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Composing/Graphics

Sheeraz Siddique

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Faculty and students may directly send their writings and comments for publication in "THE NUSTIAN" on the following address:

Editor "THE NUSTIAN"
Student Affairs Directorate, Student Centre
National University of Sciences and Technology
H-12, Islamabad.

Tel: 051-90851363 Cell: 0321-5851363 Fax: 051-90851362

e-mail: nustian@nust.edu.pk

Electronic copy of "THE NUSTIAN" is available at: www.nust.edu.pk

INSIGHT



Obeying Allah and His Prophet S.A.W.W

Sumaiya Gul

It is a great honor to be born in the home of believers, but it does not give the surety of a person being a true Muslim when he grows up and it is also not a proven fact that a person who is born in the home of non-believers is going to be a non-believer when he grows up. One's company has a great influence on a person's ideas, views and beliefs. The lower soul (*Nafs*) is conditioned by one's habits and the comfort and discomfort of a person's *Nafs* is also dependent upon those habits. This soul has the tendency to adopt any habit or deed that is followed in a society a person is living in. It has the potential of going the wrong way or the right way. There is a certain level up to which a person feels discomfort if he commits some sin but if that limit is crossed, his heart is stamped, rather sealed, and it becomes rusty, contaminated and evil. He doesn't really care about his deeds thereafter. That is why the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) said: "A man follows his friend's religion, so each one should consider whom he makes his friend."

Reciting the fundamental creed *kalma-e-tayyaba*: There is no deity but Allah, is not just enough to become a good Muslim. Because every human being is born on "the nature of Allah according to which He has constituted mankind" and it is his deeds and believes later on that make a person a true Muslim. Although the firmness of belief on Allah stems from this basic creed but there are some other criteria on the basis of which Allah judges a person's love and firm belief in Him and the best religion, Islam. But we see in our society where the Muslims are heading towards. *Azaan* is recited in every child's ear who is born in a Muslim family, but do these children prove to be true and good Muslims the examples of whom we see in our history, when they grow up? Yes there may be few but just few!

Qadi Sanaullah Naqshbandi (R.A) writes in his *Tafsir-e-Mazhari*:

The love for Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W.W) is a great blessing that is attained only in the company of those devoted to Allah. Therefore, the respected mystics rule the necessity of seeking it in the luminous company of spiritual masters.

So it is kind of a mandatory requirement that if a person wishes to be near Allah, he ought to have a really high level of *Iman* and *Ihsan*. It is not really difficult, for that a person needs to be in the company of enlightened people. The example is the companions (*Sahaba*) of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) who had so much spiritual light in their hearts which was the blessing of Allah on one hand and the company of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) on the other. Religious knowledge can be gained even by reading books, but the spiritual powers that help a Muslim to become a firm believer (*mo'min*) cannot be contained by the paper. So the heart of *mo'min* is the only way that helps transport these powers to those around and carry them. The knowledge of Islam is transferred through books to literate the people and the spiritual powers and the light of this great religion is transmitted from heart to heart. So the believers, the Muslims, have been advised to stay in the company of those who are truthful not the ones who are spreading evil and sin in the world. "O you who believe, fear Allah and stay in the company of the truthful"

This objective of being in the company of the firm believers is to seek expert instructions, learning and achieving the reality of *zikur* (remembrance of Allah). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) has said: "There is a purifier for everything. The purifier for the heart is the remembrance of Allah (*zikur*). Muslim."

When a person is in such people's company, he is reminded of Allah and when he listens to their luminous and fragrant conversations, love for Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W) is induced. This love then makes a person adopt the right way, engage himself in *zikur*; *zikur* leads to contemplation, intensifying the love and helping him to be a true and a good Muslim. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "And endure yourself in the company of those who call upon in the morning and evening, seeking His Countenance"

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) explained the impact of one's company by giving an example of a perfume merchant. The effect of a good company is like that of a person who sells perfume. Even if he does not sell the perfume, one will at least benefit from its delightful fragrance. The effect of a bad company is like that of a person who blows the bellows. "Even if the fire does not burn, at least the smoke will cause distress." (Summary of a Hadith quoted in Bukhari Sharif)

Allah has called Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) *Munir*, one who illuminates and spreads light. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) spread the light of the pious teachings in Arabia and His companions (*Sahaba*), from them the light got transferred to their companions (*Tabi'in*) and in this way the process of illumination has spread from generation to generation. This leads to the firmness of beliefs due to which faith becomes completely incorporated in one's heart and the highest degree of love is achieved leading to freshness of faith. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "O Prophet! verily we have sent you as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings, a Warner and a summon unto Allah by His command and as an illuminating lamp (*Munir*) (Qur'an 48: 8,9)

This love, I have been talking about, is not just the movement of lips; it is obedience to Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W). It is one of the basic beliefs of Islam that a Muslim follows and loves Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W), without it a person cannot be a Muslim. "Say, (O Muhammad S.A.W.W to

mankind): if you love Allah, follow me, Allah will love and forgive you your sins". (Qur'an 3:31)

