Europe Takes Many, Gulf States Take None

Fleeing from the IS (Islamic State) extremists, refugees from Syria have been welcomed in European nations, while the Gulf nations’ inaction on the Syrian refugee crisis has been termed “shameful.”

By Ashley Fantz, Becky Anderson and Schams Elwazer (CNN)

They have risked their lives to escape war in Syria. Most of Europe has struggled to deal with their masses, and has at least tried to answer a humanitarian call of a magnitude not seen since World War II. But no Syrian refugees have been resettled in Persian Gulf nations like Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, countries with significant financial and political interest in Syria. “Other countries need to do more,” tweeted Nadim Houry, Human Rights Watch deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa. He called those wealthy countries’ inaction on the Syrian refugee crisis “shameful.”

Rights Watch deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa. He called those wealthy countries’ inaction on the Syrian refugee crisis “shameful.”

Officials in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE defend themselves by noting that each has given millions of dollars to the United Nations to help the refugees. The UAE says it’s given more than $530 million in relief aid. They stress that SyrIans have entered Gulf states on visas, and stayed. And they also employ a “What about them?” defense, noting that the Gulf states aren’t the only nations not helping give homes to victims of war. Amnesty International points out that other high-income countries like Russia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea have offered zero resettlement options. The U.N. has been direct. It wants all nations which are developed to open their borders. It’s more than a matter of generosity; it’s also practical, some argue. Gulf citizens have much in common with Syrians. They speak Arabic, like most Syrians. And those states are wealthier than many countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, that have accepted refugees. Some say Saudi Arabia and Qatar have an obligation to help victims of a war.

Mumbai: More than 1,000 Muslim clerics across India have ratified and backed Mumbai-based cleric Mufti Manzar Hasan Khan Asshafi Misbahi’s fatwa against Islamic State (IS), branding the terror group as un-Islamic. Misbahi’s 1,100 page fatwa tries to demolish the claims of IS that it is working on the principles of Islamic law. “IS has claimed that it has set up an Islamic Caliphate. However, for that you need to adhere to Islamic principles. My fatwa speaks about how the IS is un-Islamic and demolishes its claims that it is adhering to the principles of our religion,” said Misbahi.

Seminary Issues Fatwa against Islamic State

By Mohd Faisal Fareed

The Lucknow-based Darul Uloom Nizamia Farangi Mahal, has issued a fatwa against the Islamic State (IS), terming its activities as “anti-Islam”. It also asked the Indian Muslim youth not to fall in the trap of the “false propaganda of the IS”. The fatwa was issued in response to a query by Lucknow resident Sajid Umar Jilani, who wanted to know whether the activities of the IS, including the killing of innocents, are valid in light of Islamic teachings. Jilani also referred to repeated killings of innocents, which are valid in light of Islamic teachings. Jilani also referred to repeated

Misbahi currently runs a madrasa, Darool Uloom Ali Hussaini in Saki Naka in suburban Mumbai. He is known to travel across the country and speak about terrorism being perpetrated in the name of religion. “Our religion does not mistreat animals as criminals. When religion teaches us to mistreat animals you have an entity which beheads, defiles and maims people with impunity. How can that entity call itself Islamic?” said Misbahi.

(Extracted from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/over-1000-clerics-back-fatwa-against-is/)

Over 1,000 Indian Clerics Back Fatwa against IS

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Solar Synergy

A Humble Farmer Reaps a Sunny Harvest

By A Staff Writer

Vijayapura (Previously Bijapur): Farmer Imamsab Tikoti was facing a gloomy future two years ago. His 26-acre farm in Honawad village, 35 kilometres east of Vijayapura, could raise just one crop a year during the monsoons. Often the rains too would give a miss and he would be barely able to manage the cost of farming. There were no rivers around the place and the harsh sun would desiccate the land to dust for most part of the year. Imamsab thought of installing a pump to draw underground water that was available at 400 feet. But Honawad had no electricity and HESCOM (Hubli Electric Supply Company) demanded Rs. 10 lakh to draw lines to the village from a transformer two kilometers away. Imamsab did not have that kind of money to do that.

Dastagir Walikar, a businessman from the same village who lived in Vijayapura, advised him to install solar panels to generate electricity. All that he needed was to install 20 solar panels of 3 ft by 6ft each. The cost of the panels and the installation worked out to Rs. 3.90 lakh. The installation was done two years ago. A borewell energized by the solar power, was drilled in a corner which began drawing water from the ground. Today Imamsab’s farm stands metamorphosed into a lush green field with sugarcane standing tall. Water is available all through the year. Walikar says the 360 sq. ft of solar panels generate 45kWh of power (i.e., 30 to 35 units) on a typical sunny day. There are no additional costs once the panels are installed. Renewable energy descending down from the sun comes free and uninterrupted.

Walikar told Islamic Voice, he has so far been able to install solar power sets in 15 farms in the surrounding villages which together produce 75 kWh of power (around 450 units) a day. She stressed the need for providing Aasra a larger premises to shelter women in distress and wanted such centres to be opened in every district. Sajida Begum, Secretary of Aasra and Tanzemul Mohsinath introduced the work being carried out by the two organization. Prof. Y. Azeez Ahmed, Director, Quwathul Islam Group of Institutions, Mr. Nayaz Ghori, and important social workers attended the function. Cheques amounting to a total sum of Rs. 4 lakhs were distributed by the dignitaries.

Scholarships by Aasra Women’s Helpline

Bengaluru: Aasra Women’s Helpline distributed scholarships to around 200 students on September 12 at an impressive function attended by Mr. Roshan Baig, Minister for Information, Urban infrastructure and Hajj, at Eidgah e Jadeed, tannery Road. The students included nearly 130 girls and 30 handicapped students in 70 college students. Ms. Bilkis Banu, Chairperson, Karnataka State Minorities Commission, said Aasra is doing yeoman service in counseling and rehabilitating women in distress.
Gopalakrishnan is not a trained architect. He is not an artist. Yet he comes up with the most beautiful designs for mosques, so beautiful, his name has become synonymous with mosque buildings across Kerala.

By Shafeeq Hudavi
(TwoCircles.net)

Govindan Gopalakrishnan, 78, a resident of Thiruvananthapuram, has been constructing mosques all his life. But he is no ordinary contractor. He credits his ability to draw sketches for mosques as “bestowed by God.” For almost all mosque functionaries across the state, his name comes to mind when a new mosque is proposed or an old one is to be renovated.

Kottankal in Kottayam district, Beemappally, Kaduvappally, Alamcode Pally and Karunagappally in Kollam district are few of his famous works. The master designer is now busy with the construction works of Ilippakkulam mosque near Kattanam in Kollam district.

But what brought him into limelight was his first work that dates back to 1960s when he was a school going child, while he drew a sketch for the dome of the famous Palayam Juma Masjid in Thiruvananthapuram. Several philanthropic businessman and even government officials decided to renovate the Palayam Juma Masjid as the earlier structure was then almost 200 years old.

Gopalakrishnan’s father was a contractor, whose blueprints of the buildings he constructed, prompted Gopalakrishnan to make a few sketches, which in turn, impressed Kerala’s chief architect. They worked in tandem to complete the mosque as per his designs. When the renovated, re-constructed mosque was inaugurated few years later by the then President Dr Zakir Hussain, Muslims were hooked by his style – domes, minarets, Islamic calligraphy. All showing immense influence of Indo-Islamic architecture.

Some are not white, but definitely sport colours unlikely to be found in traditional Kerala architecture: earthen colours and buildings hallmarked by sloping tile roofs to face heavy monsoon showers.

Gopalakrishnan says he got rid of the local architectural tradition as he “sees the world as one.” He follows Indo-Saracenic model in architecture. He has not visited structures like the Taj Mahal, but refers to the famous books, ‘Indian Architecture: Islamic Period’ and ‘Indian Architecture: Hindu Period’ by Percy Brown.

“ ‘I could easily complete these mosques as I was stuck with the spiritual beauty of the mosques. The ability to draw sketches for mosque is bestowed on me by God,” says Gopalakrishnan, who dropped out of college while pursuing diploma in engineering owing to the financial problems after his father fell ill.

Future Plans
His work has earned him so much name and fame, that he is into designing his next mosque soon, the first outside his home state, at Dindigul in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. In fact, when TwoCircles.net contacted him on phone, Gopalkrishnan was returning home after a meeting with mosque committee at Dindigul.

“If things go as expected, I will soon start construction of the 102nd mosque in my life,” says the contractor.

Ask him about training, he clarifies: “I am a contractor, neither an engineer nor an architect. I had started working with my father K Govindan since my childhood. As I said earlier, God bestowed this skill, I fine-tuned it slowly from experience.”

K Govindan was one of the eminent contractors in Thiruvananthapuram. Gopalakrishnan, who was interested in drawing, utilised all opportunities to work with his father and started to draw sketches for the mosques. But he also owes much to T.P. Kuttamy, first chief engineer of Kerala when the state was formed. “Kuttamy Sahib

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A Campaigner Against Darkness

Babar Ali is barely 22 and is the founder of a school. At 16 he was named the youngest headmaster in the world and a role model for the youth by the media. But Babar is simultaneously studying for his Masters degree in English from Kalyani University at Berhampore’s (West Bengal) Krishnath College.

Babar gets back from his college at 2-30 pm, takes his position as the headmaster of the Anand Shiksha Niketan, the school he founded in 2002 in the backyard of his thatched house in Bhabta village of Murshidabad. His father Mohamed Naseeruddin is a jute-seller. Nearly two-thirds of the Murshidabad population consists of Muslims. Illiteracy is rampant. Most children help their families in farming. Yet Babar was privileged in that his father sent him to a regular school where he received formal education.

Tempestuous Zeal

But even while he was in school, he was pained to see that children of his age had not seen the inside of a school and knew next to nothing about reading and counting. He began to gather the locality kids in an open court in the backyard and teach them whatever he would have learnt in the school.

Some girls who were taught by Babar and had managed to reach degree stage volunteered to teach at his school. Gradually, Babar’s school became popular in the area. Children would return from farms to gather at the school to learn the basics. He also got some help from the Ramakrishna Mission and other philanthropists. Firoza Begum, the founder of a school and knew next to nothing of his thatched house in Bhabta village of Murshidabad. His sister was her first student.

The Karnataka Government introduced a chapter on him in the 9th standard textbook. Ninety per cent of the emails and help he receives are from Karnataka. Babar said ‘there was painful struggle behind his success story, nothing can stand against determination, insight and zeal.’ He was a special invitee of CII and had flown in from Kolkata.

Babar says teaching was his passion. Quoting Rabindranath Tagore, he says, ‘A guru ignites the mind and removes the darkness from one’s existence’. He urges the youth to take up teaching and light up lives of the people.

Several philanthropists have helped him to construct four rooms, each 23 ft x 16 feet, and some toilets for the Shankarpada School. No fee is charged from the student. However, they have to arrange their books and uniform. He says he is determined to remain a teacher lifelong and would dedicate his life to spread the light of education among the people.

A Murshidabad lad sets up a school for 800 children in a village.

Invited by CII

Speaking to an audience of 400 educators at the 16th Summit of Quality Education organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at Bengaluru on September 22, Babar Ali told them that Swami Vivekananda was his role model. The Karnataka Government introduced a chapter on him in the 9th standard textbook. Ninety per cent of the emails and help he receives are from Karnataka. Babar said ‘there was painful struggle behind his success story, nothing can stand against determination, insight and zeal.’ He was a special invitee of CII and had flown in from Kolkata.

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Mobile Urdu Library Launched

The Karnataka State Urdu Academy launched its first mobile Urdu Library in Bengaluru on September 28. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah flagged off the library on its maiden trip behind the stately Vidhana Soudha, the headquarters of the State Government. The Library will tour the State and enable the Urdu book lovers to purchase the Urdu books published by the Academy, NCPUL and Urdu authors and writers. According to Dr. Fouzia Wajid, Chairperson of the Academy, the Library is a customized Maxi cab with shelves on the two side carrying around 10,000 books. The facility cost the Academy nearly Rs. 15 lakh. It has a stretchable display stand for books which can be taken out at its stations.

(BY A STAFF WRITER)
Muslims Not Doing Enough to Fight IS: Jordan’s Queen

Jordan: Queen Rania of Jordan said that moderate Muslims were not doing enough to fight against IS extremists and their diabolical ideology. Speaking at a major French business gathering in Jouy-en-Josas near Paris, the 44-year-old Queen said that helping the Middle East’s youth was crucial in the fight against the extremist group, which controls swathes of Iraq and Syria on Jordan’s doorstep. “We are facing a time of great peril. Daesh, or the so-called Islamic State, continues to spread its diabolical ideology,” she said. “Moderate Muslims the world over are not doing enough to win the ideological struggle at the heart of this battle,” she noted. Focusing on the youth of the Middle East, many of whom are unemployed or forced to flee their countries, was a necessity, she said. According to the queen, some 100 million jobs must be created in the region by 2020, to avoid disaffected young people from joining the ranks of jihadists. “Failure is not an option because if we fail in the face of these extremists and if they win, the region will quickly be devastated.”

