

YOUNG

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MUSLIM DIGEST

VOL.44 | ISSUE 8 SAFAR 1444 | SEPTEMBER 2022 | RS.25

The Hadith | Traditions on Qiyamah and the Day of Judgement

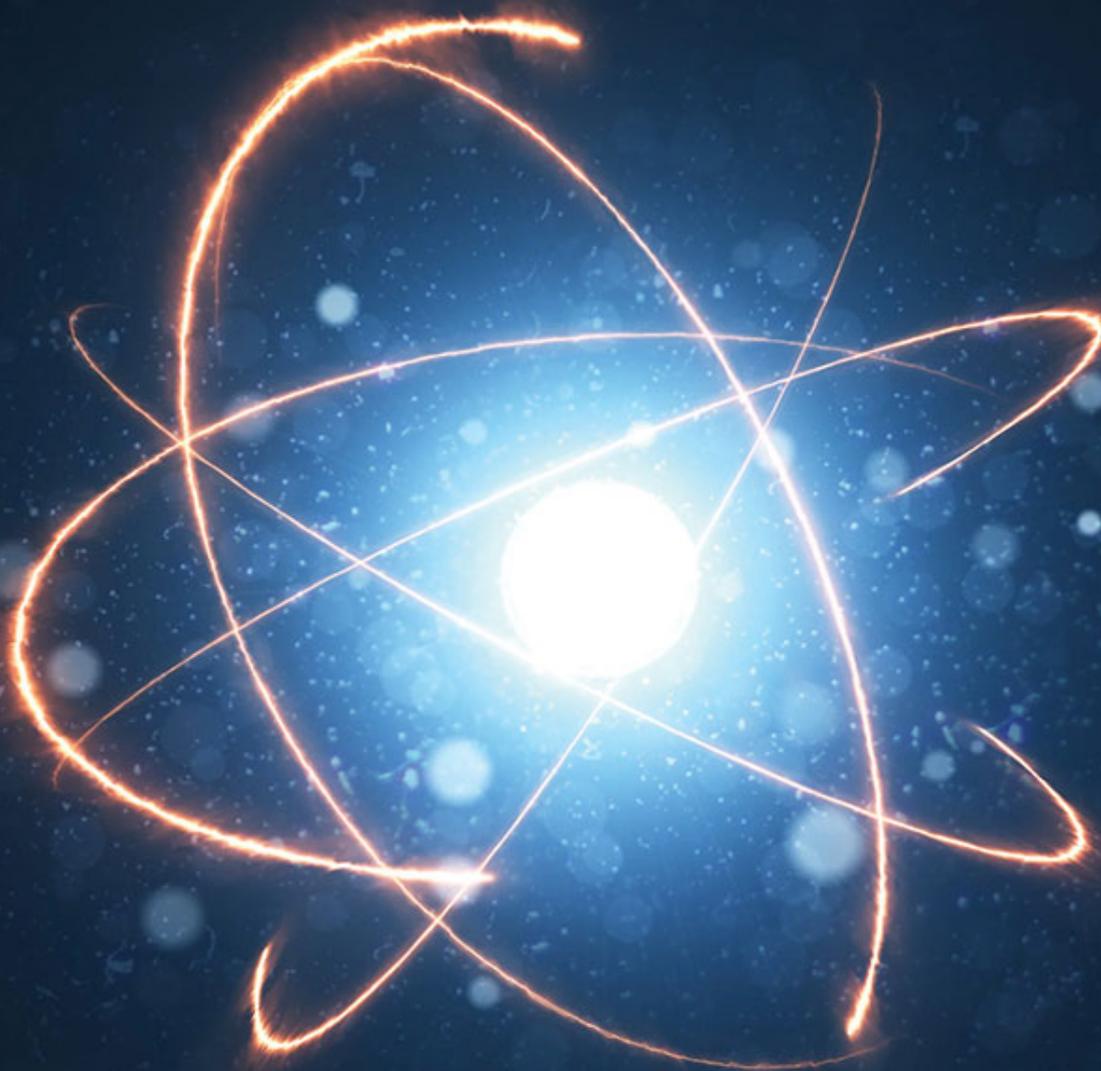
Profile | Ikrimah b. Abu Jahal (ra)

Perspective | What was COVID Really About?

Human Rights | Suicide Crisis among Canada's Arctic Indigenous

The Ghostly Atom

Do We Know Enough?



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'The Deepest Silences': What Lies behind the Arctic's Indigenous Suicide Crisis

29

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	5	HUMAN RIGHTS	29
EDITORIAL	17	'The Deepest Silences': What Lies behind the Arctic's Indigenous Suicide Crisis	
The Ghostly Atom		<i>Hugh Brody</i>	
<i>Syed Iqbal Zaheer</i>		For years, I lived with the indigenous Inuit community in Canada's far north. But it was only later, when the suicides began, that I learned of the epidemic of abuse that had unfolded during that time, writes HUGH BRODY.	
Stagnation in scientific development is not the share of physics alone. Take any field: cosmology, biology, psychology; and even philosophy and theology. Everywhere you miss new ideas, new concepts or fresh thoughts. Rather, now it is stirring of the old pudding everywhere, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.			
THE QUR'AN	19	PROFILE	31
Translation and Commentary from Surah Al-'Ankabut		Ikrimab. Abu Jahal: Once a Staunch Enemy of Islam died a Martyr for its Cause	
Source: <i>Tafsir Ishraq Al Ma'ani</i>		<i>Abu Tariq Hijazi</i>	
THE HADITH	23	BITS & PIECES	34
Ahadith on Qiyamah – and the Day of Judgement			
PERSPECTIVE	25	NEWS FLASHES	36
What Was Covid Really About?			
<i>Colin Todhunter</i>			
The strategy to wholly dismantle and privatize health and welfare services seems increasingly likely given the need to rein in (COVID-related) public debt and the trend towards Artificial Intelligence (AI), workplace automatization and worklessness.			



CHILDREN'S COLUMN

Penpal – 32, Being in the Right Career	38
The Puppy	40
Did You Know That...	42
Poem - The Handwriting On The Wall	43
The Joker and the Blind Boy	44
Halal Joke	50

Doubts, Questions, Clarifications?

Do you have doubts on Islam, comparative religion, Muslim community or life, in general, which you have been wanting to ask since a long time? If so, write to our scholarly column, 'Letters to the Editor,' and have them clarified in the light of authentic Islamic sources. Email your questions to the following address:

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Written questions/ letters may be posted to:

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E-Mail for Letters to the Editor
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One Year Subscription - India: Rs. 250, Overseas: US\$ 27
5 Year Subscription Rs.1250/- (India) For Online Payment
Remit/Transfer to "Young Muslim Digest" through our
Bank account No. 0009073000000718, IFSC Code
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be made to the above
Bank Account.**

Published from:
#332, 1st Floor, Darussalam Bldg., Queen's road,
Bangalore-560052.
Editor: Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Published & Printed by Mohammed Khalid for Iqra Welfare
Trust and Printed at Newsline Printers (A-356, 1st Main, 1st
Stage, Peenya Industrial Estate, Bangalore-560058).

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AGENTS

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QUR'AN ON MODERN SCIENCE

Q. I am a regular reader of YmD. I feel it is one of the best monthly magazine on Islam. Every section of this magazine is well placed and has something different to offer. I have following questions to ask you. Hope you will answer my questions. What does Qur'an say about modern science e.g. recycling, astronomy, zoology, botany, geology, and so on?

YmD

We wonder how could you spell out so many disciplines in one breath and seek an explanation. Or maybe we don't understand what you mean. Do you seriously believe that we can address the issues named by you and do justice to them within the restrictions of this column, when each of them requires at least a whole chapter for proper coverage? In any case, there is another aspect that we would like you to look into. It has something to do with the legitimacy of the questions of this nature, repeatedly raised by young Muslims.

There are no less than a thousand verses in the Qur'an that speaks either directly or by implication of a variety of natural phenomena. Now since science deals with nature and its laws, we can say that these verses deal with scientific questions.

That, however, should not be taken to mean that the Qur'an

is a Book of science. Or that one of its important themes is science, or yet, scientific facts are one of its concerns. None of that. The Qur'an is a revelation sent down for people's guidance. All that this revelation needs is to be read once, for someone to convince oneself that a Book of this sort couldn't be a writing of Muhammad (*saws*). Then, there are surrounding details, for e.g., the life of the Prophet, and his own words and acts, that prove beyond any doubt that he was an Envoy.

In simpler words, the whole has to be taken for evaluation, and not its parts. Those who do that, and then reject it, do not reject it because they don't understand the Qur'an. They reject it because they understand its message. The message it carries is not acceptable to them. They will



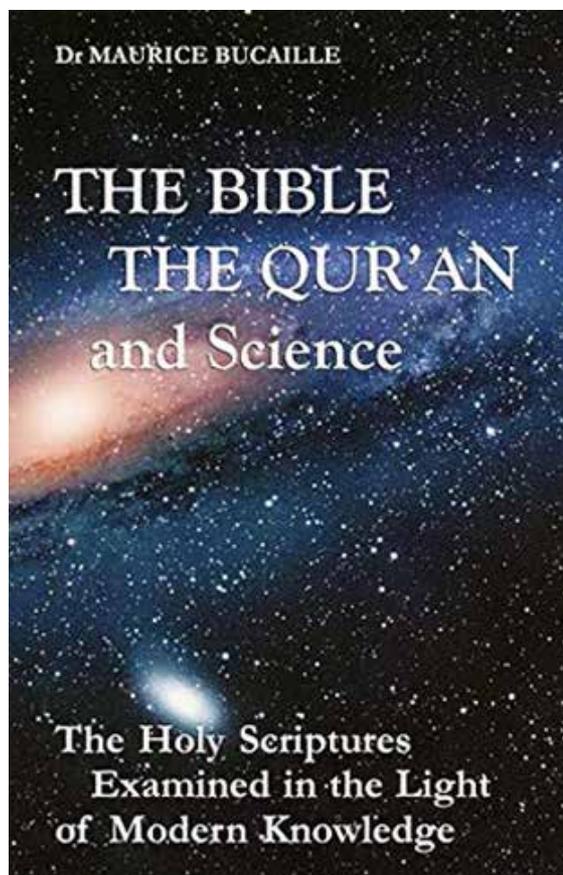
worship anything in the world, from stones, to images, to trees, to sun and the moon, to men, to snakes to phallus: just anything, but not One God. This then is the problem. Skepticism is not the problem. Rejection of that part of message which is well understood is the problem. Therefore, the piecemeal approach to the Qur'an, is all the less promising of results. Those who wish to judge the whole with a part – such as, scientific statements, which are not at all important – such people are bound to remain skeptic at heart, even if convinced with arguments.

The Qur'an is a revelation sent down for people's guidance. All that this revelation needs is to be read once, for someone to convince oneself that a Book of this sort couldn't be a writing of Muhammad (*saws*).



All the same, nature is a creation of Allah (swt), and the Qur'anic revelation, are words of Allah (swt). Obviously, there can be no contradiction. That's the point therefore, that is maintained by the scholars of Islam with reference to science and the Qur'an: there is nothing in the Qur'an that contradicts nature's well-established facts.

This simple fact represents a major proof of the authenticity of the Prophet as a Messenger of Allah. How could he, at a time when mankind was just at the threshold of science, and, Arabs in particular extremely ignorant, even of the little scientific knowledge that the Greeks and others had... how could he make a thousand statements, dealing with a variety of scientific issues, and still not commit an error, or contradict any scientific fact?



The question gathers strength when we consider the statements of scientific nature made by the scholars of the Prophet's era: Greeks, Indians and others. Those others also made several statements, but made several mistakes, some of them blundering ones. On the other hand, the Prophet did not – if we attribute the Qur'an to him, make a single error.

The matter acquires yet greater seriousness when we consider another aspect. Some of the Qur'anic statements are of the nature which were brought to light by the scientists only in recent times. That is, Qur'anic statements do not contradict any of the modern findings too. How could the Prophet predict science? These simple statements go to prove that the Prophet couldn't have been speaking by himself, and that the Qur'an has to be a revelation.

That understood, it is now up to every student of the Qur'an to look into this Book to know what its primary message is. It will not remain hidden from him.

A single reading

will more than certainly impress on him what its central message is, and that, it is simple, straightforward, without ambiguities, and those instructions easy to live by.

With that, he is left with no reason to deny: can he deny what his inner self admits as true? For e.g., Oneness of God. Can he deny it? He cannot. So he should announce it. But if he doesn't, then he is dishonest. And a dishonest person cannot be guided by any other means.

However, if someone wishes to take up the Qur'anic portions that deal with scientific questions, as an arm-chair interest, he might. In such an event, he might compare the Qur'anic verses with the modern findings.

The verses are there for this specific purposes: study and reflection, leading to strengthening of the faith. Several scholars have undertaken the work and presented their findings. Dr. Maurice Bucaille is one. Dr. Keith Moore is another. There are others lesser known, such as, Dr. Zeghlul Najjar, and recently Gary Miller. Haroon Yahya of Turkey is yet another. Some of the works are available on the Internet. Others in print.

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We on our part have also been presenting some material. See for e.g., article on Fig (YMD, Sept. 2000) which is perhaps not available elsewhere. We continue on this line, but cannot devote ourselves to the topic, exclusive of all else, nor do we see the need.

So, time and again articles should be appearing in this magazine, by Allah's grace. But to offer an answer concerning all the disciplines that you have mentioned, is beyond the scope of this column.

Q. In a lecture I heard a scholar saying that we can also drink water from a standing position. He supported his statement with a Hadith. Was he right?

Name and address withheld

YmD

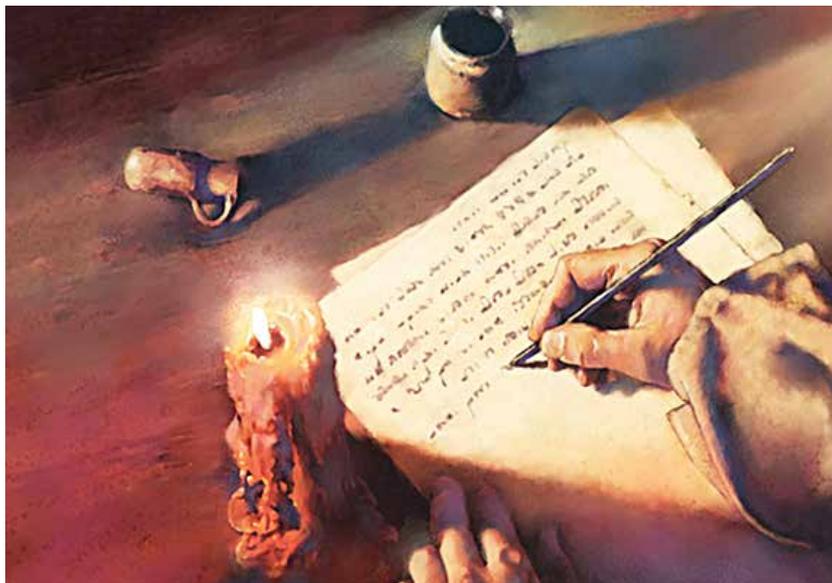
There are a few *ahadith* that allow for water to be drunk from the standing position. However, since there are clear *ahadith* prohibiting it, most scholars wish to avoid doing it, although they declare drinking from standing position lawful.

