rites of Haj and Umrah is begun. It is located south-east of Kabah at a distance of 130m and is now covered by a domed roof. Marwah is another hill located about 300m from Rukn Shaami. Path connecting Safa and Marwah is called Masaa. It measures about 394.5m in length and 20m in breadth. The Safa and Marwah and its origin to Hazrat Hajirah are described in detail along with the incidents at the time of the Holy Prophet. The book also describes the renovations of the Masaa. Now, it is fully enclosed with a high ceiling with provisions to do the sai on the two upper floors.

Chapter-8: Masjid Haraam: This chapter begins with the definition of Masjid Haraam: it refers to the Kabah, Mataaf and all the extensions which have taken place since the time of the second Khalifah, Hazrat Umar. This chapter is by and large a narration of the expansions which have been going on since the time of Hazrat Umar. This narration is elegantly interwoven with historical details and Ahadeeth. The author goes into the substantial architectural details including the courtyards, doors, size of domes, minarets, type of stone used in flooring and so on. The extensions of the recent decades embedded with technology (escalators, air-conditioning etc) and the related issues of drainage, roads, and tunnels are also described elaborately with numerous photographs.

There is a complete section on the history of the tarahwih salaah. The author points to the documented record of the tarahwih salaah in the last fourteen centuries. In the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr the tarahwih was performed individually or in small congregations. Hazrat Umar had combined the small congregations into one. Interesting, all along

there have been twenty rakaahs, followed by three rakaahs of witr (also in congregation) in both Masjid Haram and Masjid Nabwi.

Chapters-9, -10 and -11: Mina, Plain of Arafaat and Muzdalifah: The author takes the reader through the sequence of detailed sections on Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah in the process describing the arkan of hajj and some incidents from the hajj of the Holy Prophet. Then the book touches the conquest of Makkah and its far-reaching effects on the history of Makkah, and how the House was cleansed of shirk and the mushrikun.

The chapter provides a geographic picture (with maps and figures) of the three sites in close proximity. At the same time the chapter has an ample coverage of the sites whose facilities are constantly being upgraded for the ever increasing number of pilgrims. For instance hills have been leveled to provide more space for tents; tunnels have been made to reduce the distance to Masjid Haram. Besides, the author describes the extensions of the mosques at the three sites. There is a complete section on the Jamaraat, where there used to be stampeded. How this has been curbed with renovations and crowd management. In fact there have been several conferences on Crowd Management in Saudi Arabia. From my own experience few years back, I can say that the place is so well managed that even my three year old daughter, Hajira Khan could do the rami with ease.

Chapter-12: Important Notes Concerning the Visits to Historical Sites: The last chapter describes the numerous sites in and around Makkah, including the Cave of Hira, the house of Hazrat Khadeeja, and the Mala Qabrastan. And of course several Masajid are described which include, Masjid Bayyah, Masjid Jinn, Masjid Shajarah, Masjid Rayah, and Masjidul Fatah.

... to be concluded in November 2014 issue

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I Can Marry Four. What about you?

I By AsmaAnjum Khan I

Saturdays usually signal the end of a hectic week. A soothing sensation after doing time for the last six days begins to engulf me. After my talk, a sister comes and hugs, nothing unusual; but a continuous stream of tears, from her eyes was. Her visage with droplets smearing it appeared a bit white. My little talk about H.Aaishah RA and other UmmahatulMomineen had touched her, she said. When probed about the weepy act; her reply not just stunned but kept haunting me for the next few weeks.

Today is my husband's waleema, sister.

Her tone was calm. No further explanation was needed. I understood.

I too am a wife. I too am a woman. Did I feel shocked, stunned, amazed, astounded, or bewildered?

All into one, perhaps. I was speechless and it reminded me of that Eugene Ionesco, quote, Words fail you, after a time.

Yes, words failed me.

Polygamy is a seriously delicate issue. The Creator the all knowing has allowed it but with some ceilings in place. There are riders and most often than not, generally they are overlooked. However there is little or no talk about these riders, these ceilings. Off late I have been seeing lots of, 'campaigns' on the social media by our 'brothers' advocating polygamy vociferously.

Yes, vociferously.

Polygamy if practised in its true spirit and with justice can solve some social problems. But doing justice among wives is extremely difficult, or rather near impossible, our Creator proclaims.

See the related verse here.

What I find amazing is the men advocating polygamy single-mindedly to the exclusion of other more important issues, particularly those related to women, such as widow remarriage, giving a woman her rightful share in the property, and facilitating her right to khulaa, and other such things.

(<http://scroll.in/article/669083/Muslim-women-and-the-surprising-facts-ab...>)

You advocate polygamy. Fine. But shouldn't you try to first create a balanced society where women are given their due share their due rights? [I also think, this word, given, is a culprit in itself, and is a pointer

towards the prevalent malaise. What do you mean by given? Our right is our right and we should be rightfully claiming and proclaiming it. Why are not women free to proclaim and practise the rights given to them by Quran and Sunnah? Why should it be made to sound so patronizing? A society where women take to their rights in a natural way; where they are not made to feel embarrassed about proclaiming what is legally theirs; would be a dream come true.] The society with such a fine balance might also make polygamy easier and appear more acceptable. Not that I am advocating it, each to his / her own. My main grouse is when and just when, are we going to address the real issues of women?

If such vociferous campaigns [talks, workshops, video-lectures, social media posts] can be held for polygamy then why not for widow re-marriages, for giving women rights to property, and the right to ask for Khulaa ? But so far I have not seen any.

We know well Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H's saying pertaining to never delaying three things, and one of them is Widow Re-marriage.

But does anyone care?