Dr Mahathir Tells Muslims to Embrace Differences

Kuala Lumpur: Former Malaysian prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Muslims to embrace differences of opinions. Dr Mahathir, known for his progressive views on Islam, noted that Muslims have the tendency to amplify their differences instead of their common goal, and said this was one of the main factors that divides the Muslim community and makes them weak. He said it was not the right of any Muslim to declare those who do not share similar views as un-Islamic, noting that as long as they hold to the “ikraq” (pledge), they are considered Muslims. “We as Muslims, whether we are Shia or Sunni, we read out the kalimah shahadah…we proclaim Allah to be our God and Muhammad as his messenger. As long as they hold to this ikraq, they are considered Muslims,” he said. “We do not have the right to declare someone un-Islamic just because they think differently, dress differently or do not look like us,” he added.

Trains from Makkah-Madinah by 2016

Jeddah: Buses will no longer be used for transporting pilgrims to and from Makkah and Madinah when the Haramain Highspeed Railway commences operation by December next year. A total of 35 trains will be used to transport two million pilgrims, in addition to millions of Umrah pilgrims.

Mass Marriage Proposed

Bengaluru: The Sheriff Charitable Foundation will organize mass marriage of members from 30 poor and deserving families in and around Bengaluru in November. Exact dates and venue will be notified later. The Foundation will gift some essential items for the married couples to lead their lives and will also organize dinner. Girls and boys who are already engaged or the families which would like to avail of the opportunity, should contact on the following Phone numbers: Bazme Niswan 080-22860023, Feroze Estate & Properties 98450-180180, Humane touch 99025-272244, Anjuman Khuddam ul Muslimeen 080-25596200.

Boko Haram Cannot Read Quran: Army Official

Abuja: Blasting Boko Haram militants, a Nigerian senior military official has claimed that the insurgents do not practice the religion that they claim to. Committing atrocities in its name. “Most of the Boko Haram terrorists captured by Nigerian Military cannot read the Qur’an, some of them cannot even recite the first chapter—Surah Al-Fatiha, yet they claim they want to establish an ‘Islamic State’, acting director Army Public Relations, Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, wrote on Facebook. Considering the acts of extremist group’s acts as “ironically shameful”, the senior military official revealed that “when the Nigerian Military captured their bases and training camps, they never found Qur’an, Hadith or other Islamic literature.” “What they found were ammunitions, condoms and all sort of drugs including sex enhancing drugs in their enclaves at Sambisa Forest, Bornor, North Eastern Nigeria,” officer Usman said. Usman’s Facebook post was shared hundreds of times by his followers who asserted that the terrorist group tarnishes the image of Islam.

Fathiha, yet they claim they want to extend our Jewish fellow citizens my warmest sympathies on their day of celebration,” said the mufti of Tatarstan, Kamil Hazrat Samigullin, at the roundtable. He also condemned the actions of jihadists as unrepresentative of Islam.

Kazan: Muslim and Christian faith leaders congratulated Russian Jews on the rededication of a 100-year-old synagogue 500 miles east of Moscow. The well-wishers gathered at an interfaith roundtable in Kazan, the capital of Russia’s predominately-Muslim state of Tatarstan. Limmud FSU, the Russian language branch of the Jewish educational outreach group, organized the event. “A day of celebration for the Jews of Tatarstan is a festive day for all in the state, and I wish to extend our Jewish fellow citizens my warmest sympathies on their day of celebration,” said the mufti of Tatarstan, Kamil Hazrat Samigullin, at the roundtable. He also condemned the actions of jihadists as unrepresentative of Islam.
Kenya Muslims Invite Christians to Friday Prayer

Nairobi: Setting an example of interfaith harmony, Kenya Muslim leaders hosted their Christian counterparts during Friday prayer on September 18, in Nairobi's Jamia mosque for the first time in the country history. “No human is entitled to dehumanize another human being just because he or she follows a different religion,” Sheikh Abdullatif Essajee, a member of Jamia mosque management, said during Friday sermon, Standard Digital reported. “Let us work together in harmony despite our religious differences.” The leaders, drawn from various Christian denominations in the country, joined thousands of Muslims in the mosque to listen to the Friday sermon and observe the prayers. The event was organized a few days ahead of the International Day of Peace by the United Nations to promote peace among communities amid threats of divisions and violence. Paying the visit back, Muslim leaders are expected to visit various churches and other religious institutions in the coming days to reciprocate the mosque visit. Speaking to Muslims after the prayers Daniel Juma, a Catholic religious leader and CEO of Global Peace Foundation, said the move by Christian leaders to visit the mosque was a gesture of goodwill to boost cooperation among Kenyans of different faiths. “We are moving away from merely tolerating each other as Kenyans of different faiths and instead actively cooperating with each other to make our communities better. Building understanding and trust is the necessary first step,” he said. Interreligious Council of Kenya’s Paul Chepkwony, who is from Seventh Day Adventist Church, urged Kenyans to live and work together peacefully, regardless of their religious differences, saying religion should not be a dividing factor. http://www.onislam.net/english/news/africa/494031-kenya-muslims-invite-christians-to-friday-prayer.html

Muslim Clerics in East Africa Pledge to Fight Extremism

Kwale (Kenya): About 300 Muslim scholars and imams from eastern African countries said they would join their respective governments in combating terrorism. The Sufi scholars, from Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, vowed to fight extremist teachings and terrorist activities after meeting for two days at a conference in Kenya’s coastal county of Kwale. U.S.-based Somali scholar Mohamud Elmi said there has to be a counter narrative to fight extremist views in schools. “There are issues that help people to be misled. For example, if they do not get a job, social justice, they have to get proper education, the syllabus must be corrected and removed from doctrines that believes in extremism,” Elmi said. “We have to put in place a religious syllabus that supports the people of different faiths and values,” he added. Elmi called on Muslims in the region to work with their governments to squash terrorism, which has claimed the lives of thousands in Somalia and neighbouring countries.

Muslims Open Doors of Janesville's First Mosque

Breaking barriers in the community, Muslims have opened the doors of the first mosque in Janesville, in southern Wisconsin, USA, introducing true Islam to visitors. “People are worried that Muslims are some type of a threat,” mosque caretaker, Salih Erschen, told Gazetteextra. “If they don’t know about the faith and the practices, ideas and what Muslims are focused on in life, then that causes a bit a fear. So I always encourage Muslims to open their doors and invite people in and talk about what our faith is and share. That’s been my approach, to try and be more and more open about it.” Erschen hosted the public gathering to help educate the community about Islam. The open-door policy worked well after several residents experienced Islamic culture firsthand as Erschen shared a short message about social injustice and Allah’s role in the world. Visitors included Christians from nearby churches who were curious about the mosque. “We have an interest in Islam, but not an interest in becoming Muslim,” Rev. David King of Christ Presbyterian Church on Wright Road said, speaking for himself and his wife, Priscilla King.

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Europe Takes Many, Gulf States Take None

in which those nations have been involved through their financial support of rebel groups that have fought Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian civil war began in 2011 at the fever pitch of the Arab Spring revolutions that deposed dictators in Egypt and Libya, amid optimism that the people could, if they mobilized, win previously unheard-of freedoms. Protesters gathered to try to vocalize that dream, asking the Assad government to be more open. Al-Assad met that expression with violence, and as months went by, the conflict grew more complicated, with foreign fighters and people of varying desires thrown into a very messy conflation. ISIS exploited that chaos and moved in, killing and torturing anyone who opposed the extreme Islamists. Turkey has taken in nearly 2 million refugees; Lebanon more than 1.1 million; Jordan at least 629,000. Egypt has played a role, too, welcoming more than 130,000, and even Iraq, a country still ravaged by violence, has accepted nearly 250,000 refugees. More have likely crossed into those countries without being counted. It's possible that one of the reasons the Gulf states haven't been welcoming is that the concept of a refugee doesn't even exist there. Legally, they're not obligated to help. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and other Gulf states are among the few nations in the world that have not signed a 1951 U.N. treaty on refugees. That's a key legal document that defines what a refugee is and spells out their rights and states' legal obligations. But since Gulf states haven't signed the treaty, any victim of war would need to meet the same standards as anyone else to obtain a visa. Gulf states are hesitant to welcome refugees because they are concerned about what it would mean for their nations' security, said Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a retired professor from United Arab Emirates University. He told CNN that there's a belief that accepting Syrians who are fleeing ISIS only appases the terror group. It would feed "into the violence in the region, which is already the most violent region on Earth," he said. The Gulf states are the most stable nations in the region, he explained, and getting too involved could risk that. It's a "shortcoming" of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states, he said, that they don't have laws that allow for more "elaborate refugee programs" like those of European nations.

Promoting mutual values of peace and acceptance, North America's largest Muslim convention hosted a special interfaith banquet, last month, inviting people of difference faiths calling for joint action against racial and religious intolerance. "The heart of all religions is to make peace, to protect peace," said Tawakkol Karman, a Yemeni journalist, politician and human rights activist, addressing attendees at the 18th annual ISNA CIOOC (the Council of Islamic Organizations in Greater Chicago) Interfaith Unity Banquet. Karman, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work in the nonviolent struggle for women's rights in Yemen, said religion isn't just about prayers and rituals, rather it is about mutual values of justice, peace, love, coexistence, good governance and fighting for equality. Dozens of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious and community leaders came together at the Sept. 6 banquet during ISNA's 52nd annual Convention in Chicago promoting mutual values of peace and acceptance.

It's a "shortcoming" of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states, he said, that they don't have laws that allow for more "elaborate refugee programs" like those of European nations.

And a special interfaith banquet hosted by ISNA Chicago last month was an effort to push back "against the narrative that Muslims represent terrorism and extremist ideologies," said U.S. Representative Andre Carson, one of only two Muslims in the Congress. The Indiana Democrat said that Muslims need to present a positive image to American society. "A lot of terrorism activities are thwarted because Muslims are working with the law enforcement agencies and they are part of the law enforcement agencies. But you never hear about these stories," he said. "America is ours, and until we dismiss the negative notions of what it means to be a Muslim, we will still face this kind of discrimination across the country." Carson was referring to the temporary detention of a Muslim student from suburban Dallas who was pulled from class after he showed a homemade clock to a teacher who mistook it for a bomb. Ahmed Mohamed was questioned by the principal and police, then was handcuffed and taken to a police station. As Ahmed's story spread across social media, Twitter erupted with support for him. President Barack Obama invited him to the White House, and Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg posted that he wanted to meet him. A NASA scientist asked Ahmed to give him a call in a couple of years for a job opportunity. [Extracted from http://www.voanews.com/content/muslims-counter-negative-image-united-states/2960802.html]
That human beings’ seemingly insatiable greed is rapidly destroying the earth’s delicate ecology, and even threatening to destroy the earth itself, is something that is now widely recognized. But this realization has triggered little by way of practical measures to address what is literally a life-and-death question for all life-forms on earth.

Responses to this crisis often take the form of proposing technological solutions—for instance, advocating shift to renewable energy instead of fossil fuels, tree-planting drives, recycling paper, and so on. While all these may be valuable, they are not adequate in the face of the magnitude of the crisis.

Hedonism fuels greed

The ecological crisis stems hegemonic worldview of Hedonism. According to Hedonism, the purpose of human life is to maximize sensual stimulation, encapsulated by the alluring slogan ‘Eat, drink and make merry!’ Life, for hedonists, is—or, rather, ought to be—one long, non-stop party.

Hedonism defines you by what you have and consume, rather than by what you are. The more ‘good’ things you own and ‘enjoy’ the more ‘successful’ you are. Hedonism demands ever-increasing consumption of goods and services, and this means depletion of the earth’s limited resources. Hedonism, now gone completely berserk, is playing havoc with the global ecology, as this timely book wants us to recognize. The book reminds us that the ecological crisis is rooted in the crisis of worldviews, and therefore, that its solution must be rooted in a transformation of our understanding of our place in the cosmos. Mere technical solutions cannot do much.

Ecological Sanity

The contributors to this volume represent a diverse range of religious and spiritual perspectives, including Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, and secular humanist. Despite their differing beliefs about the reality of the cosmos, their spiritual commitments lead them to argue for pretty much the same things, a remarkable testimony to the importance of interfaith dialogue and solidarity to work together for the common cause of protecting the global environment, an issue that intimately concerns us all. Working for ecological sanity can also become a powerful means to bring people of different faiths to bond together—a desperate need today in a world that is being torn apart by bloody conflicts in the name of religion and ideology.

Religions can, of course, be diversely understood, often in very contradictory ways. Some interpret them to justify the pillage of the environment, others to have less of an impact on the earth and its environment. The consciousness that religion dissuades one from being greedy can work as a powerful means to promote lifestyles less damaging to the environment.

Theistic religions stress the idea of God being a trustee of the earth and its environment. The consciousness that religion dissuades one from being greedy can work as a powerful means to promote lifestyles less damaging to the environment.

Hindu Temple Hosts `Eid Prayer

In a show of religious coexistence among adherents of different faiths, Mumbai Hindus offered Muslims a place to perform ‘Eid prayers at a Ganpati pandal, a temporary structure for Hindu religious/social ceremonies, due to the shortage of prayer spaces in the city.

“During Ramadan four years ago, which coincided with the Ganesh festival, we had allowed Eid prayers inside the pandal,” Sangh member Santosh Nayak told DNA. “It may be that some people find this surprising, but it is entirely normal for us, Hindus and Muslims in Mumbai have always lived in unity here. “There is no discrimination. Hindus too participate in Muslim festivities.”