THE QUR'AN AND THE BIBLE

Q. Are the Qur'an and Bible inter-related? What does Bible say about Muhammad (saws)?

YmD

The Qur'an and the Bible are not inter-related. At best, they are books of the same genre. Originally, Bible was a revealed work, as the Qur'an is. However, with the passage of time, additions, deletions and corrections were made to the Bible, and, therefore, today, no portion can be said to be authentically belonging to the



Originally, Bible was a revealed work, as the Qur'an is. However, with the passage of time, additions, deletions and corrections were made to the Bible, and, therefore, today, no portion can be said to be authentically belonging to the original except if it can pass an external test.

original except if it can pass an external test. That external test is the Qur'an, which Allah (*swt*) called as the *Muhymin* or the Guardian, and which has remained uncorrupted since its revelation.

What conforms with a statement of the Qur'an, is an authentic revelational material in the Bible. What contradicts with the Qur'an is a later introduction or corruption and is to be rejected. What does not contradict, nor conforms with the Qur'an, is to be treated with respect, although that does not accord it authenticity.

Q. What does the holy Qur'an say about Jesus (pbuh)?

*Farah Razi & Reena,
Warangal*

YmD

The Qur'an says about Jesus

Christ that he was a Messenger of Allah, born of Virgin Mary. Being the final Messenger unto the Israelites, after whom Messengership was taken away from the Israelites and given away to the Isma'ilites. He was given irrefutable miracles such as, quickening the dead, blowing spirit into birds of clay, healing the terminally sick or disabled, etc.

Such powerful miracles were given to him in order that the Jews, habitual rejecters of Prophets and Messengers and their murderers, should be left with no excuse for rejecting their last Prophet. But they stoutly rejected him and questioned the virginity of Virgin Mary.

Therefore, after Jesus, Messengership was shifted from the Israelites to the Isma'ilites, because, if they rejected a great

Prophet like Jesus, one of their own men, who came with irrefutable signs and miracles, performed openly under public eye, then there was no chance they would accept another Prophet, not of their race, who, on the other hand, was destined to be the final Prophet before the end of the world. If he was sent among Jews, and they rejected him, the world would be in complete loss without his guidance.

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIFE

Q. I appreciate YMD for spreading the right knowledge of Islam. I have some doubts to be clarified. Firstly, does life exist on other planets?

YmD

So far there is no confirmation of any kind of life anywhere in the solar system or outside it.

Q. NASA claims that there is extra-terrestrial life far away from us.

YmD

In our knowledge, NASA never made such a claim.

Q. Also, they have begun a project called SETI (Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence).

*Abdul Mateen,
Bellary, Karnataka*

YmD

Why are they searching when they have already found it?

In any case, NASA has not begun the SETI program, rather, it has ended it, long time back. After working on the program, involving hundreds of scientists, over a long

period, costing millions of dollars, no sign of life or intelligence was discovered anywhere in the universe, and so, the project was shelved.

INTEREST AND COMMISSION

Q. Please explain the following questions. What is the difference between 'Interest' and 'Commission' in Islam?

YmD

Interest is to give out a loan on condition that when it is returned, an extra pre-fixed amount will be added up to the original, no matter what happened to the debtor. That is, whether the debtor (an individual or a Bank) makes profits or incurs loss, is immaterial to the creditor. He is assured of the principal, as well as the additional amount whenever he wants the amount returned. This is illegal in Islam.

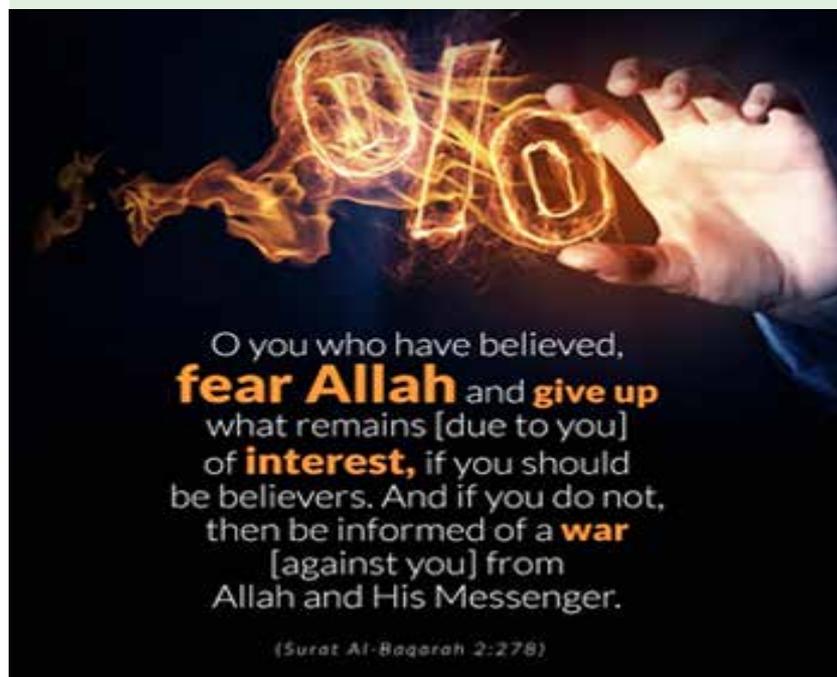
In contrast, a deal in which the amount varies, or in which one may lose part of the principal, or whole, is allowed in Islam. In short, the creditor accepts the risks of profit and loss.

Commission is fixed on services, not on loans. They are a kind of wages. For e.g., an Islamic bank keeps your money and returns when you ask. It charges you some amount as commission, for safe-keeping the money.

Another example: a bank stands guarantee to a trader that if his goods are shipped to a third party, the trader will receive full payment, and if he doesn't, the bank will pay it off.

The bank charges an amount (commission) on the first or

A deal in which the amount varies, or in which one may lose part of the principal, or whole, is allowed in Islam. In short, the creditor accepts the risks of profit and loss.



the third party, or both, for the service. Another situation: a man sells your goods or property on condition that he receives either a percentage of sale price, or a lump sum on successful completion of sale. This is also commission, and allowed in Islam.

Q. If a person offers five times prayers daily and also performs other obligations of Islam like Fasting, Hajj, and sacrifice, but earns *Haram*, then the question is, whether Allah (*swt*) will accept his *Salah*, Fasting, Hajj and sacrifice?

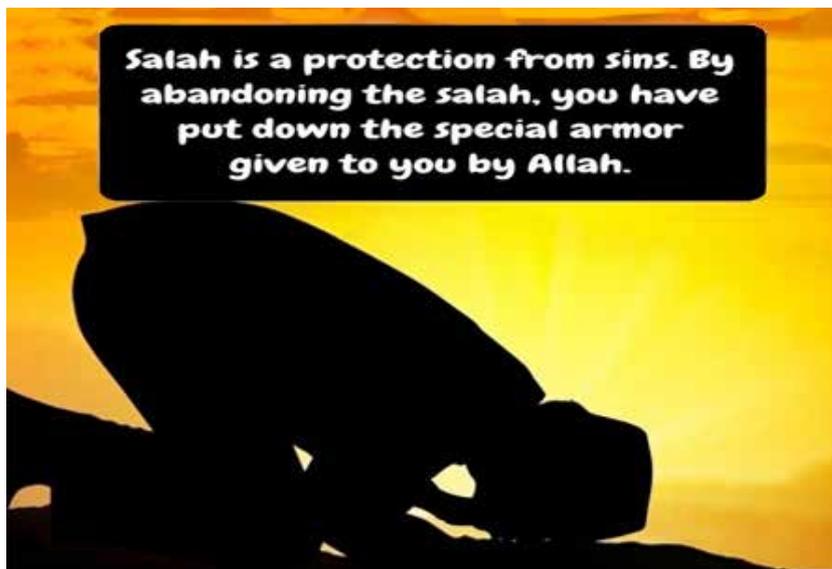
If yes (as most of us say that Prayers purify him), and if no, then it means that *Haram* and *Halal* are the most important pillars of Islam. Is that correct?

*Mohammed Shamsuddin Butt,
Kerala Muslim Association,
Calcutta-13*

YmD

In general, you are right, but your sentence needs some modifications. Earning lawfully is not a pillar of Islam. The five pillars are well-known and so is their importance. If somebody, for e.g., does not believe in the oneness of Allah (*swt*), he is not a Muslim. It doesn't matter if his earnings are lawful or not. He will enter into Hellfire, without reckoning, and will abide therein forever.

In contrast, someone believes in the oneness of Allah (*swt*) and Prays but his earnings are unlawful. His Prayers are rejected. But he remains a Muslim. He will undergo punishment for unlawful earnings and for not having prayed, since his prayers



A *Sahih Hadith* says, "There isn't a Muslim who when faced with an obligatory Prayer, makes ablution, bows down, prostrates himself, and remembers Allah (*swt*) much, doing everything in a goodly manner, but it serves as an expiation for sins of the past, so long as he does not commit major sins." And partaking the *haram* is one of the great sins of the major sins.

are not counted. But, ultimately, even after trillions of years, he will come out of Hellfire and enter Paradise, for having been a believer in Allah's Oneness, and in the Prophet's Messengership.

In simpler words, one who believes in Allah (*swt*), but opts for unlawful earnings, has rebelled against Allah's laws. In contrast, one who does not believe and acknowledge Allah (*swt*) as one God, has rebelled not against Allah's laws, but against Allah (*swt*) Himself. Hence the difference in punishments.

Further, prayers do not purify from all sins. A *Sahih Hadith* says, "There isn't a Muslim who when faced with an obligatory Prayer, makes ablution, bows down, prostrates himself, and remembers Allah (*swt*) much, doing everything in a goodly

manner, but it serves as an expiation for sins of the past, so long as he does not commit major sins." And partaking the *haram* is one of the great sins of the major sins.

OBEYING THE PROPHET

Q. It is necessary for a Muslim to obey the commands of prophet (*saws*). But is it also necessary to agree to whatever opinion on any subject expressed by the Prophet (*saws*)? To what extent is it allowable to differ in opinion with him?

*Aslam Ahmed,
KDH – Delhi.*

YmD

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of Prophetic statements: one pertaining to religion, the other

to worldly affairs. Now when it comes to the former – religious matters – there can be no two opinion about it. His opinion is final. But, as regards the second kind, his followers are free to take or leave.

For instance, he recommended that we drink cow’s milk because he noticed that it eats from every kind of grass and green leaves. He concluded, perhaps, although he didn’t say so, that an animal that ate from a variety of pasture, would yield a richer milk than another that didn’t.

Now, his followers are free to drink cow’s milk or any other of their choice. There is no sin upon them if they chose not to drink cow’s milk – especially today when it is fed only one kind of feed. If they drank, then there are two situations: either they drank it simply because he recommended, or because of other reasons.

If they drink simply for the reason that he has recommended, they would be rewarded for the intention but not for the act. That is because drinking cow milk is not a virtuous act. If they drank for other reasons, then neither they will be rewarded nor punished.

Of course, there are several acts that seem to fall in between: the religious and the worldly. Sometimes a part of an act is religious, while a part is not. In such cases the person involved should himself assess to the religiosity or otherwise of the deed.

Now, taking up the religious part of the Prophetic statements or his examples in deeds, we have said above that there can be no two

opinions over them. He is always right, without the least possibility of another opinion opposed to it being correct.

Whoever held an opinion other than the Prophet’s in religious matters is wrong, and, if he expressed it, will be questioned about it on the Day of Judgement. One might, however, note carefully that it is the opinion that we are talking about.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of Prophetic statements: one pertaining to religion, the other to worldly affairs. Now when it comes to the former – religious matters – there can be no two opinion about it. His opinion is final.

As regards actions in accordance with the Prophetic statements of the religious kind or deeds (the *Sunnah*) in accordance with his, the following is a further explanation. Religious acts are divided into several kinds. A rough division would render them as: the obligatory and the non-obligatory ones.

The *Sunnah* also gets divided into these two kinds: those that necessarily, obligatorily demand action, and those that don’t. If one acts according to the latter kind, he gets rewarded, if he doesn’t, he will not be questioned about them.

THE MAHDI

Q. Please give us detailed

information about the Mahdi Ma`ood?

Mohammed Ali Khan,
Hyderabad

YmD

The *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama`ah* are unanimous over the appearance of the *Mahdi*. However, there is no consensus of opinion over his identification.

The Prophet (*saws*) has spoken about the *Mahdi* in several narrations coming down from him. One of them says that he will be of his family, bearing the same name as his, that is, Muhammad. Another report has it that he will be running away along with a few others, chased by forces sent from Syria. He will seek refuge in Makkah, and the forces chasing him will be sunk into the earth. Thereafter, he will be pressed into accepting the allegiance of the believers, i.e., accept their Imamate.

Yet another *hadith* says he will appear between *Rukn* and *Muqam* (of Ibrahim) where people will offer him their allegiance.

As regards when he will appear, there is no clear report about that, although it looks like it will be close to the second appearance of Jesus (*asws*). Some believe he will be leading the Prayers in Syria when Jesus (*asws*) will descend. So also, there is no definite report about where the *Mahdi* will be originally from.

A WRONG APPROACH

Q. I had written an answer to you regarding the words ‘Salawatu was Salamualaika Yaa Rasulallah,’

about which you had written that it was a *bid'ah*.

YmD

To add those words would not be such a sin as to insist on them.

Q. I had also written some excerpts taken from the books of the founders of *Tableeghi Jama'ath* which are un-Islamic.

YmD

The *Tablighee Jama'at* founder – Mawlana Ilyas, may Allah bestow peace on him – wrote no book.

Q. I also wanted to know what do you think of those people who have written such things in their books as: “It is worse to concentrate on the person of the Prophet (*saws*) in one’s Prayers than to think of a bull or a donkey.” (*Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*, p.18, Maulvi Ismail Dehlavi)

YmD

The context under discussion from which the above sentence has been picked up is, “Could one concentrate on the person of our Prophet (*saws*), instead of Allah (*swt*)?” And the answer by Ismail Shaheed of Delhi is as stated by you.

He explains further in his book that if someone thought of, say, donkeys and bulls during his Prayers, then, what is most likely to happen is that his nature will act with revulsion against the thought and reject it. But, if someone thought of the Prophet (*saws*) – instead of remembering Allah (*swt*) – then, it is likely that (because of his love and regard for the Prophet), his inner self will not



The path of our Prophet (*saws*) goes through the Qur'an. The *hadith* throws further light on it. Then come other literatures: be they of the earlier scholars or latter scholars. If you have not read the Qur'an and go straight to other books, such as the ones you have quoted, and, especially, seeking to find fault in them, then you will end up hopelessly misguided.

revolt against such a thought and he will continue to think of him.

But Prayers have not been designed for the remembrance of the Prophet. They have been designed for the remembrance of Allah (*swt*). Allah (*swt*) said, “And establish the Prayers for My remembrance.” Hence, thinking of donkeys and bulls in the Prayers is better, because their thought is revulsive and so not likely to remain in the mind for long, rather than the thoughts of the Prophet, love for whom would allow the thought to linger, damaging the purpose of Prayers.

Q. “Or, the Prophet was also a human being and had been created by Allah (*swt*); he was our elder brother.” (*Taqwiat-ul-Iman*, p.48, Maulvi Ismail Dehlvi)

YmD

There isn't a second opinion over

the Prophet being a human being. The Qur'an told the Prophet to announce: “Say, ‘I am but a human being.’ (18: 110 and 41: 6)

What Ismail *Shaheed* of Delhi meant is that being a son of Adam (*asws*), the Prophet (*saws*) was our brother in humanity. He did not say that the Prophet may be referred to as one, although the Prophet (*saws*) himself addressed some of his followers as “*Ya Akhiyy*” meaning, “O my brother.” He also referred to his followers of the coming generations as “*Ikwanuna*,” i.e., “Our brothers.”