We all have known a few cases of unhappy marriages breathing down the neck of hundreds of our sisters but their fear to ask for khulaa, keeps them suffocated. There is a big social stigma attached to it. ; do we talk about this? Also how many

daughters/sisters, do we happen to know, who are not given their due share in property by their fathers and brothers? (Almost every home has it, you said?) But what we surely get to see is the stress on a man's right to exercise polygamy for the following reasons as given by our brothers: its sunnah(I often wonder how many other sunnahs do men practice before coming to this?); secondly men are created strong, they 'need' it. Third is interesting, it's difficult to lower gaze in today's times, hence...[Now really!], fourthly a man is polygamous by nature, etc, etc!.

Eeman = Encouraging your husband to remarry?!

The thing that infuriates me most in this regard is a brother's argument that if a woman has faith/eeman, she should ENCOURAGE her husband to remarry.

Yes, you have read it right. No need trying to roll back your eyes and re-read the words. So this is how my brothers judge me. I am faithful, if I encourage my hubby dear to marry another woman. If I care for my sisters truly, then I would be doing this. They say.

Respected brothers, wish to give you a piece of my mind.

My faith doesn't depend on my encouraging my husband for another marriage. My faith is a matter between me and My Creator. (By the way, in general, we the wives encourage our husbands for waking up for fajarsalah, for reading Quran with meaning, for visiting an orphanage on a regular basis or take up some good social cause with only a little success here and there, but our sweet hubbies might feel encouraged for tying the knot one more time! Knotty issue, you said!) I don't understand this. Why ask women for an impossible or say very very difficult thing? When Allah has not burdened His creations beyond their capacity, then no one else should. Why put the onus on the poor wife, when the hubby dear is free to marry once more as and when he pleases? A man can remarry, if he wants, (with riders in place) but to ask a wife to encourage her man for the same and judge her faith/iman on the basis of it? Outrageous.

Asking a wife to egg on her husband to remarry! Is it not akin to asking Israel to help Palestine? The result of such an attempt may be on the lines of US bringing democracy to Iraq or Afghanistan. And you know well how democracy, American style, is always under the threat of a new ISIS. Jokes apart these guys should stop playing this game. They should also stop judging our faith on the basis of our not just supporting but encouraging, you know what; yes, Polygamy. A woman's weaknesses are well known; to burden her beyond her natural ability and expecting her to do things way beyond her capacity is Zulm. Allah knows it. When Allah has not burdened us beyond our capacity, no one else should. While polygamy is permitted, marrying and remaining married to one is also among the nobler options. A brother informed me that it is an option for the weak. Allah forbid Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H, for the major part of his life remained married to one. Prophet saws' marriage to H.Khadijah RA happened when he was 25, and it lasted till she passed away in the tenth year of the Prophet-hood; making it a companionship of almost 25 years. His two illustrious sons in law, H.Uthman bin Affan RA and H.Ali RA followed in his footsteps. The latter among them was also specifically asked to refrain from remarrying, not once but twice. This may be an exception; nevertheless the sentiment behind it can be understood and lessons learnt. There is a detailed hadeeth re-

garding it. Of course Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. and his two companions and sons in law remarried but only after the demise of the first one [the daughters of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.] and thus proved that marrying and remaining married to one is also one of the noble options given to men. Had their wives lived longer than them, would they have remarried?

What happens really when a Muslim man remarries, today? Has it become a tool to harass the helpless wife?

What happens really when a Muslim man remarries, today? In majority of the cases, the second wife is usually found to be a rich wealthy woman. A rich woman, a widow, a working divorcee with a fat pay cheque, is, 'chosen' for the next round. My observation tells me this, yours can be different. Rarely ever have I seen a brother who claims to be not weak but strong, taking a poor woman, or a widow with kids, or an impoverished or divorced woman, as the second wife.[Exceptions are found here too.] Don't you feel a stronger brother [as they assert to be] would opt for a widow, a divorcee and then rightly claim to be Strong; real strong? Our Prophet P.B.U.H took widows and divorcees in distress mostly, when he remarried, except H.Aaishah RA. But why do majority of women taken as second wives today, have to be rich and prosperous? My ignorant self keeps wondering. The general trend is for the Richie Rich brigade. They are trending on the second marriage scene.

What is disconcerting is that there is a big social stigma attached to the widow remarriage and the matters of Khulaa. Why don't my brothers work to remove it? This stigma crushes the very spirit of these unfortunate women. The number of women living empty lives due to their inability to exercise their legitimate right to remarry or ask for Khulaa [divorce] is huge. How many women have I seen... I have lost the count who put up with such a miserable fate. Young widows are expected to remain single or rarely encouraged to remarry, while a widower (brother) gets hooked in no time. Why should it be so? Women due to their natural sense of modesty are unable to speak up for themselves. Their silence about or refusal to remarry mostly emanates from this false sense of modesty. On the other hand, we have tens of examples before us where we see our Sahabiyaat RA [pious women from the time of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.] remarrying not just

once but many times over, after they got widowed or divorced.

Some of my brothers say monogamy is a cultural thing. May I humbly ask them, if a 65 years old woman, [or younger or older than this], who is a mother, a sister, decides to remarry, will it be or won't it be frowned upon, terming it against our culture? I am witness to such a case where a 55 year old widow, after being cold shouldered by her three sons for years, decided to remarry and the rest as they say became history. She was disparaged, condemned and most unfortunately her character assassination got in full swing. Oh, she is a woman like that! They said. Do you have to be a woman to realize the poisonous sting in these words? Here my brothers should sensitize people about the thing that; we all need partners, women included. But no, vociferous campaigns for this? No advocacy of women's rights?