On Friday, September 25, the Seva Sangh Ganeshotsav Mandal in Colaba hosted ‘Eid prayer at the Ganpati pandal. The Hindu leaders claimed that about 1,300 Muslims prayed in the Pandal hall due to shortage of prayer space. The goodwill gesture of offering place and taking part in ‘Eid celebrations was welcomed by fellow Muslims.

Hedonism or maximization of sensual stimulation lies at the core of the modern lifestyle thereby leading to stress on more consumption and depletion of earth’s resources.

Increased consumption of goods and services, and this means depletion of the earth’s limited resources. Hedonism, now gone completely berserk, is playing havoc with the global ecology, as this timely book wants us to recognize. The book reminds us that the ecological crisis is rooted in the crisis of worldviews, and therefore, that its solution must be rooted in a transformation of our understanding of our place in the cosmos. Mere technical solutions cannot do much.

Abstemiousness

These teachings have very vital ecological consequences. Consciousness of the fact that God is aware of our every action can be a powerful means for us to transform our lifestyles and to become more ecologically-intelligent. If you know that God does not want you to be greedy and that rampant greed will work against you in the Hereafter, you may be dissuaded to buy that smart-looking, heavily-discounted pair of shoes that you don’t really need. This consciousness may result in putting off a bulb in a room when you step out, turning off a leaking tap or being content with just a single ballpoint pen rather than a pack. This book is a powerful reminder of the fact that the ecological crises cannot be countered unless individuals and groups transform their worldviews and learn to restrain their greed. This involves re-thinking our understandings of ‘development’ and ‘progress’ at a very fundamental level, and, beyond that, the very purpose of our life on earth. Ultimately, then, it is a spiritual issue.

Theistic religions stress the idea of God being a trustee of the earth and its environment. These teachings have very vital ecological consequences. Catholicism’s stigmatization of the body and one should be concerned about the reality of the cosmos, their spiritual commitments lead them to argue for pretty much the same things, a remarkable testimony to the importance of interfaith dialogue and solidarity to work together for the common cause of protecting the global environment, an issue that intimately concerns us all. Working for ecological sanity can also become a powerful means to bring people of different faiths to bond together—a desperate need today in a world that is being torn apart by bloody conflicts in the name of religion and ideology.

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Finding a Way out of the Faith-Reason Conflict

Losing My Religion
A Call for Help
By Jeffrey Lang
Amna Publications
10760-Tucker Street
Beltsville, Maryland, US 20705-2223
500 pages,
Price: Not Stated
Reviewed by Maqbool Ahmed Siraj

The book under review is a passionate plea and a fervent call from a neo-Muslim for use of reason in interpreting Islam for the current age and societies. The book follows two previous works from the author namely Even Angels Ask and Struggling to Surrender and tries to find answers to queries they generated among a wide variety of mainly young readers. A Mathematics professor in State University of Kansas, Jeffrey Lang is unsparing in his acknowledgement of the dilemmas faced by Muslims living in modern societies, particularly the immigrant ones and their progeny, in the West and makes a sincere attempt to relate the sacred text to the context of its revelation and ways to adapt them to contemporary societies. Dilemmas are not unique to the Muslim immigrants to the United States alone. They stare into the face of Muslims exposed to modern education, values and environment all across the globe. The difference is only a matter of degree in which one has to grapple with them.

Dilemmas that dog second generation Muslims and converts to Islam in America are not unique to them alone. Faith-reason conflict perturbs every rationally-thinking youth everywhere.

Disconnection
The author’s major worry is that Mosques, Islamic Centers and Muslim organizations are dominated by immigrants and rooted in their cultures. Though over 70 cent of the American Muslims were born to their immigrant parents on American soil, they stay clear of these erring on conservative side while interpreting Islam. It manifests in assigning a subordinate role to women, or insisting on physical sighting of moon to herald the new lunar month or extending the prohibition on intake of alcohol to spray perfumes. While such conservatism resonates with the general masses steeped in orthodoxy in the Middle East or South Asia, it is met with repulsion, nay repugnance, in the West where law, Constitution and State—all rooted in modern rationality—shapes and regulates in the lives of an individual. Most mosques having been set up by immigrant Muslims generally bar women from their boards and management. Friday sermons harp upon conformity with cultural traits inherited from countries of origin and the clerics do not cease singing paeans of its simplicity and coherence. Local new converts to Islam feel alienated from these mosques and communities and are compelled to revert to their original faiths or ways of living. The Mosque puts enormous stress on tradition and conformance, whereas the larger culture extols rationalism and individualism. Muslims revere convention and rules of behavior that are upheld as eternal and immutable, while the mainstream promotes adaptation and innovation. Western schools exhort children to challenge and to question, but the Mosque teaches Muslim children not to question their religious traditions. Of course, every religion in the West faces the same tensions. But in case of Islam, the traditions have been idealized to such an extent that it leaves little scope for reinterpretation and adaptation and hence much room for the creation of doubt in the minds of Muslims youth.

Irrational Theology
Lang builds narratives that are candid and objective and etch to broad relief the immensity of the problem caused by the irrational theology which is promoted by clerics in destinations such as Chicago, Portland or New Jersey. The woeful lack of discussion on traditions and conventions which barely have any connection with the Quran, the only authentic source of Islamic precepts and practices, make the trajectory end up in a blind alley. This is a painful situation for any individual with average rationality. A major source of disillusionment for the youth are practices deduced from Hadith literature, which at best is rooted in 7th century Arabian customs or dogmas that bear no relevance to 21st century American—or for that matter the entire Western—society. Taking a cue from these, the anti-Islamic websites paint an entirely负荷some picture of Islam to the youth thereby drawing them away from the imported faith of their parents.

How Authentic?
A major part of the book is devoted to critiquing Hadith literature which encumbers the Muslim societies with rigorous regulations and doctrines bearing not even a mention in the Quran, the only revealed source of faith. He finds himself in an unenviable position when faced with Hadith that talk of women being inferior to men in their intelligence and their righteousness and hell being crammed with more of them. If

Immigrants take along with them an Islam steeped in their culture and their native prejudices which hardly gel with an educational system which encourages questioning.

Dilemmas that dog second generation Muslims and converts to Islam in America are not unique to them alone. Faith-reason conflict perturbs every rationally-thinking youth everywhere.

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Culpable Saudis

Saudi authorities must take the blame for the catastrophe

The tragedy that struck the Hajj pilgrims at Mina on September 24 has led to loss of 717 precious lives. The fall of the crane within the sanctified sanctuary of Masjid e Haram earlier this season, extinguished 107 lives. The twin tragedies point to incompetent handling of Hajj conclave by the Saudi authorities. A government that extracts a huge fee for pilgrimage by appointing a bevy of maulims and benefits from businesses (hotels, transports, shopping) must be held accountable for safety and security of pilgrims too. But such is the secrecy maintained by the Saudi regime that it does not allow the world comity of Muslims to question its administration of Hajj and year-round Umrahs. It is time questions are asked from the Saudi authorities to come clean on as to what led to the catastrophic accident.

Early reports in Lebanon's Arabic Daily Al-Diyar suggest that a convoy of 350 personnel providing security cover to Prince Muhammad bin Salman (the son of the presiding monarch of Saudi Arabia) led to sudden distraction of the security personnel regulating the crowds at Mina and diversion of the flow of the pilgrims thereby leading to crush. The iron curtains that guard the Saudi affairs do not allow independent observers to ascertain the causes behind. The outcome of the investigation by the promised commission of inquiry by King Salman is least likely to come with any credible findings as Saudi authorities are better trained in hushing up facts rather than acknowledgement of errors and lapses. King’s government can hardly do any wrong, is the time-honoured rule of the State.

A tragedy of this proportion was least likely to happen at Mina, given the elaborate arrangements made and infrastructure provided by the Saudi regime. The site, which has witnessed several stampedes earlier, has seen been widened, provides access to the symbolic satans in several layers and allows only a single direction flow of pilgrims. The recurrence of the crush—after a gap of several years—therefore calls for looking for causes much deeply. Unless some distraction of humongous proportion happened—as is being alleged—the tragedy could not have taken place.

The tragedy also emphasizes the need for better orientation of the pilgrims at the destination of their origin. They must be made aware that stoning of satan at Mina is merely a symbolic act and does not call for taking it to be real. By casting the stones at pillars, they are mere replicating the act of Hazrat Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in a symbolic way, rather than on the ground. The act of fatwa came from diverse Muslim religious scholars from the Saudi regime the need to induct expertise from diverse sources and countries to ensure a safer, secure and sanitized Hajj. Their current management has enough loopholes and fails to measure up to standards of international conclude.

Kicking up Chimeras

Demography has come to be used as an effective tool for communal polarisation as could be seen by the release of the Census 2011 figures based on religious groups. The timing was to suit the Assembly elections in Bihar where the BJP is fighting a do-or-die battle to defeat the JD(U)-RJD-Congress's Grand Secular Alliance. The Press Information Bureau (PIB), under the Union Ministry of Information, found no qualms in giving the statistics a communal twist with most Hindi dailies coming out with scary headlines trumpeting ‘huge rise in number of Muslims’.

It was not the first time a Government agency was doing it. The 2001 Census figures on religious population were released in 2005 and it similarly spoke of ‘Muslim population going up phenomenally’. The mandarins briefing the information heads had not bothered to check the facts properly. The rise then in 2000 was due to the fact that previous Census (i.e., 1991) had left out counting of heads in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir, two states with sizeable Muslim population due to insurgency in J&K and agitation in Assam. Obviously the number would go up substantially when figures from a Muslim majority region like Kashmir and sizeable numbers from Assam get added to the overall figures. It was only after considerable brouhaha that the Registrar of Census issued a clarificatory note leading to subsiding of the controversy.

The BJP-led Central Administration was obviously interested in its phobia-fanning foot soldiers in RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini kicking up the chimeera of Muslims outnumbering the Hindus and succeeded to some extent. Its foul-mouthed trumpeters were soon on their feet warning Hindus of their extinction and India turning into an ‘Islamistan’, something that even 650 years of Muslim rule could not achieve.

Surprisingly, the Central Government is averse to releasing caste data from the Census and is sitting tight over it for considerable period as it is all likely to evoke demands for readjustment—or even enhancement—of reservation quota for the SCs, STs, and the Other Backward Classes (OBC). Looked at from non-partisan angle, the Census data has nothing to set off alarms. It is true that Muslims’ rate of growth is slightly higher than other communities, but it is also a fact that it has come down and coming down much faster (4.9 per cent) than the Hindus (3.5 per cent). Similarly, the population decline is faster in populous states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar than other states. It is also to be seen that Muslim rate of growth was higher in states where Hindu rate of growth too was higher and Muslim rate of growth was lower where Hindu rate of growth was lower. This can easily be explained in terms of efficacy of development and welfare by Government machinery. The fact that Muslim growth rate is on par with the Hindus in southern states implies that development and better health, nutrition, law and order for people can result in people being amenable to adoption of birth control measures and restricting the family size to their ability to manage it.

There cannot be a greater baloney that accusing the Muslims of pursuing a collective plan to alter the demographic structure of India with an eye over power. How could a community which cannot agree on a basic plan of modern education, reform in madrassa syllabus, amending its Personal Law on modern lines, can achieve a consensus on boosting its number secretly?
Bihar Elections

By Anish Ankur

A five-phase election schedule has been announced for Bihar Assembly. What was earlier thought to be a bipolar contest in the State with Nitish Kumar and Narendra Modi leading the two prominent fronts has given way to five fronts with rebels and dissidents grouping on hurriedly gathered platforms. But NDA and what is being touted as Grand Secular Alliance remain the main rivals.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Narendra Modi finalized seat-sharing talks. The NCP and Mulayam Singh led(SP) case is working out seat-sharing talks. Both were unsatisfied with the seat sharing arrangement. The NCP led NCP and Mulayam Singh led-SP are now fighting independently.

Since the election is round the corner, it is unlikely that the resentment will come to the fore and muddy the course.

But most dramatic political development happened in Grand Secular Alliance where two of its non-NDA partners. Senior leader of HAM(S), Devendra Prasad Yadav left the party accusing Manjhi of abject surrender before the BJP President Amit Shah. BJP’s unilateral decision of announcing the name of first phase candidates will be fighting on the secular symbol. Heavily laden with minor allies, this 'Front' had difficult time in accommodating demands.

Ideology has taken a backseat and alliances have been contrived on the basis of personal equations among leaders.

Idea has taken a backseat and alliances have been contrived on the basis of personal equations among leaders. Many sitting MLAs of JD(U) have been denied ticket. It has created a lot of internal squabbles within the party. Ticket distribution process triggered a dissent as well as revolt in almost every party. Rebels will be the thorn in the side for all of them. Most rebels belong to the ruling JD(U). JD(U) conceded 38 sitting seats to the RJD and the Congress. The Party is facing rebellion by the MLAs who have been denied ticket for one reason or the other.

Rebelling Sons-in-law

The LJP leader and MP Ram Singh and son-in-law of Ramvillas Paswan, Anil Kumar Sadhu, President of Dalit Sena, turned rebels accusing father-son duo of selling tickets to those with moneybags. Same charge has been leveled against Upendra Kushwaha’s RSLP who have been denied ticket for one reason or the other.