Q. “To make speeches on the martyrdom of Imam Husain, to offer *Sherbat* to the people, to subscribe for the *Sherbator* to offer milk on that occasion, are all forbidden.” (*Fataawa-e-Rashidiyya*, p.114, Maulvi Rashid Ahmed Gangohi)

YmD

Although we could not locate the above quoted words, only something similar to them could be found in the said book. The statement itself is defensible. To explain, to deliver speeches on the life of Imam Hussain, or to offer *Sherbet* to the people are not forbidden acts. But when a day – that of martyrdom – is appointed for the speeches and the offering of the *Sherbet*, then, surely, that is unlawful.

Q. Do you have any answers for these? I think you have no answers for these writings. That is why you have not written to me.

YmD

We have answered to all of them. As for replying to you by post, if that is what you mean, then, firstly, we do not send personal answers unless the need is pressing; secondly, you have withheld your address.

Q. There is still time for you to start afresh on the path of our master *Sayyidina Mowlana Muhammad Mustafa (saws)* and his Companions.

A Muslim,
Address withheld

YmD

The path of our Prophet (*saws*) goes through the Qur'an. The *hadith* throws further light on it. Then come other literatures: be they of the earlier scholars or latter scholars. If you have not read the Qur'an and go straight to other books, such as the ones you have quoted, and, especially, seeking to

find fault in them, then you will end up hopelessly misguided. You better change your route.

SIR SYED

Q: Your article “The Old and the New Century (Part-1)” in one of the older issues was very good, but I feel that you have made your article incomplete by ignoring the name of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. You have also mentioned that, “for every twenty Israeli research papers the whole of the Arab world

Islam and Muslims are two separate entities. In the scheme of things, Islam comes first and then come the Muslims. That is, first Islam has to be established among a people. Then will come the question of their earthly needs, hopes, aspirations and contributions.

produces one paper for world class scientific magazines.” That means that the Muslims are at the bottom line of the scientific research.

The same is the case with the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent. It was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who thought about this a century ago and decided to take some steps regarding this problem. He spent his whole life in making the Muslim community aware of this fact and in trying to motivate them to participate in resolving this problem. Almighty Allah helped him in turning his dreams into

reality & the best example of his success in his endeavours is the Aligarh Muslim University. I'm a regular reader of your magazine and must say that it is a good one for the young Muslim community.

Aijaz,
Aligarh

YmD

Islam and Muslims are two separate entities. In the scheme of things, Islam comes first and then come the Muslims. That is, first Islam has to be established among a people. Then will come the question of their earthly needs, hopes, aspirations and contributions. What would be the point if Muslims were hoisted up on the pyramid of worldly success, making massive scientific contributions, but, not as Muslims, rather as any other nation on earth – having lost their religious identity during the process of material development? Would a movement be praised that took care of the Muslims but was indifferent to their religion?

The emphasis in our article was, therefore, primarily on those who served Islam in some way. Any service to Islam directly affects the Muslims. On the other hand any direct service to the Muslims might or might not (indirectly or remotely) serve Islam. Any service to Islam takes the Muslims closer to Allah, closer to His approval, and hence, more fruitful with reference to the Hereafter: their true abode.

As for this world, once they win their Lord's approval, without which the Muslims will never be able to make any contribution to this world that would win

them respect ... once they win His approval, the material world will be made easier for them to handle. In contrast, if their Lord is angry with them, all their efforts at material development will go awry, and they will end up bringing humiliation upon themselves rather than the 'izzah (respect) promised by their Lord.

The example of several Muslim nations is before us in our contemporary world whose governments are in the service of Muslims but not in the service of Islam. They are still at the bottom of the world, where they are likely to remain, unless Allah (*swt*) Himself wills otherwise.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's ostensible objectives were to serve the Muslim *Ummah*. That is, the people, rather than their religion. It might be asked, can that not be termed as indirect service to Islam? Yes, it can be so termed provided the service helps Muslims practice Islam better. Did that happen in case of the institution Sir Syed set up? Was that, in fact, his objective? Did the men and women who entered the institution become better practicing Muslims? Or, was it that the education merely helped them find jobs or qualify for higher studies in the Western world? I suppose we all know the answer. It might be said: "Look at the number of Presidents and important men that Aligarh has produced." But, we might again remind that we are talking of service to Islam and not to Muslims.

Could somebody count on his fingers the number of great Islamic scholars that the institute produced? Can the institution



Efforts to prop up the Muslims in the leading position by educationally or materially developing them, while their religion is ignored, will end up in failure. As an educational institution, perhaps Aligarh Muslim University has been one of the most successful in the Indian sub-continent. Wherever they are: in USA or the Middle East, its former students occupy important positions. They are serious, efficient, productive, and possess a good knack of management. Further, in their civil life they are outstandingly cultured, both in manners, upkeep, as well as behaviour and social habits. Above: From the Aligarh Muslim University Campus, in Aligarh, UP

be counted as one that helped establish Islam among the nations of the world? Did it in any other way promote the cause of Islam?

Indeed, it might be interesting, and even hurtful, for the Aligarhians to hear from us that the experience of those engaged in social or educational services to Islam is that they find the least help and contribution coming from them as a group. They are readily available for parties, *Ghazal* evenings, *Musha'iras*, 'Sir Syed' Days, etc., rather than some real good service to the Muslim *Ummah*. It might be hurtful to hear of this observation, but it is our duty to speak out the truth. Yes, the Aligarhians have equally participated in religious movements, but, that is not

specific to Aligarhians. Young men from all sorts of institutions have participated in religious movements.

Not only that the institution's role in producing role-model Muslims needs to be looked into, it did not even produce men and women who made contribution to science and technology, if that was supposed to be its objective, (although we don't believe that was the objective). How many Nobel Prizes did the institution help win? How many world-class scientists did it produce? How many discoveries, inventions were made by its sons? How many research papers were written and are being written now? Perhaps we all know the answer.

We repeat once again that efforts to prop up the Muslims in the leading position by educationally or materially developing them, while their religion is ignored, will end up in failure. That is the “Annual Report” of the major Universities over the Muslim-world, many of which are about to celebrate a hundred-years of “successful contributions” to the development of the Muslims. Aligarh Muslim University is not unique.

Having said the above, we might also point out that as an educational institution, perhaps Aligarh Muslim University has been one of the most successful in the Indian sub-continent. Wherever they are: in USA or the Middle East, its former students occupy important positions. They are serious, efficient, productive, and possess a good knack of management. Further, in their civil life they are outstandingly cultured, both in manners, upkeep, as well as behaviour and social habits. They have a good taste of the fine arts too.

In fact, in this regard, Aligarh Muslim University has made tremendous contributions in India the like of which another example does not exist. While other universities hardly know what culture is and how a good cultural crop can be produced, (in fact, many universities in India produce law-breakers, if not *goondas*, receiving training right in the campus), Aligarh Muslim University produces well-polished men, responsible, sober citizens. The credit for these things go, of course, to the founder, who set the ball rolling, may Allah (*swt*) forgive him

his sins, rest his soul in peace, and reward him for the services to the *Ummah*. Service to the *Ummah* has its own reward. Further, the institution did educationally and economically strengthen the Muslims, and continues to do so, which can be counted as an indirect service to Islam.

THE EDUCATED AND *BID'AH*

Q: In view of YMD's authentic message, I have a request. Please take steps to circulate YMD in remote interiors and villages of India.

Being educated does not often mean being educated in the overall sense. Today's educated person knows and understands little else beyond his own field of specialisation. Islam is not the only religion, but also the only system of thought, that insists on the use of reason and logic in every field of activity, including religion.

YmD

Apart from other difficulties, one problem that we encounter is that people do not know the English language in the remote areas.

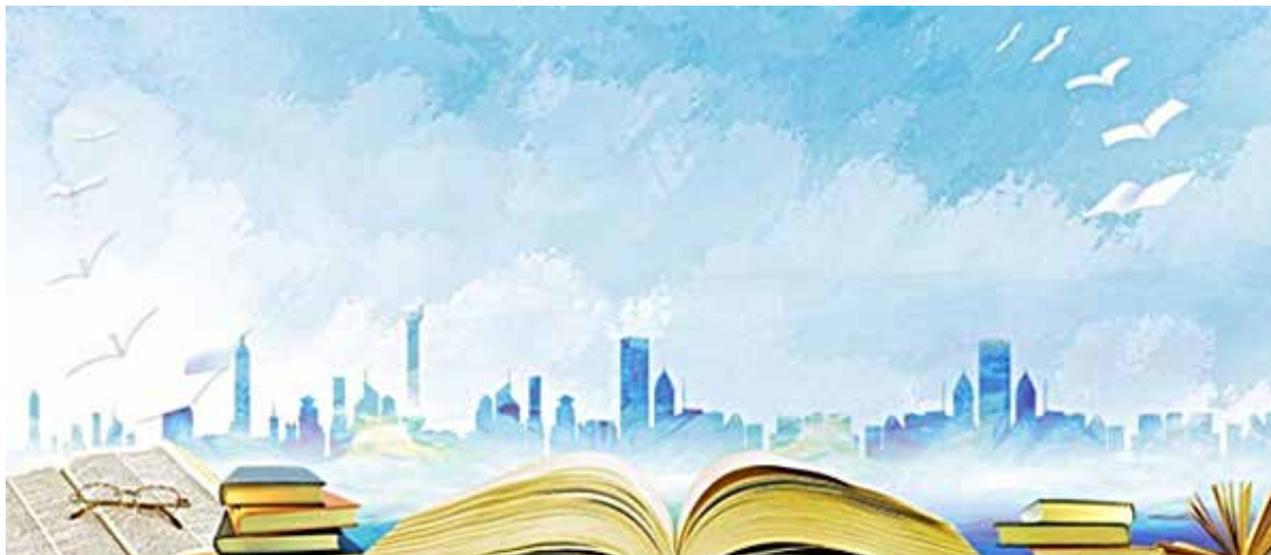
The message then has to be taken to the people in the remote areas in person, by the readers of this magazine.

Q: It has been my observation,

that *Bid'ah* practices are more prevalent in those areas, where even the most educated people, like doctors and some businessmen, enthusiastically practice reading of *Fateha* over food, celebrate *Shabe' Merajand Shabe' Bara'at* with great festivity, death anniversaries etc. Please enlighten your readers about the exact rituals and Islamic behaviour that needs to be followed on these occasions.

YmD

Being educated on secular lines says nothing about one's education in Islam. In fact, in today's university environment, the more a man is educated, the less he knows about his religion. Further, being educated does not mean being very intelligent either. All educational courses are designed for the average. It is hard work that gets one through the courses and not intelligence. Finally, being educated does not often mean being educated in the overall sense. Today's educated person knows and understands little else beyond his own field of specialisation. The above three factors make an educated man no better or worse than one not educated when it comes to dealing with the finer aspects of existence. In many fields of life and its activities, the behavioural pattern of the two is by and large similar. The educated (on modern lines) can be as illogical and unreasonable in fields other than their own, including the religious field, as the uneducated. That is the reason why we see the educated class making the same mistakes as the uneducated: visiting the Dargahs, bowing down before the Peers, conducting *Fatehah*, *Chehlum*,



The Qur'an and *Sunnah* then, need to be popularised. No amount of education, other than the direct study of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* will save people from falling into religious pitfalls. Also, the *Bid'ah* practices are so many, so wide and varied, that the fight against them requires unlimited energy, time and resources.

etc. These are not practices confined to the uneducated. It has been revealed during the past couple of years that past Presidents and Prime Ministers of France regularly consulted the Palmists and astrologers. Their being well-educated and politically highly-placed did not prevent them from committing illogical acts in the realm involving the Unseen and the Unknown.

Islam is not the only religion, but also the only system of thought, that insists on the use of reason and logic in every field of activity, including religion.

As regards those who are not trained in the use of reason and logic, it helps them by providing such clear-cut directions that even if they had blind faith in Islam, and acted blindly, they would be saved from unreasonable behavioural

patterns whether involving faiths, beliefs or religious practices.

It says for instance that “whoever went to an astrologer disbelieved in Islam.” Or, the Qur'an says, “Do not prostrate yourselves to the Sun or the moon, rather, prostrate yourselves before Allah who created them.” If those people who have not been trained in the use of reason and logic simply followed the Islamic persuasions and injunctions, they would remain free of foolish practices. All they have to do is to have some basic knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The rest is taken care of by the two.

The Qur'an and *Sunnah* then, need to be popularised. No amount of education, other than the direct study of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* will save people from falling into religious

pitfalls. Also, the *Bid'ah* practices are so many, so wide and varied, that the fight against them requires unlimited energy, time and resources. The short cut is the popularisation of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* studies which function as the overseers, admonishers, and reformers from within each individual's self, reducing the role of the external agencies of reform to a minimum.

Q: Please increase the articles written in the Children's Column.

*Summayyah,
Bangalore.*

YmD

Yes, that is one area in which several of our staffs are working. However, since we believe in high-quality work, it will be some time before their efforts bear fruit. ■



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The Ghostly Atom

Stagnation in scientific development is not the share of physics alone. Take any field: cosmology, biology, psychology; and even philosophy and theology. Everywhere you miss new ideas, new concepts or fresh thoughts. Rather, now it is stirring of the old pudding everywhere, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

It was some five hundred years before Christ that a few Greek thinkers conjectured that matter is made of particles, and that all things appear to be made of the same particle: wood, rocks, water, vapors – and all. They were all made up of the same fundamental particle. This particle was named atom. It was too tiny and was indivisible. ('Atom' meant 'uncuttable.'). If things looked different, smelt different, felt different (hot or cold), and tasted different, it was because they were assembled together differently. Otherwise, they were made of the same atoms.

Only in modern times it has been discovered that there are (half a dozen) types of atoms: stable, radioactive, etc., - although all the types are same in their structure. Thus, every solid, liquid, and gas is composed of atoms. Therefore, atom became the subject of study and research.

It was soon discovered that, even if indivisible, an atom appeared to be composed of other elements. It was realized that every atom consisted of one or more other materials which were chemically bound to it. It was conjectured that the atom was spherical, and a lump of newly discovered elements called electrons, surrounded it. It stuck to it by

electromagnetic force. It was in 1913 or so that it was discovered that an atom had a nucleus of a solid material at the center with one or more electrons orbiting it. It was originally thought that the electrons were point-like particles that circled the nucleus at high speed. The picture was similar to the structure of our planetary system where the Sun occupies the central position orbited by its planets: Mars, Earth, Saturn, etc.

An atom is of size 100 picometer where one picometer is one trillionth of a meter, i.e. ($1/1000000000000$. That is, 1×10^{-12} meter). A pin-head can comfortably accommodate millions of atoms.

The dense central part, the nucleus, has been penetrated. It is found to be composed of particles called protons and neutrons. It can be one proton and one neutron per atom, or, several protons and equal number of neutrons, and equal number of electrons orbiting the nucleus. Hydrogen has one electron orbiting the nucleus which has one proton. Oxygen atoms have 8 electrons orbiting the nucleus of 8 protons. Copper has 29 protons and 29 electrons.

The proton has two parts, 1) Quarks (two 'up' quarks,



Atomic dimensions are thousands of times smaller than the wavelengths of light, so they cannot be viewed using an optical microscope. To visualize the minuteness of the atom, consider that a typical human hair is about one million carbon atoms in width...A single drop of water contains about two sextillion (2×10^{21}) atoms of oxygen, and twice the number of hydrogen atoms...If an apple were magnified to the size of the Earth, then the atoms in the apple would be approximately the size of the original apple. – Wikipedia

and one 'down' quark) ... and (2) the Gluons. The Quarks are 3 in number, and it is the Gluons which are responsible for keeping the Quarks together within each atom.