However these issues need more of our attention and vociferousness because without the active help from our brothers, we women may not and will not be able to get what is legally ours. But do I hear them saying, I can marry four, don't know about you?

What about you? They ask innocently.

For a balanced society we need to have a balanced approach and practice. Addressing women's issues would be the first step towards this. But is anyone listening?

Why this Deafening Silence?

The divisive agenda of RSS is now Public

I By Hansal Mehta I

Film Director Hansal Mehta in an interview has expressed serious concerns over the overt activities and statements of the RSS and allied organizations, after the recent central government's victory in the general elections of 2014. He has stated that the "Communal and divisive Agenda of the century old rightist organization RSS is now open and public." This interview is the launching video of a series of audio-visual interviews, available for viewing on the internet on the joint You Tube video channel by Communalism Combat and www.hillele.org.

Hansal Mehta, the director of films Dilpe Mat le Yaar (Story of migrants) and Shahid (Minority Rights) was forthright in his assessment of the present scenario while talking about the threat of hate-driven divisive politics to journalist, educationist and humanist, Teesta Setalvad, who conducted the first interview of the series.

Mehta has won the National Film Award for best director for Shahid (2014). A marked shift in priorities of the government at the centre, was one reason that Shahid was unceremoniously replaced from being the inaugural film of the National Film Festival in May 2014, soon after election results, due to the crucial issues it raises. A fear of challenging the ideology of the ruling dispensation governs this mood of self-censorship, according to Hansal Mehta while emphasizing that there have been such threats before, even during moments of our own authoritarian past.

"Even during and after emergency, it was impossible or difficult to make serious and honest films over the period of emergency or about Indira Gandhi. While it has been easier (to make critical films) in neighbouring Pakistan." Talking about Hindi Cinema-Then and Now, Mehta assessment of the 1950s and Bollywood ran thus, "Films in 50's were more serious and sensitive towards society, raising several questions, tackling even the gender question. "After the angry man of the 1970's it was tokenism that replaced a more thematic understanding of issues."

He also talked cheerfully about his hobby, specifically about his first venture into television with a highly popular food show. A lover of good cuisine and passionate about its creation, Hansal Mehta is today learning the nuances of Awadhi Cuisine. It was Hansal, who produced the famous SanjivKapur's show 'KhanaKhazana'. Dedicated to creating more films like Shahid, that turn the mirror of society within, Mehta spoke honestly about also creating a sex comedy with the same brutal dedication.

This interview of Hansal Mehta is the first of the series of Interviews by Communalism Combat and www.hillele.org. The Series will further include interactions with various Actors, Film Makers, Artists, Academics, Writers-Poets, Activists, Politicians and Musicians, which would be launched on their You Tube Channel 'Hillele TV' (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3G7YYiSQ65t2AilCtw-anw>).

To view the recent interaction with Hansal Mehta, you may go to <http://youtu.be/1HKbUh-g5Gk> directly. (Hillele Bureau)

Hardships in Islam: Blessings in Disguise?

I By Theresa Corbin I

Saturday, 30 August 2014 00:00

We often fail to remember that blessings always come out of hardship. If it wasn't for the fire, the forest would rot and die.

When I look back on my life, I often think about how it could have all gone so terribly wrong if I had only gotten what I wanted.

If I had been independently wealthy, I wouldn't have worked so hard to get an education.

If I hadn't gone to college, I wouldn't have learned about Islam. If I hadn't learned about Islam, I don't even

want to think about where I would be.

It is the path that we don't want to take that turns out to be the best for us in the long run. It is

the flat tire that made us avoid getting involved in a deadly accident or the waitress bringing us the wrong order that allowed us to avoid getting food poisoning that are the blessings.

The hard part is recognizing that things not going the way we wanted them to is a blessing in disguise.

Giving Shots

Nothing taught me more about blessings in disguise than being a pediatric medical assistant. In this position I was tasked with giving the shots for the well patient check-ups.

Giving shots to little babies was only traumatic for me and the parents. The baby would smile and coo at me, having no idea what was about to happen. Then once the sharp needle pierced the skin the baby would cry for a moment, and then go back to smiling and cooing.

As the child got older and started to understand and remember, giving shots was an entirely different story. Around the age of 2 years, and often earlier, children would scream, kick and struggle to get out of getting shots. All they could think of was the pain from the previous shot.

Most children thought I was trying to harm them and couldn't understand why their parents were complicit in this. They felt betrayed and trapped because

prevention of disease was a concept that the child could not grasp. Now could the child grasp the concept that was only done for his sake. It was a blessing for the child to be able to receive the shots, but the child

Understanding Trials & Hardships

- Do You Remain Optimistic in Hardship?
- There is Surely Ease with Every Difficulty
- Islam Brings Hardship or Happiness?!
- There is Good in Every Event
- How Are Trials Defined?

Ctrl + Click to open link

saw it as a tragedy.

The Bigger Picture

The child has a narrow view of the world. He cannot understand that the shot's pain is only small and temporary, but will prevent disease that can cause pain and suffering that is markedly worse. The child cannot see past the pain, and in focusing on the pain, the child panics and makes the shot even worse in his own mind.

Even though we can understand the concept of disease prevention, the adult is not much better at see-

ing past his or her small scope. And often we have a hard time thinking bigger than a small pain right now that prevents pain and suffering later. We even make our suffering worse by only focusing on the pain it causes like the child getting the shot. We often fail to remember that blessings always come out of hardship. If it wasn't for the fire, the forest would rot and die. If it wasn't for the rain, we would never see the fruit of the earth. If it wasn't for the hardship in our own lives, we wouldn't become stronger people.