MIM's advent introduces imponderable in the Bihar's electoral scene.

Interestingly Lalu Prasad’s new son-in-law who happens to be the grandson of Mulayam Singh, has been entrusted to campaign for this anti-Lalu front. Left block comprising six parties of CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML), FB, RSP and SUCI(C) made their seat adjustment amicably compared to other parties but friendly fight at some seats cannot be ruled out.

MIM Imponderables

The All India Majlis-e-Ittihadul Muslimeen (MIM), has announced its decision to contest Bihar elections. Akhtarul Imam will be the leading face of MIM in Bihar. It is fielding 24 candidates in Seemanchal region comprising districts of Katihar, Kishanganj, Araria and Purnia. MIM’s entry in the poll has thrown a challenge to secular alliance. This can pose serious danger for JD (U)-RJD-Congress combine particularly in Seemanchal. High visibility in Bihar media is growing as the elections are drawing closer. Reacting on Owaisi’s entry political analyst Irshadul Haque says, “Since MIM is a new party how it will influence the Muslim votes is a matter of guess. This possibility cannot be ruled out that presence of Owaisi in poll will take some time to settle.

Eye on Raghupur

A lot of eyes are riveted over Raghupur seat, a bastion of Lalu Yadav. In the 2010 Assembly election Lalu’s wife Rabri Devi was defeated by JD(U)'s Satish Prasad. Now Lalu’s younger son Tejaswi Yadav has been fielded from Raghupur by the RJD. Satish has moved to the BJP and has now been given ticket. All that is evident is that Lalu Prasad is repeating the mistake of 2014 Parliamentary election. BJP is following the strategy of wooing the Yadav votebank and is fielding at least one Yadav candidate in every district of Bihar.

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But most dramatic political development happened in Grand Secular Alliance where two of its expected partners, Ram Vilas Paswan-led LJP has been assigned 40 and Upendra Kushwaha’s RSLP 23. Due to hard bargaining from ex-CM Jitanram Manjhi, HAM(S) was able to bag 20 seats. Five of the HAM(S) candidates will be fighting on the BJP symbol.

Heartburn

But there is a lot of heartburn in the NDA. The LJP is not happy with the new arrangement. There are murmurings of protest among the non-BJP NDA partners. Senior leader of HAM(S), Devendra Prasad Yadav left the party accusing Manjhi of abject surrender before the BJP President Amit Shah. BJP’s unilateral decision of announcing the name of first phase candidates invited criticism from these junior allies who have accused the BJP of ‘big brotherly, arrogant attitude’.

Mim’s Fields 2 Muslims

Despite its claim to giving adequate representation to Muslims, the BJP has fielded only two Muslim candidates out of the 153 seats, i.e., Saba Zafar and Abdul Rahman. While Zafar is the saffron party’s sitting member, Rahman has been fielded from Kochadhaman in Kishanganj district.

None of three prominent Muslim faces of BJP, who switched over to JD(U), Jamshed Ashraf, Monazar Hasan and Sabir Ali have been fielded by the JDU. The BJP minority cell had recommended five names but none of the names appeared in the first lists. Now BJP as part of a strategy the Muslim dominated constituencies or such seats where minorities have significant presence has allotted to the alliance partners.

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But most dramatic political development happened in Grand Secular Alliance where two of its expected partners, Tariq Anwar-led NCP and Mulayam Singh led-SP are now fighting independently. Both were unsatisfied with the seat sharing arrangement. The NCP walked out of grand alliance for not being taken on board while working out seat-sharing talks. But the Mulayam Singh led-Samajwadi Party’s (SP) case is most shocking for most of the political pundits. When NCP fell out of the secular alliance, the SP was given five seats. Then came the much awaited August 30 rally of the Grand Secular Alliance which came as a huge morale booster for Lalu Prasad, Nitish Kumar and the Congress. Presence of Congress President Sonia Gandhi added strength to the secular front. SP leader Shivan’p Singh Yadav was also present in the rally at the historic Gandhi Maidan.

But suddenly within a few days Mulayam Singh Yadav broke off the alliance under the pretext of not being given dignified representation in the secular polls with four smaller parties, all of whom are non-entities in the States. Though they call themselves the ‘Third Front’ of Bihar polls, it is plain that even the SP has never been a force to reckon with in Bihar. In the last Assembly elections SP fought all the 243 seats but drew a blank. In reality, the ‘Third Front’ is a platform is wide open to dissidents, rebels of all parties. 

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Skill Development Centres Opened in Madrassas

Patna: Union Minority Affairs Minister, Najma Heptulla launched the skill development centres at three madrassas in Bihar on August 30. It is the pilot project of the Centre’s plans to skill the minority community members with speed, scale and standards across the country.

Hajj & Umrah Apps Launched

Riyadh: Two new Haj and Umrah applications in English, Urdu and Hindi were launched in Riyadh last month. The app named “Haj e Mabroor” contains three books on Haj and Umrah, nine speeches, one Haj and Umrah presentation and 21 article. The second app has been named “Deen e Islam” and consists of 175 articles dealing with different aspects of life, 75 speeches and seven books. The apps have been prepared by the website www.najeebgasmi.com were also launched.
Managing Conflicts Without Violence

By Maria Khan

The noted New Delhi-based Islamic scholar Maulana Wahidduddin Khan and members of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality (CPS), of which he is the head, were recently in the USA for a two-week visit (from August 26 to September 8, 2015). The Maulana had been invited by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) to felicitate him. In the course of this visit, CPS members participated in a number of programs in Washington D.C. and Wallingford, Pennsylvania before attending the ISNA convention.

On August 27, the Maulana and CPS members visited the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington D.C. The USIP is an institution established by the US Congress to increase the nation’s capacity to manage conflicts without violence. Part of its mission is providing analysis, education and resources for peace-building. The Institute’s Religion and Peace-building team hosted a roundtable conversation with the Maulana to discuss Islam and peace. After a welcome note by USIP’s director of the Rule of Law Centre, Colette Rausch, the program began with the release of the Maulana’s most recent book “The Age of Peace, which was introduced to the audience by Dr. Sayyid Syeed, National Director for the Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances for ISNA.

In his opening remarks, the Maulana explained that in The Age of Peace, he has discussed the nature of the modern age and the changes brought about by it, because of which people can achieve their goals by opting for peaceful means. The freedom to do what one wants without harming others and the numerous opportunities for work opened up in the present age have made it needless to resort to violence. It is unawareness of the opportunities presented by the modern age that has led some extremists to choose violence as a means to attain their goals.

The brief introduction to the book was followed by an interactive session. Sheherazade Jafari, the moderator of the roundtable, asked the Maulana to elaborate on his idea of ‘peace without conditions’. Many people speak of peace with justice—that is, insisting that if they do not get justice, they would not be ready for peace. According to the law of nature, Prophet and his companions to justify their deeds, should be dealt with. The Maulana answered that the Prophet was born in a tribal age, which was an age of violence. Due to this age factor, the tribal chiefs who were opponents of the Prophet tried to involve him in war at several occasions. However, the Prophet tried to manage conflicts. It was because of his efforts at avoidance that challenges are a part of life. One should not consider a challenge as arising due to an ‘external conspiracy’. Rather, difficulties, both physical difficulties and intellectual problems, are part of this world. There are two kinds of challenges: crippling and non-crippling challenges. It is a crippling challenge that is a problem. Otherwise, a challenge is a booster for a community as it serves as a shock treatment, which, in turn, enhances one’s creativity. It is one’s response to challenges that determines one’s success in dealing with them.

The Quaker study and Retreat Centre, called Pendle Hill is located in Wallingford, where the Maulana and the CPS team stayed during their stay in Pennsylvania. The centre was established in 1930 as an ecumenical faith community of spirituality, peace and social equality. The CPS group visited the centre and interacted with the Pendle Hill community. During the team’s ten-day stay at Wallingford, several individuals and groups came to meet and interact with the Maulana, amongst them being members of the movement founded by the Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen, members of the Positive Thinkers’ Club based in New Jersey, and Anuttama Dasa, who serves as ISKCON’s International Director of Communications.

The Maulana spoke on ‘Dealing with Extremism in the Muslim Community’ on September 7, the third and last day of the convention. In his address the Maulana said that in the seventh century, there was a peace agreement at Hudaybiyah between Muslims and their opponents. The treaty gave peace and freedom, which the Prophet and his companions availed of in favour of dawah or preaching. The result was that they were able to spread their mission in large parts of Arabia and its adjacent areas. The Maulana noted that at the time of the Prophet, the Hudaybiyah Agreement had led to limited and local freedom for the Muslims for a few years. However, today we were living in the age of Hudaybiyah, as everyone in every part of the world enjoys freedom to carry out his or her activities without being violent. In the conditions we live today, one is free to make progress in both religious and secular domains.

(Credit goes to the writer and is a member of the CPS)

Caring for the Creation

Interfaith Coalition for Peace, an Interfaith Organisation dedicated to creating peace and harmony between different faith groups, recently organised an interactive interfait programme on the theme: “Caring for the Creation: Scriptures, Traditions, Communities” in New Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Deepali Bhanot, a Sanskrit scholar, said, “Each faith tradition affirms that this universe has been created by God for all beings to live together in full harmony with the nature.” She further said: “As a result of industrialization and urbanization, the ecological balance of the earth has been greatly disturbed. In this age of consumerism, competition and covetousness, the religious teachings that foster the moral and social obligations towards caring for the creations have been forgotten. There is a need to look back to the ancient wisdom of our religious traditions to find ways to stop further degradation of environment on this planet earth.”

Ghulam Rasool Dehlvi, a classical Islamic scholar and English-Arabic writer, gave an Islamic perspective on “Caring for the Creation”. He commented, “Clearly, there is an inseparable relation between the environment and our soul. “From the Qur’anic perspective, Dehlvi said, corruption on the earth is not confined to only political crimes, frauds, theft, rape, illegal banking or other prevalent malpractices. Deforestation, toxic waste, pesticides, and cutting so many trees on the earth are also grave corruption and, hence, brazen violation of the true Islamic universal values”, he said.

Mr. Prakash from VidyaJyoti College, New Delhi succinctly presented a Christian perspective on this issue. He said that each faith tradition has its own unique story of creation that affirms that this universe has been created by God for all living beings to live together in harmony with Nature. “While all faith traditions teach us to be grateful towards the bounties of nature that nourish and sustain us, modern science and technology seek to conquer and control it”, he said.

A number of Muslim, Christian and Hindu students and scholars participated in this inter-faith interaction, including students of VidyaJyoti College, a Catholic seminary, and an Islamic institute, the Jamia Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia.

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Moderate Islam Has a Voice If You Listen

By Helen Rose Ebaugh

On 9/11, I dismissed my usual 8:30 a.m. Sociology of World Religions class to accompany the students to the student center to watch the historic events on CNN. But before we left, I told them that it may well be a Muslim terrorist group that was responsible, but I reminded them that, even if it turned out to be true, to remember that it did not mean all Muslims are terrorists. We had three veiled women among the 30 students in the class and I did not want them, as well as other peaceful Muslims, ostracized because of the evil acts of a few individuals who might call themselves Muslim. We saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center. Unfortunately, this event introduced Islam to many Americans to whom it was an unknown religion before that fateful day and led to enormous Islamophobia in our country in the days and weeks following. By Thursday’s class, the three veiled women had visits from the FBI either in their immediate or extended families.

Prophet Muhammad condemns violence

I was puzzled by the fact that I was not hearing the voice of moderate Muslim scholars and public figures condemning the terrorist acts, in contrast to all the anti-Muslim sentiments that were voiced on television and in the news media. Where were the so-called moderate voices of Muslims who supposedly represented the bulk of Muslims in our country and around the world? Then on Sept. 21, I opened The Wall Street Journal and saw an editorial strongly condemning the attacks and arguing that the terrorists could not be true Muslims because Prophet Muhammad condemns violence and promotes peaceful coexistence among all peoples. It was signed, “M. Fethullah Gulen, scholar and imam.” His name stuck in my mind as one of the few moderate Muslim voices in the media.

The Gulen Movement

Within a few years, we admitted several graduate students into our sociology department at the University of Houston who identified with the Gulen Movement. Advising them on papers and eventually master’s theses that analyzed the movement from a sociological perspective, I came to know more about the movement and the people in it and to learn that it represents a strong contrast to the Muslim terrorist groups.

In Houston, the Gulen Movement is one of two or three active players in bringing people together from different faith traditions and providing opportunities for dialogue and interaction.

Gulen’s community centre in Houston

It is a moderate Islamic movement dedicated to peaceful coexistence, dialogue, education and providing social services to the needy. The movement started in Turkey in the 1970s when a preacher, Fetullah Gulen, began preaching from street corners, mosques, coffee shops and anywhere people would listen. I was not hearing the voice of moderate Muslim scholars and imams, as they have spread from Turkey to about 180 countries across the world, on every continent. There are 43 of these Gulen-inspired schools within Texas with about 28,000 students and a waiting list of over 30,000. They are known for their emphasis upon science and math and have state-of-the-art technology as well as dedicated teachers who often work overtime and spend time visiting the students’ homes and working with parents on their children’s education.

Interfaith dialogue is another hallmark of the movement. In Houston, the Gulen Movement is one of two or three active players in bringing people together from different faith traditions and providing opportunities for dialogue and interaction. In addition, the group is dedicated to social outreach to those in need.