The atom is mostly empty. More than 94% of its mass is in the nucleus. And the nucleus is so tiny that one could say it does not exist. The electrons are like a cloud. The atom is more an image than a physical unit. Says a scientific article: "Particles are not dots in space, but are more like 'dancing points of energy.'" In the light of latest findings the planetary model in which an electron orbited the nucleus as a particle, had to be abandoned.

But, the invisibility is simply not because it is so tiny, but because of its shadowy existence at the atomic level. That is because, it is there now, and not there now. It has a dual quality of being. It behaves like a particle as well as like a wave.

And atoms join with each other – to produce molecules (any ordinary matter: an iron piece, brick, wood etc.). In all cases it is electrons of an atom joining with electrons of another atom. In other words, it is electrons alone of an atom, that join electrons of another atom and never the nucleuses.

This electron to electron joining is called covalent binding. And covalent bonding does not necessarily require that the two atoms be of the same element. They can be of different elements too. E.g. one atom of oxygen and 2 atoms of hydrogen, successfully join together to become a molecule of water. But the nucleuses remain apart, even if water molecules are heated or cooled.

At this point we might say, 'Stop. Enough is enough.' This one-page covers hundreds of pages of description of an atom. Atom appears to be too vast a subject.

Yet, despite such large material, produced by hundreds of scientist, (of whom more than 200 won Nobel Prizes in Physics) all over the globe, working over more than a century, we are left with dozens of unanswered questions

to this day: "What is dark matter? Why is a neutron heavier than protons by just one per cent? Where did all the antimatter go?" etc.

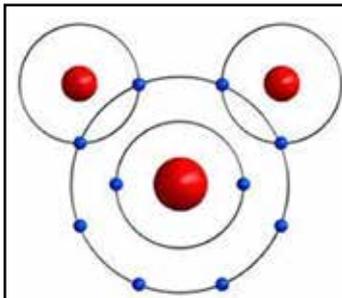
The research goes on. But since last quarter of a century, the yield is discouraging. Science seems to be stagnating. The search for the 'final truth' is evading. The scientists do not know what to make of their discoveries. For instance:

Experiments show that an atom seems to be in two places at the same time. When two particles are 'quantum-entangled' and each is placed in different locations, in an experiment 21 km apart, then, amazingly, each seems to know what is happening to the other. (Each location requires billions of dollars to build with machineries and equipment).

For example, if the polarization of one of the entangled atom is changed from positive to negative, the other entangled atom in the other location unconnected to the first location, changes its polarization from negative to positive instantly, without delay of a microsecond. The information between the two particles appears to travel from one to the other location, at speed faster than that of light: 300,000 km a second. This contradicts the Theory of Relativity. But this theory is firmly established. It has been tested by the best of minds over a century and has stood all tests to emerge as true in flying colors. Quantum theories are, on the other hand, demonstrable in any lab. But the quantum theory and relativity cannot co-exist in a single theory. They contradict each other.

But the stagnation in scientific development is not the share of physics alone. Take any field: cosmology, biology, psychology ... and even philosophy and theology. Everywhere you miss new ideas, new concepts or fresh thoughts. Rather, now it is stirring of the old pudding everywhere.

We might, at this juncture, remind ourselves of a statement in Allah's Book: "*They will not comprehend aught of His knowledge, save such as He wills.*" (2: 255) ■

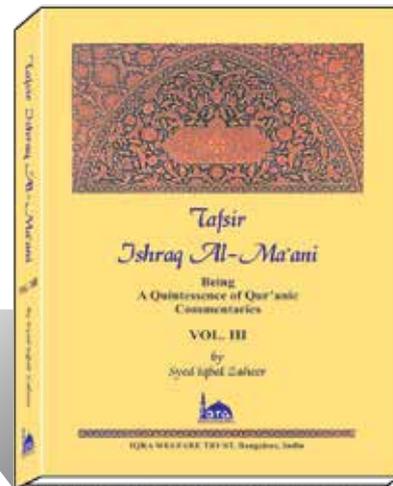


Electrons were discovered as a fundamental unit of charge. They also have mass, and in fact determining the charge to mass ratio of an electron is commonly conducted in undergraduate physics labs. So we know that electrons have charge, mass, and spin (a magnetic dipole moment). That's about all we know, because they are about all the properties that we can readily detect.

Verses from Surah 29: Al-`Ankabut (The Spider)

Makkan

Translation and Commentary



Source: *Ishaq al-Ma`ani*

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND, THE COMPASSIONATE

[36] *And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu`ayb. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah and look to the Last Day.³⁸ And act not corruptly in the earth, spreading mischief.*

Commentary

38. That is, you should look forward to be rewarded for your good deeds in the Hereafter (IbnJarir). A few have thought that the meaning is “fear the Hereafter” (IbnJarir, IbnKathir, Qurtubi).

[37] *But they lay the lie on him and so the earthquake seized them and by morning they lay prostrate in their dwelling.³⁹*

39. That is, they lay dead, piled upon each other (IbnJarir).

[38] *And (remember) `Ad⁴⁰ and Thamud - surely, it has become clear to you (what We did to them) from their homes (now in ruins). Shaytan decked out fair to them their deeds, and thus averted them from the Path, although they were (otherwise) quite sagacious.⁴¹*

40. Asad comments: “As regards the tribe of `Aad, the above seems to be an allusion to their one-time capital, the legendary ‘Iram the many pillared’

(mentioned in the Qur’an only once, namely, in 89: 7). It has since been buried by the moving sand-dunes of Al-Ahqaf(a region between ‘Uman and Hadramawt,

within the great South-Arabian desert of Rub al-Khali); it is said, however, that its traces are occasionally uncovered by strong winds.”

41. Alternative meanings are, “they were endowed with sight” (Majid), or “were keen of sight.” Asad writes, “Thus, the Qur’an implies that it is man’s ‘ability to perceive the truth’ (*istibsar*) that makes him morally responsible for his doings and hence, for his failure to resist his own evil impulses..”

Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah said that they

were quite sagacious in their religious affairs, doing what they did consciously; upon which Dahhak added that not only they knew well what they clung to as their religion, but were in fact sort of proud of it (IbnJarir). Another possible meaning is that they knew the error in their pagan religion, and were quite aware that the truth lay in the message brought by their Prophets, yet clung to paganism. Farra’s opinion on the other hand was that although they were a sagacious people, their sagacity served them not (when they decided to reject the messages).
–Qurtubi



[39] *And Qarun, Fir`awn and Haman - Musa did go to them with clear signs but they waxed proud in the earth, but they were not the overtakers (against Us).*

[40] *Wherefore We seized each one for his sin. Against some We loosed a storm of stones;⁴² some were seized by the Cry;⁴³ some We sank in the earth,⁴⁴ while some We drowned.⁴⁵ And Allah was not such as to wrong them, but rather, they were wronging themselves.*

42. The allusion is to `Aad and the nation of Lut.

The Arabs name every storm that carries sand, pebble, or hale, as `aasif. (IbnJarir)

43. The allusion is to Thamud and the inhabitants of Madyan.

44. Such as Qarun. Asad comments: “The common denominator between these two (Haman and Qarun:

“The common denominator between these two (Haman and Qarun: au.) and Pharaoh is their false pride (*takabbur*) and arrogance (*istikbar*), which caused them to become ‘archetype of evil’.. A similar attitude of mind is said to have been the characteristic of the tribes of `Aad and Thamud mentioned in the preceding verse.”

au.) and Pharaoh is their false pride (*takabbur*) and arrogance (*istikbar*), which caused them to become ‘archetype of evil’.. A similar attitude of mind is said to have been the characteristic of the tribes of `Aad and Thamud mentioned in the preceding verse.”

45. Such as the nations of Nuh, Fir`awn and his folks.

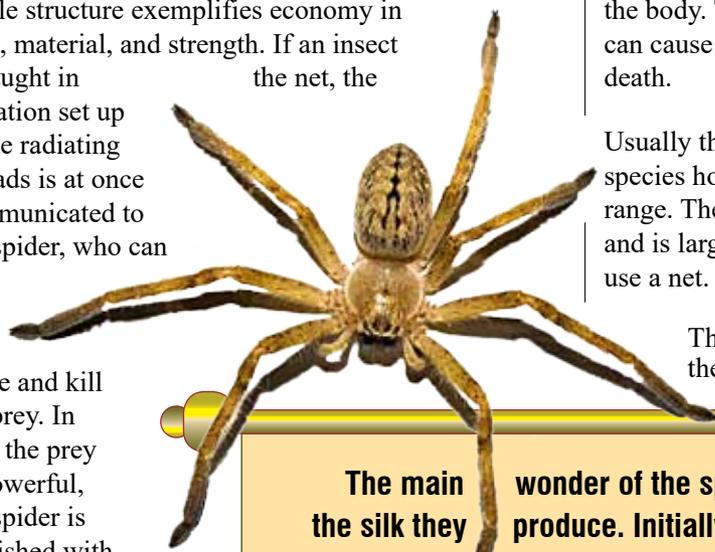


[41] *The example of those who took protectors other than Allah is like the spider which takes (to itself) a house; but truly, the weakest of houses is the spider’s house;⁴⁶ only if they knew.⁴⁷*

46. Yusuf Ali has a goodly note on the spider’s nest: “The Spider’s house is one of the wonderful Signs of Allah’s creation. It is made up of fine silk threads spun out of silk glands in the spider’s body.

There are many kinds of spiders and many kinds of spider’s houses. Two main types of houses may be mentioned. There is the tubular nest or web, a silk-lined house or burrow with one or two trap-doors.

This may be called his residential or family mansion. Then there is what is ordinarily called a spider's web, consisting of a central point with radiating threads running in all directions and acting as tie-beams to the quasi-circular concentric threads that form the body of the web. This is his hunting box. The whole structure exemplifies economy in time, material, and strength. If an insect is caught in the net, the vibration set up in the radiating threads is at once communicated to the spider, who can



come and kill his prey. In case the prey is powerful, the spider is furnished with poison glands with which to kill his prey. The spider sits either in the centre of the web or hides on the under-side of a leaf or in some crevice, but he always has a single thread connecting him with his web, to keep him intelphonic communication. The female spider is much bigger than the male, and in Arabic the generic gender of '*Ankabut* is feminine.'

Spiders

Except Antarctica, spiders are found everywhere. A few of them are aquatic, that is, live under water. There are about 30,000 known species of them. Their average sizes vary from a few millimeters to 9 cm. body length. Feet included, they can be as large as 30 cm. (a foot). The bird-eating spider weighs 120 gm. and is capable of hunting down little birds.

Spiders have eight legs and eight simple eyes. In some species the eyes are so arranged as to allow all around view. They can see ahead, behind, above, and

to the sides, all at the same time. The lower part of the abdomen produces the silk gland. They live for about a year and are predators; they bite their prey releasing a powerful poison which causes paralysis. The poison also produces digestive juices in the body of the prey which the spider sucks along with other juicy parts of the body. To humans, their bite is not fatal although can cause severe pain. Occasionally, they may cause death.

Usually they use their nets to trap insects. Some species however lasso them as they come within range. The famous Tarantula variety lives in burrows and is large enough to pound on the prey rather than use a net.

The main wonder of the spiders is the silk they produce. Initially, it is a fluid which contains a protein called fibroin.

The main wonder of the spiders is the silk they produce. Initially, it is a fluid which contains a protein called fibroin. It solidifies into an insoluble thread when the proteins rearrange themselves under tension as the silk is drawn out of the spider's body. Spiders have several glands to produce several types of silk. Spider silk is up to 200 times finer than the finest human hair and is highly elastic.

It solidifies into an insoluble thread when the proteins rearrange themselves under tension as the silk is drawn out of the spider's body. Spiders have several glands to produce several types of silk. Spider silk is up to 200 times finer than the finest human hair and is highly elastic. It can be stretched to over 20% of its length and retains its elasticity

at temperatures as low as - 40 ° C. It is one of the strongest natural substances known. A single thread of it can be stretched by nearly a third without snapping, and would have to be about 80 km long to break purely under its own weight. It is said that an inch thick of pure spider silk net can stop a flying jetliner in the air.

Mating occurs by the force of nature, otherwise, it is the end of the male which is either eaten off by the female, or dies off, immediately after the mating is over. Once mature, the male spider stops feeding and spends all the time and energy trying to find a female to mate with. In some cases the female starts eating off the male even as mating is going on. Strangely, in such cases mating actions continue despite the male having lost its head to the female.

Spiders are oviparous, i.e., they lay eggs. The mother

sometimes carries the eggs on her back, or conceals them somewhere, preserving them in silk cocoons. When they hatch, the young ones ride on their mother's back until they are big enough to fend for themselves. Among the Wolf spiders, when two female spiders carrying young meet, they fight to the death of one of them. When that happens, the spiderlings from both will climb onto the back of the victorious mother who carries them around as if they are her own.

47. Yusuf Ali tells us why people fail to learn in life: "Parables seem simple things, but their profound meaning and application can only be understood by those who seek knowledge and by Allah's grace

attain it." And, "Most of the facts in the last note can be read into the Parable. For their thickness the spider's threads are very strong from the point of view of relativity, but in our actual world they are flimsy, especially the threads of the gossamer spider floating in the air. So is the house and strength of the man who relies on material resources however fine or beautiful relatively; before the eternal Reality they are as nothing. The spider's most cunning architecture cannot stand against a wave of a man's hand. His poison glands are like the hidden poison in our beautiful worldly plans which may take various shapes but have seeds of death in them."



[42] Surely, Allah knows whatever aught they call upon other than Him. He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

[43] And We strike these similitudes for the people, but ponder not except the knowledgeable.

[44] Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth.⁴⁸ Surely in that is a sign for the believers.

48. "I.e., endowed with meaning and purpose.. In other words, belief in the existence of a meaning and

purpose underlying the creation of the universe is a logical corollary of one's belief in God" (Asad). ■

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Ahadith on Qiyamah – and the Day of Judgement

I. And `Abdullah (ra) says that when the Prophet (saws) entered Makkah on the day of victory, there were three hundred and sixty idols around the Ka`ba. He began to poke at each of them with a stick that was in his hand, the while saying: “The Truth has come and falsehood has left. The Truth has come and falsehood has left. The Truth has come and falsehood will not come back.”ⁱ– Bukhari

Notes:

i. The meaning is that *tawhid* (monotheism) has come and *shirk* (polytheism) has left. And, as the *hadith* predicts, and another fixes the place also, polytheism will never come back to the Arab Peninsula. Islam is well-established in the Arab heartland. *Kufr* will never come back here, even if in some phases of history transgressions may be reported.

II. Abu Hurayra (ra) says the Prophet (saws) said: “How will you feel when Ibn Maryam (saws) will descend down between you while the Imam will be from one of you?”ⁱⁱ– Bukhari

Notes:

ii. Isa (asws) will follow the *Imam* of the Muslims because he will be arriving for a certain purpose after fulfilling which he will die. His prophetic period is over. He will be following the *Shari`ah* revealed to our Prophet (saws) whose prophetic period – and so his *Shari`ah*– will last until the Last Hour.

His second coming will be to destroy Dajjal and his followers, most of whom will be Jews who are expecting the Messiah to come and give them victory over the nations of the world i.e., primarily,

Christians and Muslims. It is the same expectation of the Christians. And it is yet the same expectation of the Muslims. And judging from the predictions made by the Prophet that have so far come true, we know whose expectation is right and on whose side the Messiah will be.