What Allah and the Prophet Have Said about Blessings

even if we cannot perceive the blessing, we should still trust that Allah knows...

Even a small thing like a fever is really a blessing. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Allah removes the sins of a Muslim for his illness as fire removes the dross of gold and silver." (Abu Dawud, 3092)

And like the fever being a way to purify us, everything we suffer is a form of good. The Prophet said: "I am amazed by the believer. Verily, Allah does not decree anything for the believer except what is good for him." (Muslim, 2999)

The greater the hardship, the greater the blessing, if we can only see it for what it really is. The Prophet said:

"A mighty reward is associated with a large affliction. Indeed, when Allah loves a people, He afflicts

them in trial. Thus, he who is pleased, for him is (His) pleasure, and as for him who is angry, for him is displeasure." (At-Tirmidhi, 2396)

Allah tells us in the Quran that the difficulty He places on us is so that it can make us better people: {Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you and to complete His favor on you that you may be thankful.} (5:6)

Acceptance of Allah's Plan for Us

In my time in the medical field as the bearer of shots, every now and then there would be a child that was so calm and accepting of the situation that it would surprise me. Even though the child didn't understand why the shot was necessary, she trusted that the doctor's knowledge was greater than hers and that the doctor who prescribed the shots only wanted good for her. And without the struggle to resist her fate, the shot was next to painless.

We should all strive to be more like the child who is calm and accepting of the shot, but on a much grander scale.

We need to understand that even if we cannot perceive the blessing, we should still trust that Allah knows what He is doing and He only wants good for us.

<http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/living-islam/growing-in-faith/476747-hardships-in-islam-blessings-in-disguise.html>

THOSE WHO ARE PATIENT IN ADVERSITY
AND FORGIVE WRONGS ARE THE
DOERS OF EXCELLENCE
Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Emotional Intelligence, Muslims, and Eid Al Azha

[First Ten Days of Dhul Hijjah leads a Muslim towards perfection)

I By Shakeel Ahmad I

Everybody who knows even a bit about Eid Al Azha also knows that it is a celebration that strengthens a Muslim's resolve to sacrifice, in the way of Allah, that which he may love the most (commemorating Ibrahim Alaihis Salam's readiness to sacrifice his most beloved son who was a gift from God in an age when no one could even dream of becoming a father). This sacrifice on the day of Eid-Al-Adha is preceded by disciplining of Muslims to a life of giving (sacrificing) during the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah, and a strict training (to internalize the attribute of sacrifice) for those who have proceeded to perform Hajj.

One could become ready to sacrifice the most precious resource like time, the hard-earned money, the opportunities of perceived enjoyment like watching TV serials or movies, etc., only when one is aware of one's physical self (self awareness), one's emotional self (emotional literacy), has the kind of feelings for others (empathy and compassion) that makes him think of the benefits of others as well, and could allocate one's resources, feelings, emotions wisely (balance). The four attributes essential to master for high EQ (measure of Emotional Intelligence or EI: refer to Part-1 of this series, in BaKhabar's September issue) are, thus, essential for nurturing a culture of sacrifice, and vice versa. We can, therefore, conclude that Emotional Intelligence is an essential characteristic for selfless sacrifice, that is, for anyone who is willing to sacrifice, for the sake of God, without any apparent worldly return in-sight.

The importance of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah need no elaboration beyond mentioning the fact that Allah swears by these ten days in Quran (89:1-2). From various sources of hadith and fiqh, we know that these ten days could train us in developing a habit of sacrificing for the sake of Allah and Allah's

creatures, practicing the essential elements of Emotional Intelligence as commanded by Allah.

What constitutes sacrifice? Physical sacrifice could include acts of giving away what we possess, like money (charity), or what we perceive as possessing, like time (spending on good deeds other than charity). Emotional sacrifice could include letting the calls of emotions subside, like controlling anger against an offence, or forgiving someone even for an act against which permission to take revenge in equal measure is permitted. Patience could be considered another emotional sacrifice, for example, not seeking an immediate return for an act of benevolence. Without patience and perseverance, there can be no forgiveness or tolerance. Spiritual sacrifice could include worshipping God -it requires sacrificing one's ego and desires, submitting unconditionally one's entire self before an unseen entity.



We have now arrived at some elements of sacrifice (physical, emotional, and spiritual that could be seen in worship of the creator, forgiveness, patience, charity, good deeds) that we could examine to see how Quran and Sunnah commands us to internalize in order to make a success of our lives.

Ibn 'Abbaas (Radhi Allahu Anhu) reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihe Wasallam) said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allaah than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah?" He said, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Sahih Bukhari, 2/457).

These ten days include the Day of 'Arafaah, on which Allaah perfected His Religion. Fasting on this day will expiate for the sins of the year before, and the year after. These days also include the Day of Sacrifice (Eid Al-Adha), the greatest day of the en-

tire year and the greatest day of Hajj, which combines acts of worship in a way unlike any other. Scholars have recommended to race in good deeds during all of these ten days, apart from indulging in worshipping, seeking forgiveness, fasting, etc. Acts of good deeds involve being generous

in giving (charity or sadaqah) to others and reluctant in demanding from others. These ten days of intense training could make it easy for them (acts of the ten days) to become our habit for the rest of the year. And this training, year after year, could soon internalize them to become a part of our personal character. Muslim, as a nation, after nurturing these characteristics could become leaders of the society and role models, worthy of emulation by others, exactly in contrast to the image they carry now.

Let us now take a look at reference from Quran and Sunnah for some of these elements.