(HeLEN Rose Ebaugh is a Professor Emeritus for the University of Houston’s department of sociology. She is an author and lecturer on world religions and the moderate voice of Muslims. For the past 20 years, she has been involved in interfaith work in Houston and internationally.)
Pope Calls On Every European Parish to Host One Migrant Family Each

Vatican City: Pope Francis called on every European parish and religious community to take in one migrant family each in a gesture of solidarity he said would start in the tiny Vatican state where he lives.

“I appeal to the parishes, the religious communities, the monasteries and sanctuaries of all Europe to... take in one family of refugees,” he said after his Sunday address in the Vatican.

The pope’s call goes out to tens of thousands of Catholic parishes in Europe as the number of refugees arriving over land through the Balkans and across the Mediterranean to Italy and Greece hits record levels.

There are more than 25,000 parishes in Italy alone, and more than 12,000 in Germany, where many of the Syrians fleeing civil war and poverty are trying to escape to neighboring countries.

The pope said he thought of his own son when he saw the toddler on the beach. Speaking to Turkey’s Dogan News Agency, Mehmet Ciplak recounted how he prayed the little boy was still alive as he walked towards him and scooped him up from the water’s edge.

“When I approached the baby, I said to myself, ‘Dear God I hope he’s alive.’ But he showed no signs of life. I was crushed,” he said. “I have a six-year-old son. The moment I saw the baby, I thought about my own son and put myself into his father’s place. Words cannot describe what a sad and tragic sight it was.” Twelve refugees drowned last month when two boats sank on the short crossing to Greece, and images of Aylan’s lifeless body washed ashore in Bodrum in southwest Turkey sparked international outrage over Europe’s migrant crisis.

Aylan was buried in the Syrian town of Kobane, now a symbol of resistance by Syrian Kurds against Islamic State (IS) extremists. Aylan’s four-year-old brother, Ghalib, and their mother Rihana also drowned when their boat sank. His father Abdullah was the only family member to survive and has returned to Kobane to be close to the graves of his wife and children.

Islamic Voice, October 2015
Bangladesh PM Hasina Named UN ‘Champion of Earth’

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh was named as one of the winners of the United Nations Champions of the Earth award in recognition of her country’s initiatives to address climate change.

First Muslim Lawyer to Contest Mayor’s Elections

London has its first Muslim mayor candidate after the main opposition, Labour party selected Sadiq Khan, a bus driver’s son and former government minister, as its candidate. Khan, a former human rights lawyer, will stand in elections being held next May to decide who should follow Conservative Boris Johnson, one of Britain’s best-known politicians, into City Hall. While the Mayor of London has fewer powers than in comparable world cities such as New York, it is a high-profile job which usually attracts ambitious figures. Khan, 44, said he wanted to iron out inequalities in a city, home to some of the world’s richest people, as well as some of Britain’s poorest. “Our burning ambition must be to ensure that all Londoners have the same opportunities,” he told a press conference after being nominated.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Receives Lifetime Achievement Award in the USA

Chicago: Renowned Islamic scholar and author of several books, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) at their 52nd Annual Convention in Chicago on September 6, 2015. Presenting the award, the President of ISNA Mr. Azhar Azeez appreciated the Maulana’s lifelong contribution towards working for peace and building bridges and mutual understanding between people of different faiths. At the event, Dr. Sayyid Syeed, ISNA’s National Director for Interfaith and Community Alliance, released the Maulana’s latest book, The Age of Peace. He urged the audience to read the book and remarked that there was a dire need to discuss and understand the ideology of peace which the Maulana had presented. In his acceptance speech, the Maulana said that peace and spirituality were two sides of a single coin. He explained that spirituality is the inner content of peace, and peace is the external manifestation of spirituality. The 90 years old Maulana was on a two-week visit to the US on an invitation by ISNA. He addressed a number of gatherings including those at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS).

Mr. Irfan Razack, Chairman and Managing Director of the Prestige Group of Companies was conferred with Sir M. Visveswarya Memorial Award for the year 2015 by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce on September 21. The award was presented to him by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The citation said “through its innovative approach and designs, the Group has created world class projects like The Forum Mall, UB City, The Collection and Golfshire which have become benchmarks today and are being emulated by many. Besides redefining the Bengaluru skyline, the Prestige Group has also created landmarks in Hyderabad, Cochin, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Goa and Chennai”. The Group supports the Akshaya Patra Programme (midday meals scheme) for the Government schools, has partnered with St. John’s Hospital and participates with the Government agencies in road development, landscaping and beautification activities for a cleaner and greener Bengaluru”, the citation added.

Kamal, son of renowned Saudi businessman and philanthropist Saleh Kamel, made the announcement after meetings with university representatives including Yale President Peter Salovey. Kamel, chief executive of the Dallah Albaraka Group banking and real estate enterprise in Saudi Arabia, has sponsored a lecture series on Islamic law for the last three years. Yale officials say the Abdullah S. Kamel Center for the Study of Islamic Law and Civilization reflects a growing interest at Yale and other institutions in Islamic law, history and culture. “The contemporary challenges of Islamic law are broadly relevant to political events throughout the entire Muslim world and those are developments that are watched by a much larger audience of people who in many cases have not much knowledge at all of the history and traditions if Islamic law,” said Professor Anthony Kronman, a co-director of the center. (www.arabnews.com/featured/news)

Dubai: In recognition of his efforts in serving the Muslim community, a Muslim father-of-five has been named Australian “father of the year”, adding to a long list of awards he had received over the past few years.

Dr. Mogli Gandesh and Prof. K. S. Bhagwan. The award will be presented to the writers and authors on November 7, at Patil Puttappa Auditorium, Dharwad.

Australian Muslim Named Father of the Year

Sydney: In recognition of his efforts in serving the Muslim community, a Muslim father-of-five has been named Australian “father of the year”, adding to a long list of awards he had received over the past few years.

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ISLAMIC VOICE, October 2015
**Women’s Afghan Paragliding Team Soar Through Kabul’s Skies**

Kabul: Zakia Mohammadi, a woman in Afghanistan's first national paragliding team, waited on a hilltop on the outskirts of Kabul for a wind to lift her craft into the sky, as dozens of watching teenagers clapped and cheered. She is one of a group of young Afghans taking to the skies in a country, where military helicopters and surveillance balloons are a far more familiar sight. "When I went up to the sky, I thought I was a bird which had just been freed from a cage," said Mohammadi, one of two women in the newly established team of 15 that includes two trainers. "When women see me they don't believe that an Afghan woman can do this," said Leeda Ozori, the other woman in the team. "The situation is not good, there is no security, but I am brave and I can do it." During the rule of the militant Taliban in the 1990s, Afghan women were kept out of schools, universities and public life. They could not leave their homes unless accompanied by a male family member. "When we first came here, children were pelting us with stones," paragliding trainer Mehran Rahbari said. "But later, when they found out that we were coming here for sports, they stopped throwing stones at us. Now they love us. We cannot go anywhere outside Kabul," said Iranian trainer Rahbari. "We are afraid if we go out and get attacked, one bullet can end all our efforts." "Our idea is to show to the world that Afghan women, although living in war and insecurity, have the ability to improve and become developed," said Mohammadi. [extracted from http://spanishnews today.com/womens-afghan-paragliding-team-soar-through-kabuls-skies_26859-a.html]

**First Emirati Woman Posted at UN’s New York HQ**

New York: Hind Abdul Aziz Alowais has become the first Emirati woman to be posted at the United Nations Headquarters in New York as a senior advisor since the UAE became a member of the United Nations in 1971. Alowais was selected for the post of Senior Advisor in the Office of the Deputy Executive Director, Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships, at the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). This appointment on September 7, came shortly after the UAE declared August 28 as Emirati Women’s Day and coincides with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the UAE General Women Union (GWU). In this position, Alowais will work to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. She will assist the Deputy Executive Director in building advocacy and substantive support on intergovernmental, governmental, and strategic partnerships. Most recently, Alowais served as a Counselor and acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the UAE Mission to the United Nations in New York.

**UNHRC Applicants for ‘Violence against Women’ Post**

The U.N.’s Human Rights Council (HRC) over the summer quietly appointed Saudi Arabia as head of a panel responsible for interviewing and short listing experts focusing on a range of human rights-related themes. Among the posts considered at meetings chaired by the Saudi ambassador to the HRC, Faisal bin Hassan Trad, since May, was one dealing with “violence against women, its causes and consequences” and, another focused on “the independence of judges and lawyers.” The kingdom is frequently cited by human rights advocacy groups and Western governments for the fairness of its judiciary and its treatment of women. (Last year Saudi Arabia was in 13th last place out of 142 countries, evaluated by the World Economic Forum for gaps between women and men in the areas of political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival.) [extracted from http://csnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/un-human-rights-council-saudi-arabia-chairs-panel-vetting-applicants]

**Jordan’s Queen Rania receives Walther Rathenau Prize**

Jordan’s Queen Rania received the Walther Rathenau Prize in recognition of her work as an outstanding advocate for peace and understanding between East and West. She was presented the award by German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. The ceremony was held at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. The Queen conveyed the pressing need for empathy and compassion, or “basic human decency”, to the women guards’ urgent necessity amid the security conditions and developments in the country,” Major General Khalid Al Waqeet, Assistant Secretary General for Parliament Security Guard Affairs, said. “Allowing female volunteers to join the parliament’s guards, for the first time, aims to deal with changes that necessitate the development of the security system,” he told Kuwait News Agency (Kuna). The women guards’ duties will include inspecting and frisking women, both staff and visitors, Al Waqeet said, adding that the new parliament building scheduled to be opened within six months will provide all the needs of the women guards. (http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwaiti-recruits-women-as-parliament-guards-1.1573861)

**Kuwait Recruits Women as Parliament Guards**

Qatar: In a historic breakthrough for women, Kuwait is recruiting female guards for the parliament in a bid to improve the security system. “Having women guards at the parliament has become an urgent necessity amid the security conditions and developments in the country,” Major General Khalid Al Waqeet, Assistant Secretary General for Parliament Security Guard Affairs, said. “Allowing female volunteers to join the parliament’s guards, for the first time, aims to deal with changes that necessitate the development of the security system,” he told Kuwait News Agency (Kuna). The women guards’ duties will include inspecting and frisking women, both staff and visitors, Al Waqeet said, adding that the new parliament building scheduled to be opened within six months will provide all the needs of the women guards. (http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwaiti-recruits-women-as-parliament-guards-1.1573861)

**Hundreds of Turkish Women Cycle To Support Green Transportation**

Izmir (Turkey): Hundreds of women have taken to the streets on bicycles in multiple events in western and southern Turkey to raise awareness of sustainable transportation methods, as Sept. 20 marked “The World Cities without Cars Day.” Around 500 women cycled the streets of the Aegean province of Izmir after they gathered at Izmir’s Konak Square at 5 p.m. on Sept. 20 as part of an event to spread awareness of the positives of bicycle use and highlight the vitality of any cities without exhaust fumes. Filiz Morovaniler, a woman taking part in the event with her bicycle, said she was truly passionate about cycling. “We, as women, want to make our voices heard. We want all cities to have necessary infrastructure for cycling. We yearn for sustainable transportation,” Morovaniler said. [extracted from http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hundreds-of-women-cycle-to-support-green-transportation.aspx?pageID=238&nID=88793&NewsCatID=340]

Bilal Erdogan, a son of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is an executive. Over the past two years, the Turkish government has lifted bans on women and girls wearing headscarves in schools and state institutions, moves denounced by opponents as undermining the basis of the country’s secular society. Erdogan, who co-founded the ruling Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP), called new elections after Davutoglu failed to form a coalition government with the opposition after June polls.

First Minister with Headscarf: For the first time in the history of Turkey, a Muslim but secular country, a woman who wears an Islamic headscarf has been named as a government minister. Ayşen Gürkan, a 52-year-old academic, was appointed to be the minister in charge of family and social policies in the provisional government of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu that will run the country until the November 1 elections. The mother of three is also a member of the board of the Foundation for Youth and Education (TURGEV), of which
Man has been so created as to be susceptible to both tendencies of good and evil. It is through his will and effort that he chooses one or the other, making himself liable to ultimately receive its reward or punishment, as the case may be. The surah speaks of the people of Arabia at the start of the Islamic message. They used to deny the resurrection and life after death. The surah reminds them of the fate of the people of Tubba, who lived in southern Arabia. The surah makes only a very brief reference to them, giving no details of what they did or how they transgressed. What is of interest is only their fate, and it must have been well known to the Arabs who were the first to be addressed by the Qur'an. It was enough only to mention them in order to revive feelings of dread among the Arabs.

As this reminder makes them shudder, they are called upon to reflect on the perfect design of the heavens and earth, and how the universe is finely balanced and well planned, indicating that it is deliberately made in this way for a particular purpose: “We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in mere idle play. We created them all for nothing other than a true purpose, but most of them do not understand.”