However, before the Messiah comes, Allah (swt) will send *Masih Ad-Dajjal*, the Anti-Christ, whom all those with no true faith will blindly follow, chiefly the Jews, but also the Christians and some of the Muslims weak in faith. With these as his followers – and they making the bulk of his army –Dajjal will go about spilling lot of human blood

and causing misery. It is when the division of the evil and the virtuous would have taken place with both sides locked in a fierce life and death battle, that `Isa (asws) will appear, descending into Damascus with the help of two angels at the time prayers would be just beginning to be held. The *Imam* of the Muslims will ask him to lead, but he will decline and ask him to continue to lead in the prayers. He will then join the Muslim forces that would have gathered there for another battle with the

Dajjali forces. He will chase Dajjal from place to place, defeating him in battle after battle, until they will finally meet in a place called Ludd (now an air-force base in Israel). There `Isa (asws) will kill him and Muslims will finish off his followers. Thus the evildoers will be destroyed and a long peaceful period will follow. *WaAlhamdulillah rabbi al-alamin.*

III. And Sa`d b. Waqqas (ra) says the Prophet (saws) said: “The people of the pails will ever remain on Islam until the Day of Resurrection.”ⁱⁱⁱ – Muslim

`Isa (asws) will follow the Imam of the Muslims because he will be arriving for a certain purpose after fulfilling which he will die. His prophetic period is over. He will be following the *Shari`ah* revealed to our Prophet (saws) whose prophetic period – and so his *Shari`ah*– will last until the Last Hour.



Notes:

iii. By the people of the pail is perhaps meant the people of Hejaz whose chief occupation continues to be agriculture which involves irrigation where the pail is an important tool.

IV. Jabir (ra) says, I heard the Prophet (saws) say: "Satan has given up hoping that those who do their five daily prayers in the Arab peninsula will ever

worship him. But (he has not given up hopes of) fermenting trouble between them."^{iv}

Notes:

iv. This is yet another prediction about the people of the Arabian Peninsula. However, a condition is attached viz. those who do their five daily prayers. This should also tell us how important it is for every Muslim to do his five daily prayers. ■



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What Was Covid Really About?

The strategy to wholly dismantle and privatize health and welfare services seems increasingly likely given the need to rein in (COVID-related) public debt and the trend towards Artificial Intelligence (AI), workplace automization and worklessness.

*“And thus it renders more and more evident the great central fact that the cause of the miserable condition of the working class is to be sought, not in these minor grievances, but in the capitalistic system itself.” ~ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England (1845)* (Preface to the English Edition, p.36)*

The IMF and World Bank have for decades pushed a policy agenda based on cuts to public services, increases in taxes paid by the poorest and moves to undermine labour rights and protections. IMF ‘structural adjustment’ policies have resulted in 52% of Africans lacking access to healthcare and 83% having no safety nets to fall back on if they lose their job or become sick. Even the IMF has shown that neoliberal policies fuel poverty and inequality.

In 2021, an Oxfam review of IMF COVID-19 loans showed that 33 African countries were encouraged to pursue austerity policies. The world’s poorest countries are due to pay \$43 billion in debt repayments in 2022, which could otherwise cover the costs of their food imports.

Oxfam and Development Finance International (DFI) have also revealed that 43 out of 55 African Union member states face public expenditure cuts totalling \$183 billion over the next five years.

According to **Prof. Michel Chossudovsky** of the Centre for Research on Globalization, the closure of the world economy (March 11, 2020 Lockdown imposed on more than 190 countries) has triggered an unprecedented process of global

indebtedness. Governments are now under the control of global creditors in the post-COVID era.

What we are seeing is a *de facto* privatisation of the state as governments capitulate to the needs of Western financial institutions. Moreover, these debts are largely dollar-denominated, helping to strengthen the US dollar and US leverage over countries.

It raises the question: what was COVID really about?

Millions have been asking that question since lockdowns and restrictions began in early 2020. If it was indeed about public health, why close down the bulk of health services and the global economy knowing full well what the massive health, economic and debt implications would be?

Why mount a military-style propaganda campaign to censor world-renowned scientists and terrorize entire populations and use the full force and brutality of the police to ensure compliance?

These actions were wholly disproportionate to any risk posed to public health, especially when considering the way ‘COVID death’ definitions and data were often massaged and how PCR tests were misused to scare populations into submission.

Prof. Fabio Vighi of Cardiff University implies we should have been suspicious from the start when the usually “unscrupulous ruling elites” froze the global economy in the face of a pathogen that targets almost exclusively the unproductive (the over 80s).

COVID was a crisis of capitalism masquerading as a public health emergency.

Capitalism

Capitalism needs to keep, expanding into, or creating, new markets to ensure the accumulation of capital to offset the tendency for the general rate of profit to fall. The capitalist needs to accumulate capital (wealth) to be able to reinvest it and make further profits. By placing downward pressure on workers’ wages, the capitalist extracts sufficient surplus value to be able to do this.

But when the capitalist is unable to sufficiently reinvest (due to declining demand for commodities, a lack of investment opportunities and markets, etc), wealth (capital) over accumulates, devalues and the system goes into crisis. To avoid crisis, capitalism requires constant growth, markets and sufficient demand.

According to writer, Ted Reese, the capitalist rate of profit has

trended downwards from an estimated 43% in the 1870s to 17% in the 2000s. Although wages and corporate taxes have been slashed, the exploitability of labour was increasingly insufficient to meet the demands of capital accumulation.

By late 2019, many companies could not generate sufficient profit. Falling turnover, limited cash-flows and highly leveraged balance sheets were prevalent. Economic growth was weakening in the run up to the massive stock market crash in February 2020, which saw trillions more pumped into the system in the guise of ‘COVID relief.’

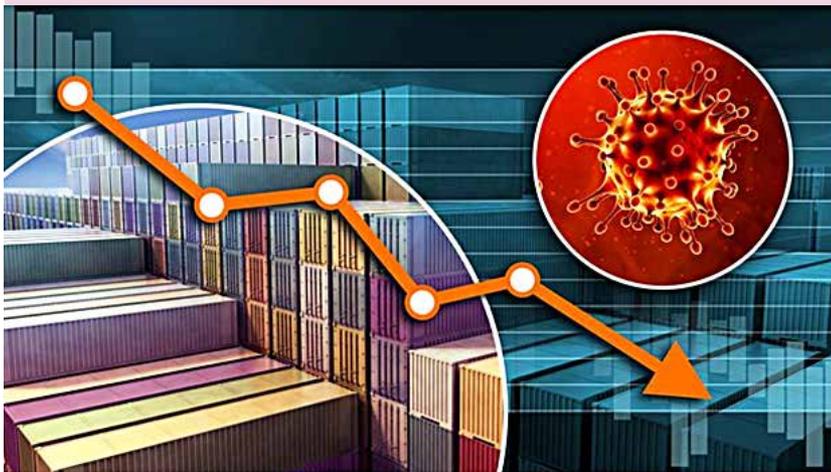
To stave off crisis up until that point, various tactics had been employed.

Credit markets were expanded and personal debt increased to maintain consumer demand as workers’ wages were squeezed. Financial deregulation occurred and speculative capital was allowed to exploit new areas and investment opportunities. At the same time, stock buy backs, the student debt economy, quantitative easing and massive bail outs and subsidies and an expansion of militarism helped to maintain economic growth.

There was also a ramping up of an imperialist strategy that has seen indigenous systems of production abroad being displaced by global corporations and states pressurised to withdraw from areas of economic activity, leaving transnational players to occupy the space left open.

While these strategies produced speculative bubbles and led to

By late 2019, many companies could not generate sufficient profit. Falling turnover, limited cash-flows and highly leveraged balance sheets were prevalent. Economic growth was weakening in the run up to the massive stock market crash in February 2020, which saw trillions more pumped into the system in the guise of ‘COVID relief.’



The IMF, World Bank and global leaders knew full well what the impact on the world's poor would be of closing down the world economy through COVID-related lockdowns. Yet, they sanctioned it and there is now the prospect that in excess of a quarter of a billion more people worldwide will fall into extreme levels of poverty in 2022 alone.

an overvaluation of assets and increased both personal and government debt, they helped to continue to secure viable profits and returns on investment.

But come 2019, former governor of the Bank of England, **Mervyn King**, warned that the world was sleepwalking towards a fresh economic and financial crisis that would have devastating consequences. He argued that the global economy was stuck in a low growth trap and recovery from the crisis of 2008 was weaker than that after the Great Depression.

King concluded that it was time for the Federal Reserve and other central banks to begin talks behind closed doors with politicians.

That is precisely what happened as key players, including BlackRock, the world's most powerful investment fund, got together to work out a strategy going forward. This took place in the lead up to COVID.

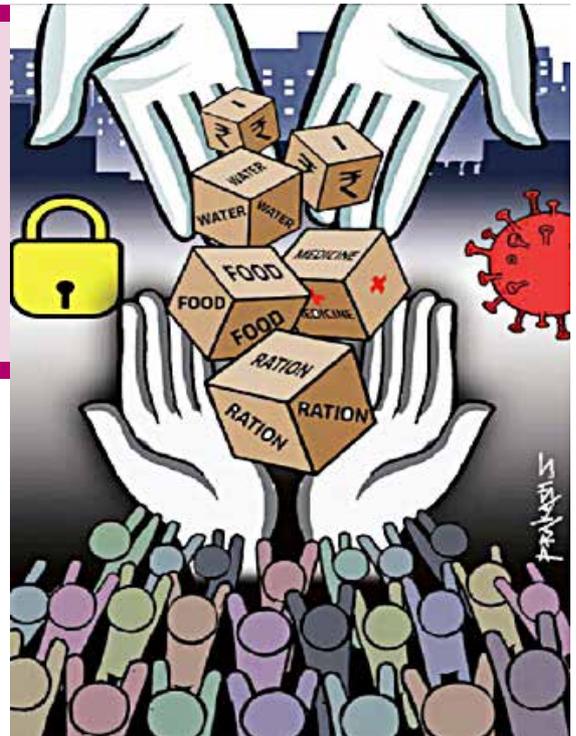
Aside from deepening the dependency of poorer countries on Western capital, Fabio Vighi says lockdowns and the global suspension of economic transactions allowed the US Fed to flood the ailing financial markets (under the guise of COVID) with freshly printed money while shutting down the real economy to

avoid hyperinflation. Lockdowns suspended business transactions, which drained the demand for credit and stopped the contagion.

COVID provided cover for a multi-trillion-dollar bailout for the capitalist economy that was in meltdown prior to COVID. Despite a decade or more of 'quantitative easing', this new bailout came in the form of trillions of dollars pumped into financial markets by the US Fed (in the months prior to March 2020) and subsequent 'COVID relief'.

The IMF, World Bank and global leaders knew full well what the impact on the world's poor would be of closing down the world economy through COVID-related lockdowns. Yet, they sanctioned it and there is now the prospect that in excess of a quarter of a billion more people worldwide will fall into extreme levels of poverty in 2022 alone.

In April 2020, the *Wall Street Journal* stated the IMF and World Bank faced a deluge of aid requests from scores of poorer countries seeking bailouts and loans from financial institutions with \$1.2 trillion to lend.



In addition to helping to reboot the financial system, closing down the global economy deliberately deepened poorer countries' dependency on Western global conglomerates and financial interests.

Lockdowns also helped accelerate the restructuring of capitalism that involves smaller enterprises being driven to bankruptcy or bought up by monopolies and global chains, thereby ensuring continued viable profits for Big Tech, the digital payments giants and global online corporations like Meta and Amazon and the eradication of millions of jobs.

Although the effects of the conflict in Ukraine cannot be dismissed, with the global economy now open again, inflation is rising and causing a 'cost of living' crisis. With a debt-ridden economy, there is limited scope for rising interest rates to control inflation.

But this crisis is not inevitable:

current inflation is not only induced by the liquidity injected into the financial system but also being fuelled by speculation in food commodity markets and corporate greed as energy and food corporations continue to rake in vast profits at the expense of ordinary people.

Resistance

However, resistance is fertile.

Aside from the many anti-restriction/pro-freedom rallies during COVID, we are now seeing a more strident trade unionism coming to the fore – in Britain at least – led by media savvy leaders like Mick Lynch, general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), who know how to appeal to the public and tap into widely held resentment against soaring cost of living rises. Teachers, health workers and others could follow the RMT into taking strike action.

Lynch says that millions of people in Britain face lower living standards and the stripping out of occupational pensions.

He adds: “COVID has been a smokescreen for the rich and powerful in this country to drive down wages as far as they can.” Just like a decade of imposed ‘austerity’ was used to achieve similar results in the lead up to COVID.

The trade union movement should now be taking a leading role in resisting the attack on living standards and further attempts to run-down state-provided welfare and privatise what remains.

The strategy to wholly dismantle and privatise health and welfare services seems increasingly likely given the need to rein in (COVID-related) public debt and the trend towards AI, workplace automatization and worklessness.

This is a real concern because, following the logic of capitalism, work is a condition for the existence of the labouring classes. So, if a mass labour force is no longer deemed necessary, there is no need for mass education, welfare and healthcare provision and systems that have traditionally served to reproduce and maintain

labour that capitalist economic activity has required.

In 2019, **Philip Alston**, the UN rapporteur on extreme poverty, accused British government ministers of the “systematic immiseration of a significant part of the British population” in the decade following the 2008 financial crash.

Alston stated:

“As Thomas Hobbes observed long ago, such an approach condemns the least well off to lives that are ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.’ As the British social contract slowly evaporates, Hobbes’ prediction risks becoming the new reality.”

Post-COVID, Alston’s words carry even more weight.

As this article draws to a close, news is breaking that Boris Johnson has resigned as Prime Minister. A remarkable PM if only for his criminality, lack of moral foundation and double standards – also applicable to many of his cronies in government.

With this in mind, let’s finish where we began.

“I have never seen a class so deeply demoralised, so incurably debased by selfishness, so corroded within, so incapable of progress, as the English bourgeoisie... For it nothing exists in this world, except for the sake of money, itself not excluded. It knows no bliss save that of rapid gain, no pain save that of losing gold. In the presence of this avarice and lust of gain, it is not possible for a single human sentiment or opinion to remain untainted.” ~ Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (1845), p.275 ■

[Global Research, July 17, 2022]

Aside from the many anti-restriction/pro-freedom rallies during COVID, we are now seeing a more strident trade unionism coming to the fore





Pond Inlet at Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada

‘The Deepest Silences’: What Lies behind the Arctic’s Indigenous Suicide Crisis

For years, I lived with the indigenous Inuit community in Canada's far north. But it was only later, when the suicides began, that I learned of the epidemic of abuse that had unfolded during that time, writes HUGH BRODY.

Horne was a teacher in the Canadian Arctic for almost fifteen years, from 1971 to 1985. He taught in six different Inuit communities. He was first charged with sexual crimes against children in 1987, was found guilty of molesting 24 boys and sentenced to a prison term of six years. Subsequently, 50 men brought more charges against him.

In 2000, he pleaded guilty to 20 cases, and was sentenced to a further five years. In 2008, he was found not guilty in relation to ten more cases. Many of his victims have pressed for compensation from the government. By 2015, awards had been made to 152 of Horne’s victims, at a cost to the government of CA\$36.5Mn. They had been between six and sixteen years old when Horne assaulted them.