Forgiveness: In the conquest of Makkah Al Mokeddameh, by the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we see the greatest example of forgiveness which has no parallels in the history of mankind. Almost the entire population that tormented and tortured not only the Muslims but their prophet as well, for thirteen long years, who fought wars against Muslims and killed the noblest among them, were forgiven. In this is the model of forgiveness for every Muslim to follow.

[Quran, 42: 40-43] The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah ... The blame is only against those who oppress men and wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a penalty grievous ... But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.

What act of forgiveness could be better than to give up our legitimate right to kill for the killing of a sibling!

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Charity does not in any way decrease the wealth, and the servant who forgives, Allah adds to his respect, and the one who shows humility Allah elevates him in the estimation. (Sahih Muslim, 32:6264)

Patience: The holy Quran and the books of ahadith

are full of commandments in favour of patience, and all of us can easily recall “innallahe maas-sabereen” or “Allah is with those who have patience” (e.g., 2:153; 2: 249; 8:46; 8:66, etc.). Who is better than the one who has Allah on his side?

Charity: Throughout Quran, Allah commands us to give, in various forms, e.g., “Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public, have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.” [2: 274] Along with prayer, we find the mention of charity in many verses (e.g., 2:277, 4:77, 4:162, 5:12, 22:78, etc.). Promised returns are such that no worldly investment can beat, e.g. Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "If any one of you improve (follows strictly) his Islamic religion then his good deeds will be rewarded ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and a bad deed will be recorded as it is." (Sahih Bukhari, 2:40)

Good Deeds: Like charity, good deeds are commanded throughout Quran, as if they be the core theme of Allah's Book. Most striking is their strong connection with Eiman (faith), that is, good deeds have no value (for akhirah) without eiman, and eiman is incomplete without good deeds – both being mentioned together, in no less than sixty verses of Quran (e.g., 2:25, 2:62, 2:82, 2:277, 4:124, 17:19, etc).

Using Intelligence (wisdom, hikmah, etc), the important constituent of Emotional Intelligence is similarly commanded throughout the holy Quran (e.g., 8:20-23; 7:179, 22:46, etc.). Phrases like “hearts wherewith they understand not” (Quran, 7:179), or “Reasoning by hearts” (Quran, 22:46), all by themselves, hold all that we could perceive as “emotional intelligence”.

From the above discussion, we see that through the first nine days of Dhul Hijjah, the training by various means of sacrifice a Muslim is prepared to sacrifice, on the tenth day, an animal that is dearest to him (best of domesticated prescribed animals). This ten day training extended to the whole year can make a Muslim what he is supposed to be, an emotionally intelligent person possessing all the attributes that raise his EQ to the highest possible levels, and bring him closer to Allah.

Source:

http://www.biharanjuman.org/bakhabar_news/bakhabar-November-2010-page7.html

Mother- in -law Wants Daughter to Separate from Husband

By Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah
-Rahimullaah-

Translated by Abbas Abu Yahya

Shaykhul-Islam Ahmad bin AbdulHaleem Ibn Taymeeyah (d.728 A.H.) -Rahimullaah-was asked:

‘A woman and her husband have a unity between them, but her mother wants them to separate, however the daughter does not obey her mother in this. Is the daughter sinful for what the mother invites her to do?’

He -Rahimullaah- answered:

All praise be to Allaah, if the woman is married, then it is not obligatory upon her to obey her father or her mother in separating from her husband, nor in visiting them, nor in things similar to this.[1]

Rather obedience to her husband, is more of a right than obedience to her parents, as long as the husband does not order her with sinning against Allaah. ‘Any woman who died while her husband was pleased with her enters Paradise.’

If the mother of the daughter wants to separate her daughter from her son-in-law, then she is from the species of Haroot and Maroot (the two Angels sent down to test the people), obedience to her is not complied with in this matter even if the mother makes Dua’ (supplicates) against the daughter.

The exception is that the husband and wife gather together upon sinning, or the husband orders her to sin against Allaah while the mother orders her with obedience to Allaah and His Messenger with that which is obligatory upon every Muslim.’

[Taken from 'Majmoo al-Fatawa' vol.33 p.113]

[1] T.N. Note: Here ShaykhulIslam is talking about the obligation, however, he is not implying that one should not visit and keep good relations, and this is clearly understood. Here are some narrations which show the importance of keeping good relations. And Allaah knows best.

1 – On the authority of ‘Aeysha that the Prophet -sallAllaahualayhiwasallam- said to her:
‘Certainly whoever has been given a portion of gen-

tenness, has been given his portion of goodness in the world and the hereafter. Having good relations with relatives, good manners and being good to neighbours blesses your dwellings and lengthens your life.’

SilsilahAhadeethAs-Saheehah No.519

2 – From Abu Darda from the Prophet -sallAl-laahualayhiwasallam- who said:

‘The person who is disobedient to his parents will not enter Paradise, nor an alcoholic or a person who belies Qadr (destiny).’

SilsilahAhadeethAs-Saheehah No. 675

3- From Abu Musa al-Ashaari who said the Messenger of Allaah -sallAllaahualayhiwasallam- said:

‘An alcoholic will not enter Paradise, nor the one who believes in magic, or one who breaks relations.’

SilsilahAhadeethAs-Saheehah No. 678

4 – On the authority of Abdullaah who said that the Messenger of Allaah -sallAllaahualayhiwasallam- said to us:

‘Indeed you will see after me people having concern for a portion of the Duniya and matters which you will dislike.’

They said: ‘So what do you command us to do O Messenger of Allaah?’

He answered:

‘Give them their rights, and ask Allaah for your rights.’