The creation of the universe
Such reflection should take into account the creation of the universe, what it points to of deliberate planning, wise purpose, perfect balance and harmony, the creation of everything in accurate measure and quantity, placing it thus in harmony with everything around it. Such reflection undoubtedly leads to the conclusion that everything is created on purpose. No coincidence or carelessness is allowed in any aspect, major or trivial, of the design of the huge celestial bodies or the small, fine creatures living on them. Thus, we realize that the universe is created for a purpose, which means that nothing of it is the result of idle play; and that it is based on the truth, which means that no falsehood is allowed to infiltrate it. We further realize that it must have an end, which does not occur at the point of death after a short journey on earth. Logically speaking, a second life, when reward and punishment are administered, is inevitable, so that good and evil come to their natural ends. Man has been so created as to be susceptible to both tendencies of good and evil. It is through his will and effort that he chooses one or the other, making himself liable to ultimately receive its reward or punishment, as the case may be. That man is so created, with both tendencies, and that God’s action cannot be mere idle play, means that man will have a specific fate which he meets after his journey on earth is over. This is the essence of the hereafter. Hence, it is mentioned after attention has been drawn to the wise purpose that lies beyond the creation of the universe: “The Day of Decision is the time appointed for all of them. It is a day when no friend shall be of the least avail to his friend, and when none shall receive support except those upon whom God will have bestowed His grace and mercy. He alone is the Almighty, the Ever-Merciful.”

Follow true guidance
This statement comes naturally at this point, closely related as it is to what went before it. It is absolute wisdom that requires that creatures should have a day when judgment is made between those who follow true guidance and those who go astray; when goodness is rewarded and evil humiliated; when people have no support, bond or relation. They will return to their Creator as individuals, just like He created them, to be required for what they did in life. No one will support them or offer a gesture of mercy, except for those on whom God bestows His grace. It is from God’s hand that they came out to work in life, and to His hand they will return to receive what their actions deserve. In between, they have a chance to act, just as they are being tested.

**Subject: ISLAMIC VOICE, October 2015**

We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in mere idle play. We created them all for nothing other than a true purpose, but most of them do not understand.
Some Sunnahs We Should Seriously Begin to Follow!

Quick question to refresh our minds: who was Prophet Muhammad? As Muslims, we believe he was the last and final messenger of the Creator to mankind. His life is an example for generations after generations until the end of time on how to live in a pure and humble way, with the worship of Allah, the Creator, as our purpose and pivotal role.

The word “sunnah” is used to describe the life and teachings of the Prophet. The Prophet said: “Whoever revives my Sunnah then he has loved me. And whoever loved me, he shall be with me in Paradise,” (Tirmidhi).

Not only for our personal gain, but out of love for our beloved Prophet we should try to live our life by the sunnah as much as possible. We should be active in learning about the life of the final messenger to mankind. While engaging in knowing about the life of a person, your love and respect for him grows. Similarly, when learning about the Prophet, you will find hundreds of stories, attributes and habits that will be beneficial for your life if implemented. Here are some sunnahs of the Prophet:

1. Sleeping and waking up early
   Aisha said about the Prophet: “He used to sleep early at night, and get up in its last part to pray, and then return to his bed.” (Bukhari)

2. Having a pleasant smile always
   Ibn Jaz reports: “I have not seen anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah.” (Tirmidhi)

3. Maintaining the 1/3rd rule in eating
   Miqdam bin Madikarib said: “I take note of your usual facial expression: is your normal expression a happy one or do you always appear sad, exhausted, preoccupied or frustrated? It will take a bit of regular effort, but you can cut down on the frowning, smile more often and spread joy and peace around you as the Prophet instructed.

When God bestows His favors on someone, He wants that person to acknowledge those favors. Is this difficult? He wants the recipient to be kind, just, seeking what is right and good.

Some make-up products. Artificial flowers may look similar to natural ones, and can retain their shape for much longer, but they lack lustre, fine smell and texture; they lack life.

Anyone can recline on a straw mat and it could leave its mark on his body. Does this give him any similarity to Prophet Muhammad, as he is called in the Qur’an) was extremely wealthy. People admired his riches and dearly wished to be similarly rich. God did not require him to abandon his life, but simply outlined a few things for him to do. He was required to reflect on how he acquired his wealth. It is granted by God. Hence, he was told to look at his wealth and say: "Whatever God wills will take place. No power works without God’s will.”

In his arrogance, Korah said that he acquired his wealth through hard work. If we assume, for argument’s sake that this was true, who gave him his intelligence? It is undoubtedly God, but he chooses to be oblivious of the fact. When God bestows His favors on someone, He wants that person to acknowledge those favors. Is this difficult? He wants the recipient to be kind, just, seeking what is right and good. He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any ill of a person or situation, the Prophet said: “He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any ill of a person or situation, he gives judgment in their cases without departing for a moment from the path of justice. Can we emulate the Prophet and adopt the same attitude to the life of this world? Some mystics and ascetics have tried to discard worldly pleasures, living on the margin of life, and hoping to emulate prophets in their sublime standards. That is an impossible task they set for themselves. A blush of shyness cannot be produced by a human constitution. He was thus produced a great change in his body. Does this give him any similarity to Prophet Muhammad, who gave this world an unexpected glance because his heart was attached to his Lord, alert in His presence? No one becomes qualified as a military commander because he wears the sash of the commander. There is a certain attitude people should have towards the life of this world. It has been explained by the Prophet and we would like them to know it. Should they maintain it, they rise in honor. Korah (or Qarun, a moment from the path of justice. The Prophet said: “When God bestows His favors on someone, He wants that person to acknowledge those favors. Is this difficult? He wants the recipient to be kind, just, seeking what is right and good.

The beauty of this particular hadith clearly highlights that overeating is a reprehensible quality we should stay away from. However, it is also important to remember that under-eating is equally as harmful to a person. In order to function, we need to have a balanced outlook towards our meals; your level of food consumption should not leave you feeling tired or bloated as this is a state that leads to laziness, which is a vice we seek refuge in Allah from.

It is an underestimated fact that food has a dramatic effect on your body’s and brain’s performance. This hadith clearly highlights that overeating is a reprehensible quality we should stay away from. However, it is also important to remember that under-eating is equally as harmful to a person. In order to function, we need to have a balanced outlook towards our meals; your level of food consumption should not leave you feeling tired or bloated as this is a state that leads to laziness, which is a vice we seek refuge in Allah from.

Quick question to refresh our minds: who was Prophet Muhammad? As Muslims, we believe he was the last and final messenger of the Creator to mankind. His life is an example for generations after generations until the end of time on how to live in a pure and humble way, with the worship of Allah, the Creator, as our purpose and pivotal role.

The word “sunnah” is used to describe the life and teachings of the Prophet. The Prophet said: “Whoever revives my Sunnah then he has loved me. And whoever loved me, he shall be with me in Paradise,” (Tirmidhi).

Not only for our personal gain, but out of love for our beloved Prophet we should try to live our life by the sunnah as much as possible. We should be active in learning about the life of the final messenger to mankind. While engaging in knowing about the life of a person, your love and respect for him grows. Similarly, when learning about the Prophet, you will find hundreds of stories, attributes and habits that will be beneficial for your life if implemented. Here are some sunnahs of the Prophet:

1. Sleeping and waking up early
   Aisha said about the Prophet: “He used to sleep early at night, and get up in its last part to pray, and then return to his bed.” (Bukhari)

2. Having a pleasant smile always
   Ibn Jaz reports: “I have not seen anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah.” (Tirmidhi)

3. Maintaining the 1/3rd rule in eating
   Miqdam bin Madikarib said: “I take note of your usual facial expression: is your normal expression a happy one or do you always appear sad, exhausted, preoccupied or frustrated? It will take a bit of regular effort, but you can cut down on the frowning, smile more often and spread joy and peace around you as the Prophet instructed.

When God bestows His favors on someone, He wants that person to acknowledge those favors. Is this difficult? He wants the recipient to be kind, just, seeking what is right and good.
Sunnahs ...

time and reduce the amount of energy used to contemplate over irrelevant matters being discussed. This energy and time could be well spent on something beneficial, such as reading Qur'an or doing vital tasks, or only speaking things relevant matters being discussed. This energy and time could be well spent on something beneficial, such as reading Qur'an or doing vital tasks, or only speaking things

denounced the barbarity of ISIS.

Pak's First Woman Truck Driver: Pakistan took yet another step towards gender equality when Shamim Akhtar from Rawalpindi became the country’s first female truck driver. The 53-year-old single mother said "Nothing is too difficult if you have the will, however if women make themselves believe that they can’t do certain tasks then nothing works for them." Driving cars for many years, Akhtar on September 8 after being hospitalized for a few days in Lucknow’s Ram Manohar Lohia Medical Institute. He was 81.

Yadav represented the Biaapuro Assembly seat (which encloses Ayodhya) on Samajwadi Party ticket in the UP Assembly for several terms. Extremely secular, Yadav won the confidence of Hindus and Muslims both in the region caught in communal turmoil. He was elected from the seat first in 1977 and retained it in 1980, 1985, 1993 and 1996. He was first elected to the Lok Sabha from Faizabad segment as a CPI member when Ayodhya agitation was at its peak. He was elected to the Lok Sabha for two more terms.

Yadav established several educational institutions in the region and started several welfare schemes for the youth.

Ali Hafeez, the most known name in Urdu journalism in Karnataka, bid adieu to this mortal world on September 22 in Bengaluru after a brief illness. He was 82. He was chief reporter of Daily Salar for several years before retirement in the early 1980s.

Ali Hafeez’s original name was Syed Abdul Ali and he adopted the pseudonym Ali Hafeez. He was basically a sports reporter and graduated up to reporting on administration and politics. He thus imparted an identity to Daily Salar and Urdu journalism in the State. He was conferred the Kannada Rajyotsava Award and was also feted and honoured by bodies like Karnataka Urdu Academy, Majlis e Adab, Karnataka Patrika Academy, etc. His mortal remains were taken to his ancestral village Qadripura of the group 'Girls United for Human Rights'. He is also founder of the group's parent organization, The Awakening.

The only treasure that lasts forever is; our relationship with our creator - Allah.

The man learned a great lesson that day. Isn’t that the truth about our lives?

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We worry about how to earn more money.

We worry about how to earn more money.

We worry about where we should live – 5 bedroom or 6 bedroom house. What kind of vehicle to buy – a Mercedes or Honda or BMW or a Porsche?

What kind of dress to wear? All sorts of things, only to abandon all these things when we reach the entrance to our destination – the Grave! When we realize we cannot enter our destination with all these things.

We don’t realize in our life’s journey that these are just hardships, or only seeking things that benefit oneself and others in duniya and akhirah.

5. Visiting the sick

The Prophet said. “Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and set free the captives.” (Bukhari)

The concept of looking out for others is found throughout the teachings of the Prophet. Sadly, we are regularly aware of people within our circle of acquaintances who are tested with an illness, big shortcomings.

The man saw about an hour later that the creature had reached its destination – a tiny hole in the floor which was entrance to its underground dwelling. At this point the ant’s shortcoming that it shared with a man was revealed.

H ow could a small ant carry the large leaf carefully managed to its destination into the tiny hole? It simply couldn’t!

So the tiny creature, after all the painstaking hard work and exercising great skills, overcoming all the difficulties along the way, just left behind the large leaf and went home empty-handed.

But there was no thought about the end before it began its challenging journey and in the end the large leaf was nothing more than a burden to it.

The creature had no option, but to leave it behind, to reach its destination.

One Sunday morning, a wealthy man sat in his balcony enjoying the sunshine and his coffee when a little ant caught his eye; going from one side to the other side of the balcony, carrying a big leaf several times more than its size. The man watched it for more than an hour. He saw that the ant faced many impediments during its journey, paused, took a diversion and then continued towards its destination.

At one point the tiny creature came across a crack in the floor. It paused for a little while, analyzed and then laid the huge leaf over the crack, walked over the leaf, picked the leaf on the other side then continued its journey. The man was captivated by the cleverness of the ant, one of Allah’s tiniest creatures.

The incident left the man in awe of the group’s parent organization, The Awakening.

The award reaffirms my courage and determination as our weapons, my country, Pakistan will be liberated from every type of injustice and violence,” she said. Bashir added that she was blessed with an amazing and supportive family, especially her uncle Erfaan Hussein Babak who is the co-founder of the group 'Girls United for Human Rights'. He is also founder of the group's parent organization, The Awakening.

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The man learned a great lesson that day. Isn’t that the truth about our lives?

We worry about our family, We worry about our job, We worry about how to earn more money, We worry about where we should live – 5 bedroom or 6 bedroom house. What kind of vehicle to buy – a Mercedes or Honda or BMW or a Porsche?

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The creature had no option, but to leave it behind, to reach its destination.
The Hundred Letters

Here are some portions from Paul Jackson’s English translation, from letter number 97, on Death:

Hazrat Sharafuddin bin Yahya Maneri (b. 1263), also known as ‘Makhdum Sahib’, was one of the most famous Muslim Sufis of India. He belonged to the Firdausi Sufi order. Qazi Shamsuddin, the governor of Chausa in western Bihar, had frequently petitioned Makhdum Sahib to send him written instructions for his spiritual advancement. Makhdum Sahib complied with this request, writing him a number of letters on various spiritual topics. These were collected together by Zain Badr Arabi and others in attendance on Makhdum Sahib. These letters, in Persian, were translated into English as The Hundred Letters by Paul Jackson, a Catholic (Jesuit) priest (b. 1931) from Australia who has been living in India for several decades.