In January 2015, a former Catholic priest, Eric Dejaeger, was found guilty of the sexual abuse of 32 children in the high Arctic community of Igloolik between 1976 and 1982, the same time as Horne was committing his crimes. Journalists covering Dejaeger’s case reported that he apologised to the court, with some of his victims in attendance.

Dejaeger and Horne are two of many such offenders – some charged and imprisoned, many long since dead or hiding in legal obscurity. In time we would learn the extent of sexual predation in the residential schools to which thousands of Indigenous children in Canada were sent.

A government official in the new Inuit administration of Nunavut had invited me to visit Iqaluit, the largest town in the eastern Arctic.

Nunavut was the name the Inuit had given to their territory – a new jurisdiction won through the campaign for their rights to their own lands, and which had been created in April 1999.

Nearly 700,000 square miles of the north, the homeland of 30,000 Inuit, the realisation of a political dream. Now I had a chance to go to the decolonised Canadian Arctic. The invitation arose from publication of my book, *The Other Side of Eden*.

I was being asked to return to the north to share thoughts about its history and to meet with some of those working in the new Arctic.

In 2002, twenty years after I had last been in the Arctic, I returned. The Ontario landscape, at the

fringes of Ottawa, spread out in the grey grip of the coldest part of winter. A taxi took me through a cold and gloomy dusk to my hotel, where a large brown envelope was waiting for me at reception. I took it up to my room, thinking here would be the arrangements for the meetings and travel in the coming days. I unpacked, and then sat down at the room's tiny desk and opened the envelope.

I opened the brown envelope and took out five pages of typed information. No note about arrangements, and no indication of who this was from. Just a long list, a table of facts. With a row of headings: place, gender, age, method.

It was suicide data: a list, for the years 1999-2001. The places were all Inuit communities in Nunavut, including the ones where I had lived, and others where I had stayed or passed through 20 years before.

Some were small villages of a few hundred people. The largest

– Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet – numbered more than 2,000. But they were all on the list, every kind of Inuit community. The list was long: dozens of cases.

I recognised many family names: the children and grandchildren of men and women I had known, travelled with, lived with and learned from when I had been in their villages and homes.

There was no summary of the facts, no analysis of the cases – just a line for each one. But it was easy to see the pattern. About two thirds were men, and one third women; all but one or two were between the ages of 15 and 30; almost all had died by hanging.

The same flow of events was being described in Alaska, Greenland, Australia and much of Canada. Young people, especially young men, had suicide rates of anything between 75 and 250 per 100,000, many multiples of those in the same nations who were not from First Nation or Indigenous families.

Sexually abused children can find themselves driven into and then caught in the deepest of silences, while needing, more than anyone else, to be cared for and heard and given a chance to heal.

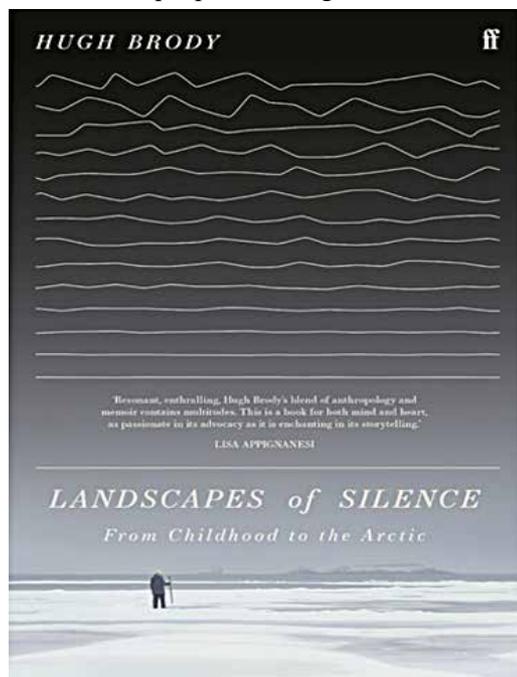
Damage to the society makes for silence, grief and anger on all sides. Those who would expect to have the job of passing on knowledge, insight, beliefs and all the skills that are the heart of a culture have been undermined. Those who have been abused devalue themselves.

Parents have been caused to doubt the worth and validity of all that they were raised to be, and have lost confidence in all that they should be passing on to their children. Or the children have been persuaded that the parents have nothing of real value, no relevant truth to offer.

So the line from the older to the younger generation is broken. Each is caught on their side of the line – the old not able to be parents as they would have wished to be, the young not able to look to parents for all that young people need.

Thus the meaning of life as it was, as it should be, as each side of the generational divide needs it to be, is lost in uncertainty, grief and silence. The next generation is left with an absence of attachment, and a longing for the things they deeply need but, as small children, find that they cannot have. ■

[Adapted from Landscapes of Silence: From Childhood to the Arctic by Hugh Brody, published by Faber]



Sexual abuse of children may be different in crucial ways from other forms of abuse: it is a direct assault on the most vulnerable of all. But it has a critical relevance to all other damage done: child victims of abuse are rendered unsure of themselves, and thus given an acute sensitivity to all the other forms of damage that they might then face.

The author, Hugh Brody's book, 'Landscapes of Silence: From Childhood to the Arctic'



The Yarmouk River along whose banks the great Battle of Yarmouk (636CE) was waged between Muslim and Byzantine forces. Ikrimah b. Abu Jahal, too, had participated in this battle which broke the back of the Byzantine Empire.

Ikrima b. Abu Jahal: Once a Staunch Enemy of Islam died a Martyr for its Cause

Ikrima was the son of the infamous opponent of Islam – Abu Jahl. He fought against Muslims and remained an enemy of Islam for a long time. He attended the Battle of Badr, where his father was killed.

After his father's death, Ikrima returned to Makkah and became more aggressive against Islam. He took part in the Battle of Uhud and the Battle of the Trench against Muslims.

Almighty Allah (*swt*) gave strength to Muslims, and the Prophet (*saws*) led a campaign against Makkah. He adopted a strategy of surrounding the city from all sides to be protected against any onslaught by the Quraish.

The Prophet (*saws*) advised his

commanders not to fight in the sacred sanctuary. But Ikrima was in a different mood. He raised an army and attacked the contingent of Muslim commander, Khalid bin Waleed. As a result, Ikrima lost four fighters and fled.

Soon afterwards, Makkah witnessed a different scene. The Prophet (*saws*) was standing at the door of the Ka'aba. Hundreds of idols in and around the Ka'aba were smashed, and Bilal bin Rabah called *Adhan* from the rooftop of the Ka'aba.

Thousands of the Quraish who were staunch enemies of Islam were expecting revenge from the Muslims – mass execution for their decade-long crimes.

Suddenly the Prophet (*saws*)

declared: "Go back; you all are free."

The pagans of Makkah were astonished to hear those words. They had never experienced such magnanimity and generosity in their history. Only six people were to be executed for their crimes, and Ikrima was one of them.

The people realized the greatness of Islam and came to the Prophet (*saws*) to embrace the new religion. But Ikrima was not among them. He fled from Makkah to save his life and headed toward the seashore. He remembered his crimes and thought that nobody could save his life.

Even the staunch enemies of Islam like Amr Ibn al-Aas and

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Abu Sufyan had embraced Islam and received great favor from the Prophet (*saws*).

When thousands of Makkans embraced Islam within a few days, a group of women came to the Prophet (*saws*) and said, “We have come to embrace Islam.”

When a lady lifted her veil – she was seen to be Hind bint Utba, the one who had hired a slave to kill Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib (the uncle of the Prophet) and chewed his liver after his murder.

She spoke bluntly, “You were the most hated person for me in the past, but today you are the most loved one.” The Prophet (*saws*) welcomed her into the fold of Islam and prayed for her forgiveness.

The next woman was Umm Hakim, wife of Ikrima. She wanted to embrace Islam, and the Prophet welcomed her. Then she said, “My husband, Ikrima, fled the city fearing for his life. Would you be kind enough to pardon him and grant him amnesty?”

To her surprise, the Prophet (*saws*) said, “He is granted security!”

She burst with joy and ran toward the coast, looking for her husband. She located him and conveyed to him the great news saying, “I have come from the noblest and the most gentle and honorable person ... He has pardoned you and promised amnesty for you.”

Ikrima could not believe it and asked, “Did you personally ask him, and he told you so.” She said, “Yes!” Ikrima then returned to Makkah with his wife, Umm Hakim.

Before Ikrima came, the Prophet

(*saws*) told those present there, “Ikrima bin Abu Jahl is coming to you. Don't curse his father because the cursing of a dead hurts a living person and does not reach the dead.”

When Ikrima reached, the Prophet (*saws*) welcomed him. Ikrima said, “O Prophet of Allah! Umm Hakim told me that you have granted me amnesty.”

He replied, “She is right! And you have full security now.”

Historian Baladhuri reported that 70,000 enemy combatants were killed, and 3,000 Muslims were martyred in the Battle of Yarmouk.

Ikrima then recited the *Kalima* and became a Muslim. He requested the Prophet (*saws*) to pray for the forgiveness of his past deeds.

Then he said, “O Prophet of God! Whatever money I have spent in preventing people from coming to the way of Allah (*swt*), I will spend double the amount in inviting people to the right path. And whatever battles I have fought against Islam, I will fight twice that number for the sake of Islam.”

Ikrima participated in all the battles after his conversion to Islam. During the Battle of Yarmouk in Syria, he entered deep into the enemy ranks. Khalid bin Waleed, who was the Commander, advised him not to go deep into the enemy ranks as his death would be a great loss for Muslims.

He replied, “O Khalid! You

preceded me in Islam. Let me atone for the past sins. I fought much against the Prophet in the past; should I now be afraid of the Romans? No, it will never happen.”

He called on the Muslims to launch a fierce attack, and finally, Allah Almighty gave victory to Muslims. The battlefield was littered with corpses. Historian Baladhuri reported that 70,000 enemy combatants were killed, and 3,000 Muslims were martyred in the Battle of Yarmouk.

There great Muslim fighters – Harith bin Hisham, Ayyash bin AbiRabiah (cousin of Khalid bin Waleed) and Ikrima bin Abu Jahl were wounded.

Harith cried for water, when it was brought to him, he saw Ikrima looking at it. He asked the person to give water first to Ikrima, but when it was brought to Ikrima, he saw Ayyash looking at it. He said, “Give it first to Ayyash.” But when the water was brought to Ayyash, he died before drinking it. Then the person turned toward Ikrima and Harith to give them water, but both had passed away. ■

[Courtesy: Arab News]

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Towards Severe Desertification & Deglaciation

Southern Europe, Central America, much of Brazil, southern Africa, coastal Australia and southern China are now in the hyper arid belt and undergoing severe desertification. Dryland areas dominate the global land surface, engulfing nearly six million square kilometres in



spreading deserts and bringing near-perennial drought to virtually all continental areas outside the higher latitudes. In the United States, wildfires incinerate whole forests, turning entire towns into embers and ash, with fire risk increasing by more than 500% across much of the country.

The largest conflagrations generate pyro-cumulonimbus clouds with fire tornados and black hail, pushing particulates into the stratosphere and covering the Earth in a layer of ash and dust similar to the impacts of a small nuclear war. Most of the world's mountain ranges are now deglaciated, with even the Himalayas losing 75-90% of their ice. This further diminishes fresh water supplies and reduces the potential of agricultural production to move uphill in areas where lowland temperatures are now too hot to grow crops. With little remaining snowfall, heavier precipitation surges out of mountain ranges, causing devastating flash floods that submerge whole cities in a matter of hours. Coastal areas are pummelled by Category 6 Superstorms, with tropical cyclones also battering areas such as western Europe and the Mediterranean that have previously been outside the hurricane belt.

A State Secret?

A leading judge acted unlawfully by authorising a secret court hearing in which he decided that Prince

Philip's will should be kept secret without notifying the media, an appeal court has heard.

Farmers' Woes

According to the 2021 State of India's Environment, greater than 28 farmers and farm laborers die by suicide every single day. Some are in debt from banks and cannot pay for them; others are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, low produce or crop prices, stress from family, increased cost to cultivate goods, or even crops failing to grow.

High Winds of Australia

In Australia, a series of cold fronts brought spells of high winds to the south-west earlier this week. Gusts of 73mph were recorded in the suburbs of the city of Perth and a nearby exposed lighthouse site at Cape Leeuwin recorded a gust of 85mph in the early hours on a recent morning. While not exceptional for this part of the world during their winter months, this resulted in some building damage in the city itself as well as some swell of at least eightmetres on nearby coasts.

Canada's Largest Hailstone

Farther north, in Canada, a hailstone thought to be the largest ever measured in the country was found



[recently]. In a severe storm near Innisfail, between Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta, the hailstone had a diameter of more than 12cm and a weight of just over 300g.

Weather Tracker: Mediterranean Sea hit by Major Marine Heat wave

There has been no respite from record-breaking temperatures as the ocean warms and wildfires rage on land. Maritime heat waves have destroyed up to 90% of coral populations in parts of the Mediterranean, with sea fans (*see image adjacent*) particularly hard hit.



Many parts of Europe have seen record-breaking temperatures over the past few months, but it is not just the continental landmass which has been affected. The Mediterranean Sea is experiencing a major marine heat wave, with sea surface temperatures in western parts of the Mediterranean 4-5 °C warmer than average. Temperatures have been above average for prolonged periods since the start of May, with June the warmest on record for large portions of the Mediterranean basin. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has classified the current event as a “severe” Category-3 event, one level from extreme thresholds.

Marine heat waves can have devastating impacts on

marine ecosystems and are expected to increase in intensity and frequency in the future due to human-induced climate change. Scientists have found that marine heat waves between 2015 and 2019 in the Mediterranean caused mass casualties in marine species, coral bleaching and harmful algal blooms.

Wildfire Devastation in Mariposa County, California, USA

Meanwhile, a devastating wildfire has been raging in Mariposa County, California, USA, close to Yosemite National Park, home to some of the oldest sequoia trees on Earth. The Oak fire, which started on



22 July, has destroyed almost 19,000 acres of land and forced the evacuation of at least 6,000 people.

Firefighters have made some progress over recent days and the fire was 39% contained. The wildfire was able to spread at ferocious speeds as a result of the tinder-dry ground, thanks to months of drought. ■

Intellectual Prostitutes

John Swinton, former Chief of Staff of the most powerful and prestigious newspaper on earth, *The New York Times*, when asked to give a toast to the “free press” at the New York Press Club stated:

“There is no such thing, at this date of the world's history, in America, as an independent press. You know it and I know it. There is not one of you who dares to write your honest opinions, and if you did, you know beforehand that it would never appear in print. I am paid weekly for keeping my honest opinion out of the paper I am connected with. Others of you are paid similar salaries for similar things, and any of you who would be so foolish as to write honest opinions

would be out on the streets looking for another job. If I allowed my honest opinions to appear in one issue of my paper, before twenty-four hours my occupation would be gone.

“The business of the journalists is to destroy the truth; to lie outright; to pervert; to vilify; to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. You know it and I know it and what folly is this toasting an independent press? We are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks, they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities and our lives are all the property of other men.

“We are intellectual prostitutes.” ■

NEWS FLASHES

FROM THE MUSLIM WORLD

SAUDI ARABIA

Barriers around Ka'aba Removed

Saudi Arabia has decided – after two years – to remove the preventive barriers around the Holy Ka'aba, allowing worshippers to once more touch the House of Allah (*swt*). The barriers were installed to ensure social distancing between pilgrims. The area

surrounding the Ka'aba, where pilgrims circumambulate seven times was closed in March 2020 for sterilization as a preventive measure to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Hijrah – Walking the Path of the Prophet

For the last 1,444 years, the story of the great migration that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, undertook has been one of the region's most continuous narratives, a tale that has been fondly repeated by Muslims for centuries. The journey the Prophet took between Makkah and Madinah shaped the beginning of Islam and was the launch of a civilization that now includes 1.5 billion Muslims globally.