SilsilahAhadeethAs-Saheehah No.3555

Source:<http://followingthesunnah.wordpress.com/2014/08/15/mother-in-law-wants-daughter-to-separate-from-husband/>



The Best Anti Depressant: *InnalillahiwainnailaihiRajeoon...*

Kerala a prosperous south Indian state boasts of being the only Indian state with 100 percent of literacy and many Educational Institutions as compared to other Indian states. Japan is the most industrialized nation in the world with its unmatched Suzuki, Sony, Nokia, and Panasonic. Bangalore is the cyber city of India which hosts a large number of Multi-National Companies in its boundaries. Yet all these three places have one thing in Common. They lead the world in suicide statistics. And suicides come from affluent class. They also include the frustrated students who fail to get up to the mark.

Whenever the results of Matriculation and Secondary schools are out, news of students committing suicides pour in. Quite surprisingly, these are not the failures in exams but those who are not able to get into medical and engineering are killing themselves. The success of a student is restricted to the grades he gets! 'Career Worship' is being cultivated as new form of God worship by many parents and institutions.

With the rate race towards a prosperous job intensified, the expectations of the parents from children also get hyper. I was stunned to see the improvement in achieving percentages in this year's Mumbai results, one in HSC and the other in SSC got 100 out of 100 in Math! The Times of India says that there is a climb in the number of students getting 90 percent and above!

A professor in Bhavans College Mumbai once took the introductory lecture of the students of BSc first year. He announced, "I believe that this is the most frustrated batch in the entire college! Raise your hands those who don't agree with me." Everybody agreed. That batch was of those students who worked extremely hard from ninth standard and sacrificed all the social activities and confined themselves to their books, coaching classes and buried themselves beneath the piles of books and guides. Yet they did not manage to get admission in medicine and engineering. Every Indian college of science has this batch. No one is exempted.

So with this, the parameter of failure has drastically

gone up. If you cannot secure an admission in Medicine or IT in spite of getting 80%, then you are a failure!

Let me take an analytical stock of the situation from Islamic perspective so that those who have missed the bus may not sink into depressions. Islamically, failure in this word is not the end of the road to success. Note the most encouraging words of Qur'an, the last verse of Surah Imran: Yaaayyuhallazinaa-manofasberoo was saberoo, Oh you who have believed! Be patient and remain patient. In other translation: O you have believed, preserver and endure and remained station and fear Allah that you may be successful

If you analyze the early setbacks or hardships of Muslims you will discover that many failures are the early signs of success. For those who feel that success should be fast and immediate then consider this: In first thirteen years of early Islam, only a handful of people became Muslims, in the next decade almost the whole of Arabia submitted to Islam, and the next decade saw empires like Rome, Persia and Egypt losing out to Islam.

Many students have formulated a wrong version of success in their minds. They relate it with their grades. If success is directly proportionate with your achievements then what about those prophets who did not have followers except a handful! Would you call them failures? Many companions of the Prophet (pbuh) were killed or remained poor while other perished in the hot sands of desert and a few even lived to be victims of various trials and tribulation, yet they were entitled to get a merit card from Allah. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Allah. This is the supreme success, says the second last verse of Surah M-aidah.

Islam de attaches you from materialism. It teaches you how to handle failures and deal with it and let not failure cause you a loss in your morale, in your motivation and in your attitude towards your life. And it is very simple. SABR, PATIENCE. If you lose something, a relative to death, wealth in business loss or a chance to build a career which you were dreaming of for years, you only have to say, + The same verse is the best 'anti-depressant assurance'

from Allah, those are the ones upon whom are the blessings from their Lord and they are the rightly guided, Surah Baqarahch 2 verse 156-157.

Among the hastiest decision, which also proves harmful emotionally and socially, is divorce. People rush for divorces like any thing. Why many people find themselves incompatible for their spouses but they get along well even with their aggressive boss, disobedient children, stubborn customers and irritating neighbors? It may seem to many people that spouses can be replaced easily but bosses can't be. Children can be disobedient but spouses should never be. Customers can be stubborn but they follow it up by a profit in deal, spouses don't. You can shut your doors for neighbors but not for your spouse. You can sell your house but can't sell your spouse. So, many people are in a haste to replace them.

Spouses err. They fall short in expectations. Their shortcomings strike brighter than their good qualities. These are common features everywhere. If you look at your spouse's errors and shortcomings through microscope then it will give you a magnified image. This is how Shaytan works. Haste is a weapon used frequently by Shaytan to instigate a man to do wrong and destroy his Akhera. It is haste that leads many warring couple to separation. If haste is a weapon of shaytan, then it is also a test for man. Note these three Qur'anic verses that reflect human psychology:

1. Man was created weak 'KhuliqaInsaanaDhaeefa'..Surah Nisaa verse 28.
2. The prayer that man should make for good, he makes for evil, for man is given to Haste ... Surah Al Israch17, verse 11.
3. InnalInsaanaKhuliqahalooa.. Indeed man was created very impatient..SurahMa'arij chapter 70, verse 19.

The hand and tongue that doesn't rise against injustice rises against justice.
Decide if you want to be for Allah ﷻ or against, for He's just.

Yamin Baig

Where do I start?