**Soul Talk**

*The journey through life has many valleys that we can't just skip over, and also many mountains to climb that we can't just jump over. It is also true that we need the space and the freedom to make our own mistakes. Trial and error seem to be the only way we can learn and grow. Life is first and foremost a process. And this process is a zig-zag process at that.*

**John Powell**

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Dear Brother Shamsuddin, men are of three kinds. The first are covetous and greedy; the second have begun to turn to God; and the third have attained the heights of mystical knowledge. Pleasure-prone people simply do not think about death and, even if they do, it is in order to pine for the good things of this world and to become further engrossed in its good things. The remembrance of death makes such a person move further away from God. A person who has begun to turn towards God thinks about death as a means of producing fear and dread in his heart and thus be enabled to turn completely towards Him. It often happens that he has a great aversion to death out of fear that it might come before he has turned fully towards God and prepared the provisions necessary for it. Such a person would be excused for such an aversion, and would not come under this threat: “Anyone who has despised the vision of God Almighty does not rest in His favor.” This is because he does not abhor death and the remembrance of death, the beloved and remains engrossed in making preparations to meet her at the time and place that will be most to his liking. The sign of his friendship is that he is always making some effort on her behalf, and is not preoccupied with anybody else.

**Sickness to health**

The advanced Sufi is forever recalling death, for it is the time appointed for seeing the countenance of the Friend, and no lover can forget the time fixed for meeting the beloved. He would love to be swallowed up by death so that, being freed from this dwelling place of sinners, he might rise to the abode near his Friend, just as Huzafa relates: “O God, You know that I prefer poverty to riches, sickness to health, and death to life. Make death easy for me, that I might arrive at my reward—You!” Now it will be understood why the advanced Sufi is excused—for loving death and yearning after it. It is said, however, that there is second standing in the presence of God. He also said: “Death is a present for the faithful, because the world is their prison, and they are always grief-stricken in it. Death is the release from all that, and release from prison is certainly a much-prized gift.” Again, he said: “Death is an atonement for every Muslim.” Anyone who is a real Muslim, unlike you and me, is in quest of it. A genuine believer is the person from whose hand and tongue Muslims receive peace and security. The abode of the believers should edify others. They should not be stained by sins, except for trifling ones. Death makes them pure.

**Ready for death**

Makhdum Sahib, the governor of Chausa (b. 1263), also known as ‘Makhdum Sahib’, was one of the most famous Muslim Sufis of India. He belonged to the Firdausi Sufi order. Qazi Shamsuddin, the governor of Chausa in western Bihar, had frequently petitioned Makhdum Sahib to send him written instructions for his spiritual advancement. Makhdum Sahib complied with this request, writing him a number of letters on various spiritual topics. These were collected together by Zain Badr Arabi and others in attendance on Makhdum Sahib. These letters, in Persian, were translated into English as The Hundred Letters by Paul Jackson, a Catholic (Jesuit) priest (b. 1931) from Australia who has been living in India for several decades.

**Imam Suri said:** “I saw an old man in the mosque in Kufa who said: ‘I have waited for death for thirty years in this mosque, not knowing when it would come. When it comes, I won’t have to wait for anything else. I don’t want any delay. I have no claims on anybody else, nor does anyone have any claim on me.’”

A venerable Sufi has said: “There are three types of sorrow: that of worship—has it been accepted or not? that of sin—has it been forgiven or not? and that of the vision of God—will it be denied or not?” The especially favored ones have said: “There is really only one sorrow—that of being denied the vision of God! Every other sorrow, apart from that, is easy to bear, because it is not destined to last.” Hence it is that the prayer of all the wise in this: “O Lord, do whatever You wish, but don’t cut us off from this!” The secret has been couched in the following verse:

The hearts of all are stirred
In expectation of seeing Your face!
Our bodies, out of fear of separation,
Cry out in the midst of pleasure and comfort!
Without Your beauty, flowers of desire
Turn to thorns in my hope-enchanted eyes!

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Q: My father died eight years ago leaving behind his wife, two sons, three daughters, one brother and two sisters. Both his parents died long time ago. His estate is mainly a house valued today at around 1.8 million rupees. How is his estate to be shared? May I also point out that the eldest son's work in the house was such an arrangement, you are not, you need to look into the matter carefully.

A: What I am saying about the sharing out of your father’s inheritance applies to the house and to everything else he left behind, including any cash amount, payment from his work, furniture, etc. Because he had children of his own, including two sons, his brother and two sisters are blocked from inheriting him. In other words, they get nothing. Siblings inherit only when the deceased has neither sons nor parents surviving him.

The only one of your father’s heirs that has a fixed share is his wife, who inherits one eighth of all his property. The remainder, which is seven eighths, is divided into seven shares, one for each of the three daughters and two each for the two sons. Thus, in this particular case, each of the daughters inherits an amount equal to that of the man’s wife. This does not apply in other cases. If you want the shares to be determined in figures, then each of the four women takes 225,000 rupees, and each of the two sons takes 450,000, assuming that the value of the house is 1.8 million. The same proportion applies to other items of your father’s property.

The complication arises from the eldest son’s work in the house and income from it. You say that this was the case for several years during your father’s lifetime. It all depends on the arrangements your father and brother had. If it was agreed between them that the rent was in compensation for the work your brother put in, then it belongs to him. If no such agreement was made, you and your brothers and sisters need to agree some arrangement. If there was such an arrangement, you are recommended to consider that it has continued for the years that followed your father’s death. If not, you need to look into the matter carefully.

The only thing I want to say is that you should sort it out amicably. Unless there is clear and unwarranted favoritism to one party, it is better to let things as they are. You make the division now and everyone takes their shares.

A new film, Journey into Europe explores contemporary dimensions of Islam in Europe and the invaluable contributions of Islam in European history and civilization.

Many other Muslim thinkers - as one scholar tells in the film, influenced by medieval Jewish writings including rules of grammar etc. The advancements in science, culture, philosophy, and music could not have come through without an enabling environment and some level of state patronage. But the film underplays the currents of intolerance even then. Averroes, among others, was also persecuted for his rational ideas.

As the film shows, the Europeans today are divided between those who consider Muslims incompatible with Western civilization and those who respect the differences in their companions. Some even acknowledge that Islam contributed to what is now referred to as European civilization by introducing newer ideas in philosophy, medicine and science. The Muslim rule in Europe ended in 1492 A.D. followed by a clear effort to erase every trace of Muslim influence on European life. Over time, the Spanish Muslims were persecuted, and looked down upon. The term “Morado” became a means to profile them.

In recent years, terrorism has led to further demonizing of the Muslim. While the acts of terror are committed as instruments of politics and power (asserted with religious terminology and abusing ‘Muslim.’ While the acts of terror led to further demonizing of the Muslim. While the acts of terror are committed as instruments of politics and power, and they are committed as instruments of politics and power. Especially in Europe, the Muslim contribution to the modern European identity is not acknowledged.

Extremist Discourses

Sadly, the role and influence of extremist clerics does not feature prominently in the film. Similarly, the inability of Muslims to articulate their political concerns is also a missing link in the narrative. Perhaps, Dr. Ahmed wanted to focus more on the bridges between the past and the present, and between communities rather than dwelling on the fault lines. As Dr. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury commented, Journey into Europe comes at a time when “myths and fantasies still stir up corporate fear between our communities.” It widened across Europe and public spaces will impact how Muslims are viewed.

The film underplays the pressure to accept Syrian refugees is a positive signal and testifies to the brighter side of European values despite the fears drummed up by the right wing. Amid the cacophony of Islamophobic and extremist discourses, Journey into Europe presents insights on cementing understanding between Islam and the West. Never has the need for a redefined and updated La Convivencia been so urgent.

Source: The Huffingtonpost.com/raza-rumi/islam-in-europe_b_8105746.html?ir=India &adsSiteOverride=in
Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1839 – 1897) was the most prominent Muslim political leader of his time. Due to his excellent qualities, he was offered high positions in several Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt and Turkey. But because of his negative activities he ultimately became unwanted everywhere. He could not achieve his goal and died in frustration, before he was sixty.

Al-Afghani, along with his disciple Muhammad Abdah (1849 – 1905), made Paris the centre of his activities. In 1884, he began publishing a newspaper entitled al-Urwah al-Wuthqa (The Indissoluble Link) from Paris. But, because of his political extremism, Muhammad Abdah could not see eye to eye with him. In Paris he told al-Afghani that they were wasting their time in political activities. They should instead establish an educational institution to peacefully educate the Muslim youth. Al-Afghani disliked the proposal and replied: Innana anta mathabbiti (‘You are saying something discouraging’). Thereafter, Abdah terminated his association with al-Afghani and left Paris for Egypt.

**High-profile endeavour**

Muhammad Abdah had proposed a low-profile way of working, but al-Afghani considered the high-profile way of working to be the right way. Political struggle was for him a high-profile endeavour and educating people was a low-profile project. In the latter case, one makes one’s plans on the basis of realities. This means placing oneself in a position of low visibility; as proceeding in this way draws little public attention, people do not regard this as a great task. On the contrary, in the high-profile way of working, a person makes big plans and speaks in a grandiloquent manner, and this increases his visibility. However, in terms of results, working in a low-profile manner bears fruit, whereas the high-profile way of working does not. In the former case, one remains steadfast to the peaceful course, whereas in the latter case, one very soon becomes embroiled in confrontation and violence.

The greatest assets to humanity are those who are born with superior qualities such as exceptional brilliance and great firmness and resolve. But it has been the sad experience of history that people with such qualities all too often become the victims of misadventure. This is because they are not ready to undertake anything less than a high-profile enterprise. Therefore, they engage in unrealistic planning for the task in hand, and the result is that they generally fail in life. Neither are they able to do anything of significance for themselves, nor can they enhance the lives of others.

The peaceful method develops modesty. Contrary to this, one who adopts the violent method very soon becomes arrogant. The peaceful method develops one’s personality in a constructive way and it is the only method that yields a positive result. The violent method, in contrast, ruins a person’s personality and destroys the resources at hand.

The low-profile way leads one to success, whereas the high-profile way leads to further deterioration of the situation. The reason is that working in a low-profile way is in accordance with the law of nature. And, in this world success is only for those who follow the law of nature.

**Law of nature**

Take the example of a tree. A tree begins from a small seed. The seed starts growing, and after a period of about twenty to thirty years it becomes a fully-grown tree. The growth of the tree takes place gradually. This gradual way of growth is analogous to working in low-profile. If the tree went against this law of nature, it would never fully mature as a tree. Similarly, if a person did not follow the law of nature in life, he would never achieve any success in this world.

**Doomed to failure**

The truth is that man has to perform his activities within a society or a social system. Therefore, it is essential for him to take into consideration the factors that lie outside himself. In doing so, he will automatically follow the low-profile way of proceeding. On the other hand, one who lives within and for himself and does not take into account external factors is doomed to failure. This is because attaining success is like the functioning of a cog-wheel. When two cogs work in perfect conjunction with each other, the machine will run efficiently. But if either of the two cogs becomes jammed and fails to move, the machine will cease functioning altogether.

This is the secret of success in life. Those who are ignorant of this principle are the ones who become violent. Taking to violence is only on account of a lack of awareness. If one can shake oneself out of one’s unawareness, one will never opt for the violent course of action.

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**Two Ways of Being**

**Life-Giving Effects of Awareness of Death**

Mortals may come and go, but God carries on His work of providing mankind with sustenance.

A young man graduated from an Islamic university in India. He had intended to pursue further studies further, but before he could do so he received news from home which shattered his resolve. His father had died. The small bit of land which his family owned had been looked after by his father. Now there was no one left to till the land; his mother and little brothers and sisters were left alone at home. He was now the only bread-winner in the family. Conscious of his responsibilities, he realized that there was only one thing he could do now: that his father had died. He would have to give up any idea of further studies and return home to take up his father’s work on the family farm.

The young man enjoyed a close relationship with one of the senior teachers in the university. He went to see this teacher, and told him that he was taking leave of him now. He was going home and would not be returning. The teacher asked him the reason for this sudden change of heart. “My father has died,” he explained, “and now I am the senior member of the family. I must return to look after household affairs. There does not seem to be any chance of pursuing my studies further.”

His teacher was silent for a moment. Then, looking up at the young man, he asked: “Tell me, are you immune from death? Can you be certain that you yourself will not die on reaching home? What will happen if you do? Who will look after your family then?”

No human being, he said, could look after another. God alone is responsible for everyone’s upkeep and maintenance. “God will continue to look after your family even after your father’s death. Mortals may come and go but God carries on His work of providing mankind with sustenance. ‘You persevere with your studies,’ he said to him, ‘and leave Almighty God to look after your household. Just imagine for a while that you, too, have passed away.’

The young man took his teacher’s advice. He abandoned the idea of going home and decided to leave his family affairs in the hands of God. He carried on with the arrangements that he had been making for further education, sending an application to a foreign university. His application was accepted, and he went abroad. Once his course there was completed, he went to an African country in a missionary and teaching capacity. He and his family were happy with the way things had turned out for him in Africa. He traced his whole success to those magic words of his teacher: “Just imagine for a while that you, too, have passed away.”