The 400-kilometer distance between the two holy cities, in those eight days, has created an immeasurable impact on the social, political, and economic landscape of the Arab Peninsula.

Saudi Beekeeper Tastes Success

Norah Shawi Al-Shimmari's sweet-toothed customers have always known that her honey is among the best in the world – and now it is official. At her first attempt, the Saudi beekeeper from Hail has won a gold medal at the prestigious London Honey Awards for her Talah, or Aracia, honey. "Winning was one of my biggest wishes for this year. I could not believe it at first... To win is a wonderful feeling," she told *Arab News*. Al-Shimmari is the only female apiarist in Hail and is known in the Kingdom as the "the beekeeper of the north."





Beekeeping is about persistence and being eager to produce distinguished honey, she told *Arab News*.

Ka'aba Adorned in New Kiswa

One of the most watched ceremonies in the Islamic world took place recently when the Ka'aba was adorned with its new Kiswa. The Kiswa, or the covering of the Ka'aba, is replaced annually in a tradition observed for centuries.

A team of 200 Saudi technicians

working at the King Abdulaziz Complex for Manufacturing the Kaaba's Kiswa, carried out the task.

The Kiswa is decorated with Qur'anic verses embroidered onto the cloth with 120 kilograms of 21 karat gold thread and 100 kilograms of silver thread. The cost of making a new 850 kilogram Kiswa is estimated to cost SR25 million, or over USD 6.5 million, making it the world's most expensive covering. ■

[COMPILED BY: SYED NEHAL ZAHEER]

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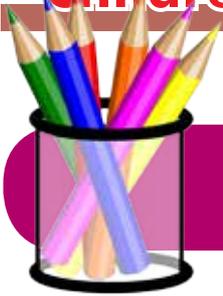
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Penpal – 32

Being in the Right Career

Amatul Hakim

The auditorium was full to its capacity. Enthusiastic teenagers were all geared up to pick and choose the best career for themselves. Yes, it was the career councillors speaking eloquently to attract the students – with a couple of these sessions, and of course, with the associated peer pressure all around.

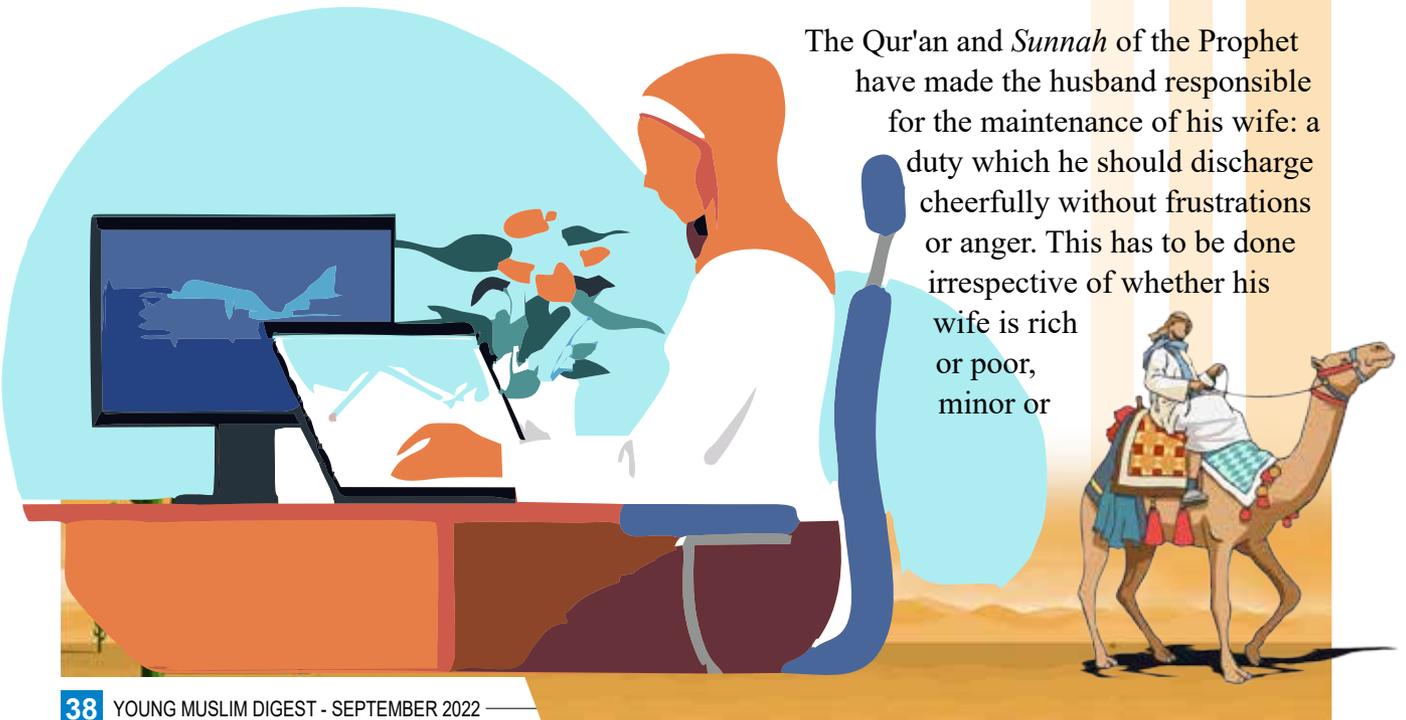
Eighteen years old Fatimah, for instance, wants to take up a computer-related course, so that she gets a well-paying job after completion of her studies. Her sister, Farhana, wants to settle down with a good job before she could even think of marriage. Hena is an engineer, working for a top-notch company, and her dream is to go abroad for both studies and job

—and this she wants to accomplish before she could choose a life-partner for herself.

Parents of these girls are speechless, since they have no say in the decisions of their highly qualified and well-earning daughters. Nevertheless, the Muslim daughters of this generation have to be guided and reminded about the stand of Islam on the matters of career and earnings of a woman.

It should be well-understood that the life of a Muslim is always governed by the laws of the *Shari'ah*, that is, the commands of Allahta'ala. In an ideal Muslim household, women are never burdened with financial responsibility, unless there is a dire need for it.

The Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet have made the husband responsible for the maintenance of his wife: a duty which he should discharge cheerfully without frustrations or anger. This has to be done irrespective of whether his wife is rich or poor, minor or





adult, healthy or sick.

Of the many responsibilities a husband bears, one is to shoulder the financial needs of the family in a generous, charitable way, so that his mate may be assured of security, and hence perform her role as mother and wife devotedly.

The twenty-first century is witnessing vast and rapid changes in the functioning of human society. Well-defined roles of men and women have been messed up, thus causing chaos and confusion in the family system.

Since people have failed to differentiate between wants and needs, the greed for money is ever increasing. Even though technological advancement is at its peak, nations are gripped with recession and economical downfall.

The United Nations and its allies think urging people to take up a defined career would solve the problem of economic crisis, and will revive the economy. And therefore, career guidance and counselling sessions have become more common now, than before.

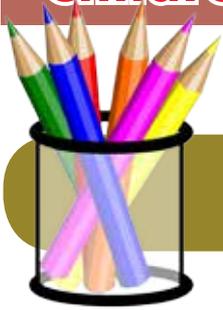
Students who have just reached puberty and getting to know the world around them, are bombarded with career choice related information and assessments. At this very young age, most will not even know what they want for the rest of their lives.

Further, the upbringing, culture, religion, and the social system of every individual student differs. The blanket approach of attracting everyone towards a lucrative job is not a wise idea, because this can have a disastrous effect on the peaceful functioning of the communities.

The purpose of education – as a manifestation of perfection and good character present in the human – is lost, if the aim of education is only to provide the right career.

Strong nations and peaceful communities are not just the products of productive, diversified, and distributed workforce, but rather of responsible citizens with unity, tolerance and hard-working attitudes. ■





The Puppy



We had just finished dinner. A group of us American girls who were studying in Egypt had decided we would eat at a local restaurant and when we finished, we had twenty Egyptian pounds leftover from the pool of cash we had put together.

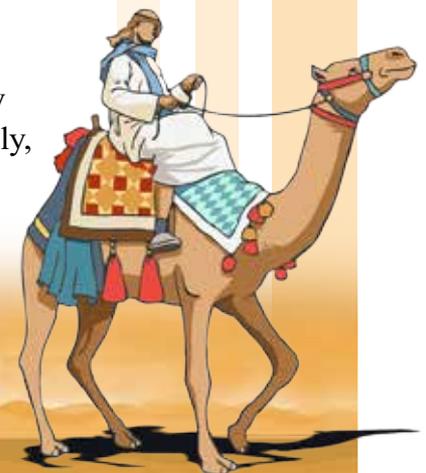
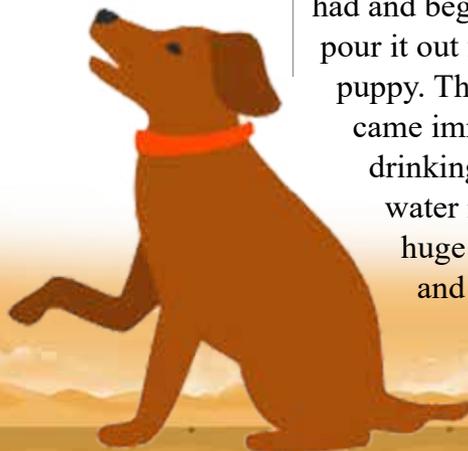
Figuring out what to do with the money, one of the sisters suggested, “There’s that boy who sleeps outside that one grocery store! You know, he’s got that puppy! And whenever he’s with that puppy, he’s like the happiest

kid in the world.”

I realized whom she was talking about. There was a teenage boy who slept on the grass across the street from the grocery store. There was no trace of family, money, or anything—just a boy and a stray puppy who kept him company. “Let’s give the money to him!” the sister exclaimed. With purpose, our group began to head over.

From the restaurant, it took us about twenty minutes to get to the location of the boy. But he was nowhere to be seen. His puppy, however, was there...and he was thirsty. The puppy had in his paws a closed water bottle that he unsuccessfully attempted to open.

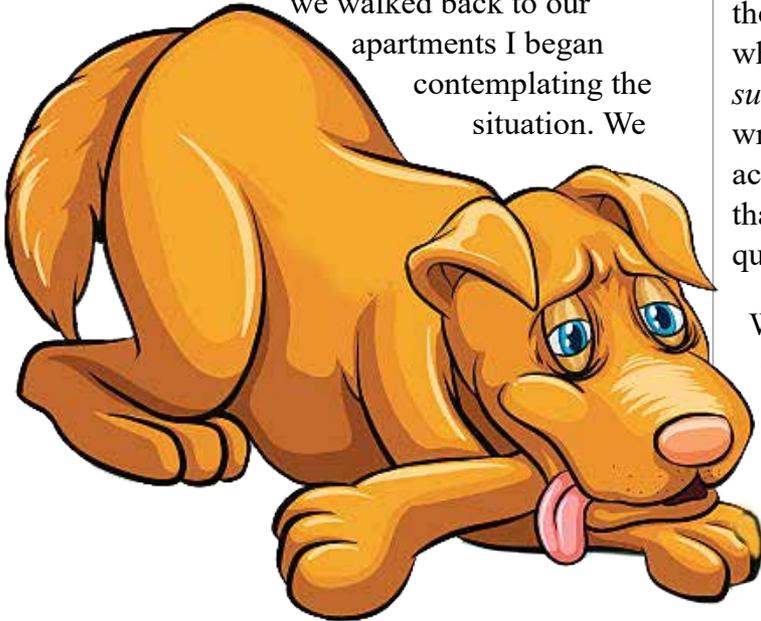
Imagine the torment of feeling intensely thirsty, staring at water in paw’s length, and not being able to access it despite immense struggles and efforts. Realizing his dilemma, we quickly opened the bottle of water we had and began to pour it out for the puppy. The puppy came immediately, drinking the water in huge gulps, and not





stopping for some time. Finally, relieved, the puppy eventually ran off to play.

We did not find the boy that night. As we walked back to our apartments I began contemplating the situation. We



have extra money, helped remember the boy in that moment, given us the strength, ability and time to take the twenty minute walk to find the boy, and instead, guided us to a puppy who needed our help to drink water. Allah *subhanahuwata`ala* (exalted is He) had written for us, a group of foreigners from across the world, to have been in that place, in that moment of time, simply to help a puppy quench its thirst.

What about you, dear worshiper of God, who is struggling to please Him, stumbling upon blocks of heedlessness and difficulties? What about you who are trying to keep it together, find a job, get married, do well in school, deal with domestic issues at home or societal pressures all around?

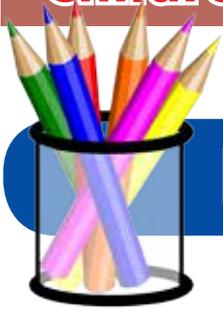
had walked about twenty minutes in search of a specific boy. We could not find him, and instead we found a puppy in extreme thirst, making great efforts to access water.

Allah, The All Wise, had written for us to

Dear believer who struggles to make your prayers, complete your fasts, lower your gaze and preserve your chastity—if that is the mercy that Allah, The Ever Merciful, has written for a small puppy, that He would subjugate human beings to simply help quench the thirst of a creature amongst His Creation...then what about the Mercy of Allah `azzawajall on you, His struggling worshipper?

“Therefore flee unto Allah...” (Qur’an 51:50) ■





Did You Know That...

- * If you lift a Kangaroo's tail off the ground it can't hop - they use their tails for balance.
- * If you keep a goldfish in a dark room, it will become pale!
- * Cows can sleep standing up, but they can only dream lying down. .
- * The scientific name of the red fox is *Vulpes vulpes*.
- * Alligators can live up to 100 years.



* A single elephant teeth can weigh as much as 9 pounds. .

- * During World War II, Americans tried to train bats to drop bombs.



* *Canis lupus lupus* is the scientific name for a Gray Wolf.

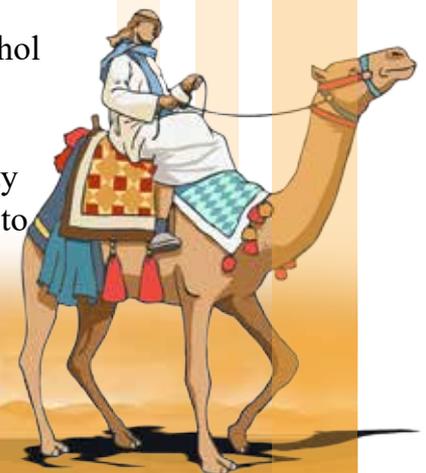
* To escape the grip of a crocodile's jaw, push



your thumb into its eyeballs – it will let you go instantly.

- * It is much easier for dogs to learn spoken commands if they are given in conjunction with hand signals or gestures.

- * Even a small amount of alcohol placed on a scorpion will make it go crazy and sting itself to death! ■





POEM

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

Author Unknown

A weary mother returned from the store,
Lugging groceries through the kitchen
door.

Awaiting her arrival was her 8 year old son,
Anxious to relate what his younger brother had
done.

"While I was out playing and Dad was on a
call,
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall!
It's on the new paper you just hung in the den.
I told him you'd be mad at having to do it
again."

She let out
a moan and
furrowed her
brow,
"Where is your little
brother right now?"
She emptied her arms and
with a purposeful stride,
She marched to his closet
where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as
she entered his room.