By Abu Muhammad Yusuf

Imagine waking up one morning to find everyone smiling, just peace, harmony, tranquillity, mutual love, respect, serenity...wouldn't it be divine? We all desire to change the world for the better, but where do we start? A wise man once said;

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town, so I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I know the only thing I can change is myself. And suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

So what is really the secret to changing world? Actually it's not such a big secret! Allah Ta'ala gives us the perfect and most wise solution:

“Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” (Quran-Surah Rad, 13:11)

If we desire change, then let us change what is within ourselves first and have high hopes and good expectations about gaining help from our Creator. The Messenger of Allah Ta'ala (peace be upon him) is reported to have said that Allah says:

"I treat my servant according to his expectations from Me and I am with him when he remembers Me...if he takes one step towards Me, I will take ten steps towards him. If he walks towards Me, I will run unto him." (Hauth: Bukhari& Muslim)

Often we fear and resist change. Boldness, courage and determination are essential components of change. The secret of change is not to fight the old, but to refocus and build the new.

We need to take it one step at a time. Rome was not built in a day and a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. Sometimes it's the smallest decisions we make that can change our life forever.

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will Insha Allah change.

Allah, The Most Wise, is always there to Help and Guide us. So let us not delay and try to be the change that we wish to see in the world.

Modi's Mission to 'Reform' India Must Begin At Home

I By Aijaz Zaka Syed I

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call urging the nation to "shed communal poison" is welcome. However, this mission to save India and the world must begin with his own 'parivar'

August is the month of anniversaries and memories in the subcontinent. This past week saw India and Pakistan celebrate their Independence with the usual fanfare although it was a rather muted affair on the other side of the border. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's party was spoiled by the clamorous calls of Imran Khan and Tahirul Qadri demanding instant revolution.

In India, national celebrations were led by Narendra Modi, something many in India and around the world had hoped they wouldn't see in their lifetime. The Red Fort, built by Mughal emperor Shah Jehan, who also gave us the eternal Taj Mahal and iconic Jama Masjid, saw Modi stand where Jawaharlal Nehru had stood and addressed the nation for long years. The first prime minister sported an elegant sherwani for the occasion and chose the language of departing British for his soaring eloquence.

Modi, who cut his ideological teeth in Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and went on to become its proud pracharak (propagandist), was expected to break from the past. And he did—by choosing his trademark short-sleeves kurta with a polka dotted flaming orange turban and speaking in Hindi.

But that's where the predictability ended. What Modi said in his maiden I-Day address took everyone by surprise. With the Red Fort in the backdrop and majestic Jama Masjid on his left, Modi said the Indians needed to "shed the poison of communalism and casteism." "How long will this continue?" he asked. "We have fought long enough. We have killed enough. Turn back and see. Has anyone gained anything?"

Lamenting that decades of bloodshed had caused deep wounds to 'Bharat Mata', the PM proposed a 10-year moratorium on violence. One couldn't believe one's ears; nor did one's eyes trust what they beheld. What's going on? Is this the same man whose name has been synonymous with the Gujarat 2002? Urging national unity and harmony and stressing the need to build a new, all-embracing India—it was as though it

was Jawaharlal Nehru, and not Narendra Modi, speaking!

What do we make of this change, if it's indeed a change? A classic case of the devil quoting scripture or has Modi had a sudden change of heart, an overnight metamorphosis? Has he lately been reading the Discovery of India since he moved into 7, Race Course Road? Perhaps a copy left behind by Dr Manmohan Singh?

Which reminds me—what a stunning contrast Modi's Red Fort performance made against that of his predecessor! Probably, MJ Akbar, BJP's new spokesperson, is right after all when he suggests that while Dr Singh essentially spoke to his Congress bosses, Modi addressed the nation.

That's not a very charitable thing to say about the former PM, a decent and humble man. But then politics is not really the place for decent and humble men. Otherwise, he wouldn't have ended up holding the can and being blamed for all the mess and corruption of the Congress-UPA rule.

It turns out that Singh had been all along riding a horse whose reins were not in his hands. But enough about the past. The man of the moment is Singh's successor. The effortless transition Modi seems to have made from a universally despised satrap presiding over the most chilling, state-sanctioned pogrom in India's history to the popularly elected prime minister is truly remarkable. More dramatic and breathtaking has been the ostensible shift in his approach and worldview.

ON THE SAME PAGE?

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None of us 'cynical sickulars' (in Hindutva's parlance) in our wildest dreams had imagined that the architect of Gujarat 2002 would one day preach tolerance and plead for purging the nation of "poison of communalism."

But there he was—pure reason, sweetness and light personified. It was a positive vision statement too. Who would contest his argument that we have "fought long enough and killed enough"? India has indeed suf-

ferred enough thanks to “decades of bloodshed.” It was time to end the madness.

It was a brilliant, bravura performance. Indeed, as that eternal cynic who was a regular at the Mughal court at the Red Fort, would put it, “Yehmasail-e-tasawwuf, yehterabayaanGhalib/Tujhay hum walisamajhte, jon-abadakhwarhota (These philosophies you spout with such pompous gravity, Ghalib!/People would think you wise, if you weren’t such a goddamn drunk).

Doubtless, Modi’s argument makes sense. One is almost tempted to take his words seriously. The trouble is, even as the PM has been trying to make a break from the past, projecting himself as a reasonable, pragmatic leader emphasizing time and again on ‘good governance and development of all’ as he promised during his poll campaign, his party and larger ideological parivar have been pushing a different, conflicting agenda.

While he has been signing paeans to inclusive growth and progress, Hindutva rabble-rousers have been dipping into their old bag of tricks, playing the same old games that come naturally to them. The past few weeks and months have seen hundreds of communal riots in sensitive states Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Tactics have been familiar and Muslims always the target.

In the name of increasingly dangerous canard like ‘love jihad’ (Muslim boys preying on Hindu girls to ‘Islamize’ India!) and rumors of forced conversions and rapes, an environment of mass hysteria and hatred is being created against Muslims. Last month, rumors of a Hindu teacher being “gang-raped and converted to Islam” in a madrassa, of all the places, spread like wildfire in UP with the media, politicians and everyone else screaming their heads off about “mass rapes and conversions.”