To base one’s life on awareness of the inevitability of death is thought of as a negative attitude by some people. But, in fact, this awareness has a dynamically positive effect on people’s lives. When people really become aware of the fact that they are going to die, they become better positioned to live their lives to the full. They see death and life as they really are. Having seen death, they come to know life better.

(Maulana Wahiduddin Khan)
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SM Educated Muslim parents invite alliance for their separated daughter, Architect looking for respectable Muslim family of big town.

Your Dialogue

Conflict and Fanaticism

Q: We see that all over the Muslim world, two rival groups are always in conflict: One affects highly educated people who believe in reason and logic, but care little for religion, while the other consists of largely uneducated people who hold fanatically to certain beliefs and try to impose them on others. How to remedy such a situation?

A: There are definitely two groups with widely different attitudes to religion. These have been there since the very early days of human existence. The noble prophets and those who have followed them on the same route try to bring the message of faith home to people, hoping that they will respond positively to the call to believe in the Oneness of Allah. On the other hand, they are opposed by people who prefer to follow what they feel to be their interest, paying no regard to the divine guidance and caring little for the teachings of prophets. This has always been the case, and it will continue to be so, until the end of human life. I do not agree with you at all when you say that the camp opposed to faith attracts mostly the highly educated who rely on reason and logic. It is true that some of those highly educated may turn their back on religion, but that is only because they either prefer not to study religion with the sort of seriousness they attach to other matters; or because they prefer to satisfy immediate pleasures; or because they feel that their position will be threatened by religion. They simply do not respond to the challenge of the divine message to use their reason and logic in evaluating the truth advanced by the divine faith. There was a time when a higher proportion of educated people seemed to move away from religion, but if you look at the historical circumstances that led to this situation, you are bound to conclude that this was...
The Islamic Golden Age of Science: The Ibn Al-Haytham Example

By Sameen Ahmed Khan

There have been numerous conferences on the themes related to the Islamic Golden Age of Science, during the 8th-13th centuries. The United Nations declared 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL-2015), with the intention to stimulate worldwide interest in light-related sciences and technologies. The year 2015 marks numerous anniversaries from the field of optics. The oldest among these is the 1000th anniversary since the appearance of the encyclopedic treatise on optics (Kitab al-Manazir or the Book of Optics) by the Arab scientist Ibn al-Haytham (965-1040). Ibn al-Haytham became a central figure in the documents, which were submitted to UNESCO and eventually leading to the declaration of the International Year of Light by the United Nations in December 2013. The International Steering Committee of IYL-2015 launched an International Working Group (IWG) “Ibn al Haytham” to highlight the contributions of Arab scholars in the Islamic golden age to optics; in particular the work of Ibn al-Haytham.

Prof. Azzedine Boudrioua, a leading optical scientist is the Chair and Coordinator of the Ibn Al-Haytham Working Group. Prof. Roshi Rashed the world renowned mathematician, science historian and the 2007 King Faisal International Prize Laureate is the Honorary Chair. As part of the IYL-2015, UNESCO hosted an international conference from 14-15 September 2015 at its Headquarters in Paris, France, focusing on the accomplishments of the Islamic civilization in its Golden Age and the life and works of Ibn al-Haytham. The event had a very high profile inauguration. Dignitaries in the inaugural session included, Irina Bokova (Director-General of UNESCO) and General of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission just across from the garden, offered to help, after the Volunteers had provided them with a 100-metre water hose.

“I don’t like to work in the streets, but my family needs bread. Usually, I feel sad,” Inam said, looking away, “because I feel a sort of helplessness.” Oscar Arias Sanchez said at the Arms Trade Treaty’s First Conference, “And we must speak, today – in favour of this crucial treaty, and its swift and effective implementation. If we do, then when today’s children of conflict look to us for guidance and leadership, we will no longer look away in shame. We will be able to tell them, at last, that we are standing with them. We are on guard. Someone is finally ready to take action.”

That morning, I heard the voices of Sakina, Inam and the Afghan youth ring through the street, “Enough of war!”

Dramatic colours Through their dramatic colours and clear action, they were inviting all of us, “Bury your weapons. Build your gardens.”

“We will stand watch for you!” (Hakim (Dr. Teck Young, Wee) is a medical doctor from Singapore who has done humanitarian and social enterprise work in Afghanistan for the past 10 years, including being a mentor to the Afghan Peace Volunteers, an inter-ethnic group of young Afghans dedicated to building non-violent alternatives to war. He is the 2012 recipient of the International Pfeffer Peace Prize). http://www.countercurrents.org/hakim10915.htm.
India lives in its villages. This oft-repeated maxim explains much of socio-economic realities of India. But how do the people in Indian villages live? Although the share of urban population in India went up from 27.80% in 2011 to 31.10% in 2011, India still remains overwhelmingly rural. Here are some facts:

Highlights
- Two out of three Indian houses are in rural areas.
- 6% of the houses in rural India are vacant.
- A majority of rural houses, i.e., 77% are used solely as residences.
- 19.5% of houses have non-residential use i.e., grain stores, shops, cattle sheds etc.
- 0.3% are locked.
- 3% are used as residences with other uses.

Income Level
How prosperous, connected and accessible is Rural India. The data released from the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) on the standard of living of rural households in India provides some insights into the state of rural people. The data from the 2011 Census was released by the Union finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley in July 2015. The data provides the variables across the social spectrum too.

- Less than 5% of the rural households pay income tax. Even states that are considered rich i.e., Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the number of IT payees hovers around 5% mark.
- In nearly 75% of rural households, the main earning members of the family earns less than Rs. 5,000 a month ($2.6) or Rs. 60,000 a year. In just about 8% households, the main earning members earn more than Rs. 10,000 a month.
- 72% of the rural households own a phone of some sort (mainly cellphone), only 11% own a fridge and 20% own a vehicle.
- The census found that only 3.62% of rural households across the country have a Kisan Credit Card with a credit limit of Rs. 50,000 or more.

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The Earth’s environment is facing a bleak future with market driven economy depleting natural resources at a rate the nature will not be able to replenish.

Women more affected, 60% work without written contract

This report estimates the loss in global demand at $3.7 trillion as a result of unemployment, lagging labour incomes and their effects on consumption, investment and government revenue.

The World Employment and Social Outlook 2015 (WESO) finds that, among countries with available data (covering 84% of the global workforce), three quarters of workers are employed on temporary or short-term contracts, in informal jobs often without any contract, under own-account arrangements or in unpaid family jobs.

No Written Contract

Over 60% of all workers lack any kind of employment contract, with most of them engaged in own-account or contributing family work in the developing world. However, even among wage and salaried workers, less than half (42%) are working on a permanent contract.

The first edition of the new, annual flagship report, entitled The Changing Nature of Jobs, shows that while wage and salaried work is growing worldwide, it still accounts for only half of global employment.

Another current trend is the rise in part-time employment, especially among women. In the majority of countries with available information, part-time jobs outpaced gains in full-time jobs between 2009 and 2013.

The report finds that despite the positive steps made towards improving pension coverage, social protection, such as unemployment benefits, is still mainly available only for regular employees. For the self-employed, even pensions are scarce: in 2013, only 16 per cent of the self-employed contributed to a pension scheme.

Nearly 73 per cent of the global jobs gap in 2014 was due to a shortfall in employment among women who make up only around 40 per cent of the global labour force.

Out of 40 countries (representing two thirds of the global labour force), 453 million people were employed in global supply chains in 2013, compared with 296 million in 1995. This represents a share of 20.6 per cent in total employment in the countries covered, compared with 16.4 per cent in 1995.

At the global level, 52 per cent of employees are currently affiliated to a pension scheme, compared with 16 per cent of the self-employed.

Nearly 80 per cent of employees with a permanent contract are currently contributing to a pension scheme, compared with just above half (51 per cent) of employees with temporary contracts.

(Note: The statistics have been excerpted from World Employment and Social Outlook 2015 and ILO Trends Econometric Models April 2014)
I have just assisted with the workshop ‘Discover Yourself’ held in Johannesburg on the 12 & 13th September, 2015. I have been to many lectures, talks, but nothing has had more of an impact on my life than this workshop. Life changing workshop through Allah’s help. Sadathullah Khan is able to teach us basic life skills on how to deal with life, moment to moment and coaches us on the important life skills on how to calmly deal with any issue we may face. I saw in front of my eyes how people came in there depressed and left liberated, praise be to Allah. Discover Yourself is hosted by Sadathullah Khan from Bangalore, India. He has hosted this workshop all around the world, US, Dubai, South Africa and many parts of the world. Malaysia, I think will love this workshop. Malaysia is truly missing out on a workshop that is transforming lives. Does anyone have any idea which organisation would be willing to host this workshop there. Here is my review of this workshop- http://www.nanima.co.za/2011/03/discover-yourself-by-sadatullah-khan/ Nanima, http://www.nanima.co.za

MASTOEROA WILLIAMS: I had an awesome, mind blowing workshop and I am very grateful to you. Mr. Khan, you have an amazing ability to reach out to people and give them beneficial knowledge, which when implemented will create a total mind shift in thought and behaviour. This workshop should be presented to all the people in the world and it will make so many changes to those who want and need it. I am going to bring my family, friends and brothers and sisters in Islam when you are next in Cape Town, God willing! Thank you so much for the tools, relaxed breathing, energised breathing, relaxation techniques. I feel so full of love and even more gratitude in my life, I behave differently with all the people and my life, and it is just so great and I am grateful. I am treating my children as human beings and not enforcing my way only, I give them a choice. Whenever you come to Cape Town, I want to know, so that I can attend whatever workshops you will be presenting.

RABIA: Thanks. I got the concept of living life. I promise myself that I will stay positive and try to apply what you coached me. It’s almost 8 years of my separation and divorce, I want to love someone and be loved It’s just never happened. Thanks again.

SHABIER: It’s a life changing experience. I have attended Khan Sir’s workshop in the past. I have evolved over these years. We are human and we tend to weaken over time and we rust. I therefore, need to attend now and again. In general my family bears witness to the fact that I am a new human being Alhamdulillah. Sadathullah Khan is Allah sent. I love him. He is really passionate about changing hearts. With me it has really worked and it changed my life.

SHAHEEN: It was very motivational. I was a person with no zest to live because I thought I was useless. After attending this workshop, I am now a woman with lot of confidence and I have achieved a lot Alhamdulillah. With the help of Almighty Allah and the motivation of Khan Sir, my family has seen a change in me and taken me as a mentor. of organizers and Khan Sir, the reward, and always the means and opportunity to reach as many people as possible with no limits. I now have the tools and pray that the Almighty keeps me steadfast to use these tools to show and equip my family and friends to find the truth, peace and acceptance.

ZEENATH: Subhan Allah! Amazing, how all the answers were within me and all the changes I need to make, lies with me too. Before the workshop, I felt my life had blockages, despite trying to make changes, it did not bring about significant change. The workshop made me relook and change my perspective about it and realized that the blockages were in my mind and created by myself. Benefits were many, they were mainly tools in how to deal with life in each moment.

RAZAN: The workshop was very informative and encouraging. Before the workshop, I always thought my way was the right way and did the blame game. After the workshop, I realized it is not all about me and I have to let go of all my expectations. I have to count my word and accept that people have their opinions and not allow it to affect me and my perspective of life.
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Conflict and Fanaticism ...

Fanaticism is alien to Islam and it will always remain so. When they do that, they can easily use their reason and logic, because divine faith that calls on people to recognize the truth of the Oneness of God and the validity of the divine message. In the history of Islam, there was no time when a conflict took place between enlightened education and scientific findings on the one hand, and Islam on the other. Indeed, the two stand always hand in hand. It is true that there are people who claim to be religious and try to impose their ideas on others. Such people have not learned Islam well. They do much damage to the cause on the one hand, and Islam on the other. Indeed, the two stand always hand in hand. It is true that there are people who claim to be religious and try to impose their ideas on others. Such people have not learned Islam well. They do much damage to the cause.

Floor Space Index (FSI) is the ratio between the total built-up area and plot area available allowed by the government for a particular locality. Premium FSI refers to permission obtained to build extra floor space by paying a premium.

Tenant: One who occupies land or property and pays rent.

Lease: A contract under which one party land or property against a sum for a specific period.

Encumbrance: An impediment to the use or transfer of the property in the form of an interest or right in the property.

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Pugree: An Indian term used to describe an interest free security deposit given to landlords which is refundable at the expiry of the lease term to the outgoing tenant by the successive tenant.

Terms Related with Real Estate

What is Real Estate?
Any property that can be bought, sold or rented is real estate. Usually the natural resources existing on or within the property are also included in real estate.

Realty: Immovable property like land or house.

Condominium: An apartment building in which each apartment is individually and wholly owned and the common areas are jointly owned. Each unit has separate deed.

Apartment: It is a term used for flat in American English denoting a set of rooms on a single floor for living with other facilities such as kitchen and washroom.

Villa: An imposing country or suburban home of a wealthy person.

Row houses: One of a series of houses, often of similar or identical design, situated side by side and joined by common walls.

Carpet area: Carpet area is the net useable area in a building or house. It does not include thickness of walls or pillars.

Built-up area: The carpet area, plus the area taken by walls, pillars and balcony is called built-up area.

Super Built-up area includes common amenities, such as the area of lift shafts, lobby, and corridor, proportionately divided among all flats. The common usable areas, such as a swimming pool, garden and clubhouse, may also be included in it.

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