He trembled
with fear-he
knew that
meant doom!
For the next
ten

minutes, she ranted and raved
About the expensive wallpaper and how she
had saved.

Lamenting all the work it would take to repair,
She condemned his actions and total lack of
care.

The more she scolded, the madder she got,
Then stomped from his room, totally
distracted!

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.
When she saw the wall, her eyes flooded with
tears.

The message she read pierced her soul with a
dart.

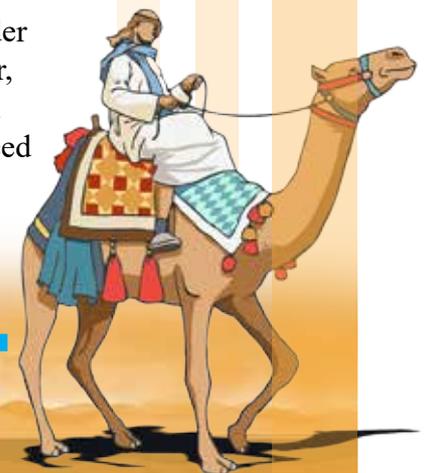
It said, "I love Mommy," surrounded by a
heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she
found it,

With an empty picture frame hung to
surround it.

A reminder
to her,
and
indeed

to all,
Take time
to read the
handwriting
on the wall ■





The Joker and the Blind Boy

This is a true story about a man named Rashed. He tells his story as follows: “I was not more than 30 years old when my wife gave birth to our first child. I still remember that night: I stayed out all night long with my friends, as was my habit. It was a night filled with useless talk. I remember I made them laugh a lot on that particular night. I had an amazing ability to imitate others, as I could change the sound of my voice until I sounded exactly like the person I was mocking.



No one safe from my biting mockery, even my friends; some people started avoiding me just to be safe from my tongue!

“I remember on that night, I had made fun of a blind man who I had seen begging into the market. What was worse, I had put my foot out in front of him, he tripped and fell and turned his head around not knowing what to say, I went back to my house late as usual, and I found my wife waiting for me.

“She was in a terrible state, and she said in a quivering voice, ‘Rashed...where were you?’

“‘Where would I be, on Mars?’ I said sarcastically, ‘With my friends of course!’

“She was visibly exhausted and holding back tears, she said: ‘Rashed, I am so tired. It seems the baby is going to come soon.’ A silent tear fell on her cheek. I felt that I had neglected my wife. I should have taken care of her and not stayed out all those nights especially since she was in her 9th month.

“I quickly took her to the hospital; she went into the delivery room, and suffered through long hours of pain. I waited patiently for her to give birth but her delivery was difficult,





and I waited a long time until I got tired. So I went home and left my phone number with the hospital so they could call with good news.

“So they called to congratulate me on the birth of Salem as soon as they saw me, they asked me to go see the doctor who had overlooked my wife’s delivery.

“What doctor?” I cried out, “I just want to see my son Salem!”



“First go see the doctor,” they said.

“I went to the doctor and she started talking to me with sadness. I was shocked to know that my son had a serious deformity in his eyes, and it seemed that he had no vision. I remembered that blind man begging into the market who I tripped and made the others laugh at.

“*SubhanAllah*, you get what you give! My wife wasn’t sad; She believed in the decree of Allah, she was content. How often she had advised me to stop mocking others!

“No, she did not call it mocking but backbiting, and she had all the right. In reality, I didn’t pay much attention to Salem. I pretended that he wasn’t in a home with us, when he started crying loudly, I’d leave to the living room to sleep there. My wife took good care of him and loved him dearly, as for myself, I didn’t hate him but I couldn’t love him either.

“My wife celebrated when he started to crawl. When he was almost two years old, he started trying to walk and we discovered that he was (also) crippled, The more I’d stay away from him, the more my wife would love and care for him, even after the birth of Umar and Khalid

“The year passed...

“With a group of friends I had, I was like a toy at their disposal (entertaining them whenever they wanted) in reality, I thought the other way around, My wife never gave up on





my reform. She always made *dua* for guidance. She never got angry with my reckless behavior..... but would become really sad if she saw me when I was neglecting Salem and paying attention to his brothers!

“Salem grew. I didn’t mind when my wife asked to enroll him to a special school for the handicapped. I didn’t feel the passing of the years. My days were all the same: working, sleeping, eating and hanging out with my friends...

“Until that day...

“Friday, I woke up at 11am. This was early for me; I was invited to a gathering, so I got dressed and perfumed and was about to go out. As I passed by, I was startled by the sight of Salem while he was sobbing! This was the first time I had noticed Salem crying since he was a baby.

“Should I go out or should I see what is bothering him?

“I said No!!, how can I leave him in this position?

““Salem why are you crying?’ I asked.

“When he heard my voice, he stopped crying, he started feeling around him, what was wrong with him I thought, I discovered that he was trying to move away from me!

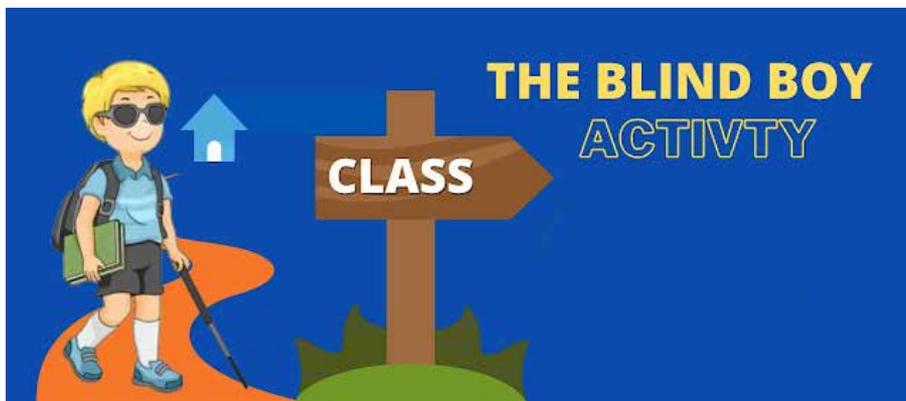
“It was as if he was saying, ‘Now, you’ve decided to Notice me? Where were you for the past 10 years?’ I followed him... He had gone into his room.

“At first, he refused to tell me why he had been crying. I tried to be gentle with him as I knew what was wrong. His brother Umar, the one who used to take him to the *Masjid* was late and because it was Jumuah prayer, Salem was afraid he wouldn’t find a place in the first row. He called out to his mother, but nobody answered so I put my hand over his mouth as if I was saying ‘Is this why you were crying, Salem!’

“Then I cried ‘O Salem...

“I don’t know what made me say this, ‘O Salem don’t be sad... Do you know who’s going to take you to the *Masjid* today?’

““Umar of course,’ he said, ‘I wish I knew where he went’





“No, Salem” I said, “I’m going to take you.”

“Salem was shocked, he couldn’t believe it. He thought I was mocking him. His tears came and he started crying. I wiped his tears with my hand then took hold of his hand. I wanted to take him to the Masjid by car. He refused and said,

“Father, the Masjid is near. I want to walk there for every step I take is accounted.’

“I couldn’t remember the last time I had entered the *Masjid* and the last time I made *Sujood*, It had been the first time that I ever felt fear and regret! Regret for what I had neglected during the long year that had passed. The *Masjid* was filled with worshippers, but I



still found a place for the Salem in the first row. We listened to the *Jumuah Khutbah* together, and I prayed next to him. After the prayer, Salem asked

me for a Qur’an. I was surprised. How was he going to read when he was blind?

“I almost ignored his request, but I decided to humor him out of fear hurting his feelings. He asked me to open the Qur’an to *Surah al-Kahaf*, I did what he wanted, he took the Qur’an from me, put it in front of him and started reading the *Surah*...

“*Ya Allah!* He had memorized the whole *Surah*.”

“I was ashamed of myself. I picked up a Qur’an.

“I felt my limbs tremble...I read and I read.

“I asked Allah (*swt*) to forgive me and guide me. This time I was the one who cried.

“I cried out of sadness & regret for what I had wasted.

“The only thing I felt was a small hand reaching out to my face and wiping the tears away. It was Salem wiping away my tear! We went back home. My wife was extremely worried about Salem, but her worry turned into tears [of joy] when she found out I had prayed *Jumuah* with Salem. From that day on, I never missed the congregational prayer in the *Masjid*. I left my bad fiends and I made righteous friends among people I met at the *Masjid*.



“I tasted the sweetness of *Iman* with them.

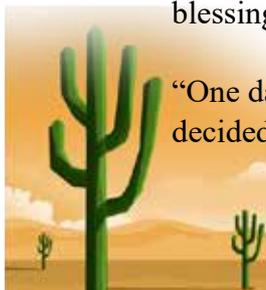


I learned things from them that distracted me from this world. I never missed out on gatherings [*halaqas*] of remembrance, or on the *Witr* prayer. I would recite the entire Qur'an several times in one month. And I was the same person that left it for years...

"I moistened my tongue with the remembrance of Allah (*swt*), that He might forgive my backbiting and mocking of people, I felt closer to my family. The looks of fear and pity that had occupied my wife's eyes disappeared. A smile now never parted from the face of my son Salem. Anyone who saw him would have felt that he owned the world and everything in it.



"I praised and thanked Allah (*swt*) a lot of His blessings.



"One day, my righteous friends decided to travel far for *Da'wah*, I hesitated about going. I prayed *Istakharah* and consulted with

my wife. I thought she would refuse, but the opposite happened! She was extremely happy and even encouraged me. I went to Salem, and told him I would be traveling. He wrapped me up in his small arms and if he could've he would've kissed my head. After that, I put my trust in Allah; began with the process and, *Alhamdulillah*, everything went well.

"I was away from my home for three and half months. In that period, whenever I got a chance I would call my wife and speak to my kids.

"I missed them so much, and oh how I missed Salem!

"I wanted to hear his voice; he was the only one who hadn't talked to me since I left. He was either at school or at the *Masjid* whenever I called them whenever I called my wife, I would tell her to kiss him and give him my *Salam*. She would laugh happily, joyfully, except for the last time I called her.

"I didn't hear her expected laugh. Her voice changed. I said to her, 'Give my Salam to Salem,' and she said, '*InshaAllah*.'

"At last I went back home. I knocked on the door. I hoped that it was Salem who would open up for me but was surprised to find my son Khalid, who was not more than 4 years old. I picked him up in my arms while he squealed, 'Baba! Baba!'





“I don’t know why my heart tensed when I entered home. I sought refuge in Allah (*swt*) from the accursed Satan. I approached my wife, there was something that had changed, I inspected her closely then noticed it was the look of sadness she had on years ago –it was back on her face.

“‘What is bothering you?’ I said,

“‘Nothing,’ she replied.

“‘Suddenly, I remembered Salem. ‘Where’s Salem?’ I asked.

“‘She lowered her head. She didn’t answer. At that moment, I only heard the sound my son Khalid made... (a sound) that still rings in my ears till this day.

“‘He said:
‘Baba, Salem went to paradise with Allah’

“‘My wife couldn’t take it. She broke down crying and left the room. Later I found out that Salem had contracted a fever two weeks before I returned. The fever became more and more severe and didn’t leave him until his soul

left his body...

“‘I felt like what happened were trials and a test from Allah (*swt*), the Glorified and Exalted. I still feel his hand wiping my tears. And his arms wrapped around me... How sad did I become for Salem, the blind, crippled One...

“‘He was not blind!

“‘But I was blind! When I befriended a company of poor friends...

“‘And Salem was not crippled for he stood on the right path!

“‘I still remembered what he used to say...
‘Verily Allah possesses infinite Mercy!’

“‘Salem... the one whose love I was once abstained from now I discovered I loved him even more than his brothers...

“‘I cried a lot... and still I am sad (till this day)!

“‘How can I not be sad?

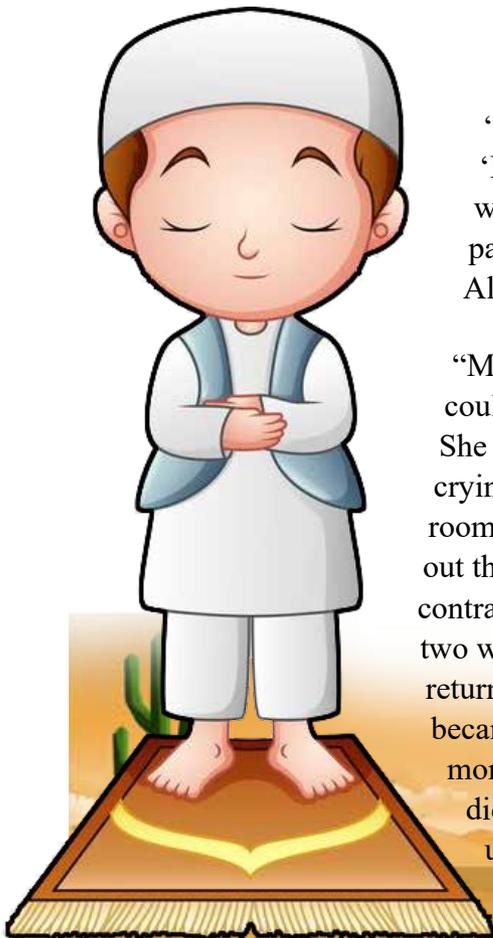
“‘For my guidance was upon his hands!

[Allah guided Rashed through Salem]

“‘O Allah! Accept from Salem through your Mercy!’” ■

[Narrated by Shaikh Khalid Rashid]

Source: www.eaalim.com

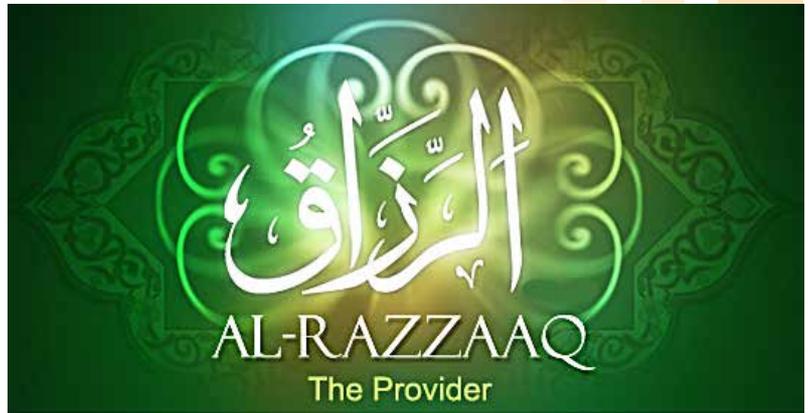




Halal Joke

An elderly lady was well-known for her Iman and for her confidence in talking about it. She would stand in front of her house and say Alhamdulillah "Allah be praised" no matter who passed by.

Next door to her lived an atheist who would get so angry at her proclamations he would shout, "There ain't no Lord!!" Hard times came upon the elderly lady, and she prayed for Allah to send her some assistance. She would pray out loud in her night prayer "Oh Allah! I need food!! I am having



a hard time, please Lord, PLEASE LORD, SEND ME SOME GROCERIES!!"

The atheist happened to hear her as she was praying, and decided to play a prank on her. The next morning the lady went out on her porch and noted a large bag of groceries and shouted, "Alhamdulillah, Allah be praised!." The neighbor jumped from behind a bush and said, "Aha! I told you there was no Lord. I bought those groceries, God didn't." The lady started jumping up and down and clapping her hands and said, "ALHAMDULILAH WA SHUKRILLAH". He not only sent me groceries, but he made the devil pay for them!" ■