A state government probe though found it to be a complete hoax with the girl insisting it wasn’t a ‘gang-rape’ but a love affair. The findings were totally ignored by the media though and wagging tongues are yet to fall silent. Meanwhile, UP continues to simmer and fear stalks the land. BJP leaders, members of parliament no less, talk of more Muzffarnagars waiting to happen. On the other hand, the luminaries of Vishwa Hindu Parishad whose Ayodhya campaign helped the BJP grow from a 2-member outfit into the principal party of power talk of Ram temple, Hindu Rashtra (Hindu state) and pushing ahead with the Hindutva agenda. Now that an RSS pracharak is the PM, some suggest, India is already a Hindu state. Ashok Singhal is confident that the ‘ideal RSS swayamsevak’ that Modi is, he

is ready to paint India saffron. Praveen Togadia assures the faithful that the government is set to fulfill the promise of a magnificent temple at the site of Babri Masjid.

On the other hand, saffronization of history and text books has begun in all earnest with the likes of Prof Sudharshan Rao taking charge of the Indian Council for Historical Research.

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Any attempt to change the democratic and secular character of the constitution and polity could have potentially catastrophic consequences for the country. So it’s all very well for Modi to talk of inclusive growth and a 10-year moratorium on communal violence. But who started it in the first place and who still continues to stir the cauldron of religious hatred across the country?

More important, as AmulyaGanguli asked soon after Modi’s I-Day address, will the PM’s own Hindutva allies heed his call for reason?

I do not doubt Modi’s seriousness. He means what he says albeit for selfish reasons. Now that he has won the election, Congress has been wiped out and no serious opposition exists to confront him, the only obstacle to his long, uninterrupted reign—or at least for 10 years—is from within. He wouldn’t want his fellow travelers to upset the apple cart with their excessive missionary zeal and delusional designs.

But whatever the explanation, you cannot have the cake and eat it too. You cannot aspire to be the new messiah of markets and middle class India and allow your brothers in faith and other crazy cousins to run amok.

Ultimately, the proof of the proverbial pudding lies in eating. We all know Modi speaks well, much better than his predecessor and many of his detractors. In the end though actions speak louder than words. Otherwise, as Shakespeare would argue, even the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. Modi’s mission to save India and the world must begin at home—with his own parivar that continues to speak in a thousand tongues. *Source: <http://caravandaily.com/portal/modis-mission-to-reform-india-must-begin-at-home/>*

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Sub.: Prime Minister's Address to Children on Shikshak Divas

Hon'ble Sir,

Shikshak Divas has a sanctity. It has been an occasion i) for teachers to introspect and realize that a lamp lights as long as it burns itself, a teacher can teach only as long as he keeps learning, and ii) for students to express their love and gratitude towards their teachers to strengthen the bond of oneness. The strictures and dictates passed on schools on this shikshak divas overshadowed and dumped that motive. In fact converting shikshak divas into guru parva and forcing students country wide to watch your speech/ interaction live appeared more like an exercise in self projection than in touching tender souls.

Soul is touched by the totality of personality, by the tender and personal touch. Your persona as a power figure, as an authority superior to all others has little for children to emulate, to sublime their ego, arrogance or desire to cheat to gain superiority. You may call your self the first servant but you do not reflect the humiliation and hardship a servant lives. He/ she never gets the round the clock media coverage as you have been getting for the last one year, ever since your Lallan College speech on August 15, 2013.

The children and parents are already exhausted of watching you on TV channels. Forcing them to watch you for additional two hours in specially arranged display systems in schools which do not have adequate number of teachers and classrooms and where half the teachers are heavily underpaid, is not commensurate with the spirit of academics and education. Rather than shadowing the personality of teachers by a virtuous personality, it would be much healthier to let teachers blossom and students grow in an atmosphere of freedom where there are no pressures and no discrimination of gender, caste, religion, language or status.

Internet connectivity to schools is a positive thing but it should not be only for a day in a year. It must also be remembered that internet or TV learning is no substitute for class room teaching. Teacher is the backbone of teaching and he must be sustained with dignity and given freedom to operate. Students are the souls of schools and they must be respected.

On behalf of Sadbhav Mission and our countrymen, I urge you and MHRD to stop this exercise of projecting executive authority as super guide.

Best regards

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THE BOILING FROG SYNDROME..!!



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Put a frog in a vessel of water and start heating the water...

As the temperature of the water rises, the frog is able to adjust its body temperature accordingly...

The frog keeps on adjusting with increase in temperature...

Just when the water is about to reach boiling point, the frog is not able to adjust anymore...

At that point the frog decides to jump out...

The frog tries to jump but is unable to do so, because it lost all its strength in adjusting with the water temperature...

Very soon the frog dies. What killed the frog?

Many of us would say the boiling water...

But the truth is what killed the frog was its own inability to decide when it had to jump out...

We all need to adjust with people and situations, but we need to be sure when we need to adjust and when we need to confront / face...

There are times when we need to face the situation and take the appropriate action...

If we allow people to exploit us physically, mentally, emotionally or financially, they will continue to do so...

We have to decide when to jump... Let us jump while we still have the strength ! Think on It !!

Boiling Frog Syndrome - Have You Become a Boiled Frog?

Don't put up with rising temperatures. Don't be a boiled frog! Are you in a job which doesn't suit you, your skills, your values and personality? Have become so comfortable or used to your current situation that you don't really know how to escape from? Boiling Frog Syndrome - Have You Become a Boiled Frog?