That means that Allah has made it clear that one who follows the exemplary ways of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) is perhaps the true lover of Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W). The companions of the Prophet achieved high levels of success in this world and the world hereafter, the reason for that was their devotion to Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W). The way they followed the orders of Allah and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) in each and every walk of their lives, is nowhere else to be found. They suffered the worst but still they were so much in love with Allah and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) that they didn't let go the firmness of their beliefs and followed Islam and its teachings with full devotion till the very end. They didn't just do the lip service or chanted poems in His tribute; they proved that they loved him by following His orders and having regard for His sayings. Mughira (R.A) narrated that if a companion of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) had to knock on his door, they did it lightly with their nails. That was the condition of their carefulness and respect for the Prophet (S.A.W.W). None of them ever raised their voices above the voice of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) which has been taught by Allah too:

"O you who are the believers, raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet" (Qur'an 49:2) One should not argue, make personal opinions or statements on the Prophet (S.A.W.W) because it is the same as raising voice above His voice. Allah says in the Quran: "Lo! They who subdue their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger, those are they whose hearts Allah has proven unto righteousness. Theirs will be forgiveness and an immense reward."

This proves that the demand of love for Allah and Prophet (S.A.W.W) is to have a strong regard for His sayings. The reason is that the Prophet (S.A.W.W) has narrated all that what Allah taught Him and gave Him the commandments. He didn't

speak on any topic Himself, it was Allah's messages He conveyed to us.

Allah clearly says in the Quran: "It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger (S.A.W.W) to have any opinion about Their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path." (Qur'an 49:2)

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) said that "None of you is believer till his desire follows what I have brought" (Muslim)

It means that you don't have to just claim that you love Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W) but you have got to prove it by following the right path set by Islam. The Prophet in his life time himself said that Islam is going to be divided into many sects in future. There is this sect, the people of which call them Muslims but they are not because they don't believe in the finality of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) and many of the people in these other sects have made many changes in the religion. Such people cannot get the blessings of Allah's love because they deny the Prophet (S.A.W.W) and go against the sayings of Allah.

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) is perhaps the criterion for success in this world and world here after. One who follows His *Sunnah* gets nearer to Allah and gets His proximity even if he is some illiterate person. But if a person who does not follow what he preaches, he is negligent of the practices that are the basis of Islam, even if he is a scholar or some really intellectual person that is going to do him no good. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) has said, "He who loves my *Sunnah* has loved me, and he who loves me will be with me in *Jannah*"

That means that to follow the Prophet (S.A.W.W) is the key to eternal bliss and success. On the dooms day (*Qiamut*) everyone would be hoping to get the Messenger's (S.A.W.W) mediation (*shafa'at*) but only those would be rewarded with it who surrendered their lives before Allah and the Prophet (S.A.W.W).

We are dependent on Allah for our existence and for the attainment of respect and comfort. He is also our sole Protector against harm, worry and humiliation. Besides Him, there is no one through whom we could fulfil our needs. But Allah, Most High, is invisible. Our belief in Him, is through faith (*Iman*) in the unseen. Owing to our infirmity in faith, we start believing that material things can fulfil our needs. Thus wealth, positions in government and vanity are misconstrued as the means of peace and comfort. However, Allah makes it clear that the wealthy do not have peace of mind. There is none who, having forsaken Allah, achieved respect and inner harmony. Anyone from this class who appears to have peace and comforts is in reality, agitated by numerous anxieties. On the other hand, there is not a single pious one not blessed with real peace and comfort.

Therefore, the believers should affirm that Allah is the Bestower of good and the only One who fulfils all needs. He is Most Compassionate, Merciful and Loving towards the believers. To convey His message, He also instilled immense mercy in His Prophet (S.A.W.W). Allah has revealed that the kind and beneficent Prophet (S.A.W.W) yearns for the good of believers and is grieved when they suffer any loss.

Allah is pleased with those who are thankful to Him. He increases His favours which become the means of comfort and respect. If one fails to offer gratitude, such favours amount to agitation, punishment and dishonour in this world and the hereafter. Therefore Allah says: "If you give thanks, I will give you more: but if you are thankless, lo! my punishment is severe." (Surah: Ibrahim - Ayut:7)

Sometimes the favours are withdrawn from those who are thankless. However, in some cases, wealth, children, wordly status, etc., while remaining intact, transform in to means of worry. Respect and leniency for women is among Allah's favours. Women should express gratitude for this by guarding their honour, chastity and reputation to please Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W.W)

Arrogance —An Invisible Foe

Aslam Bazmi

Sitting prostrate astride a camel in humble gratitude and chanting Allah's praise rode into Makkah Muhammad (SAW) at the conquest of this holy city in the 8th year after Hijra. Instead of settling scores with those who had hurt and wronged him grossly, the conqueror (SAW) proclaimed amnesty for all, even to his deadliest enemies. Arch enemy of Islam, Abu Sufyan's house was declared a refuge for those who sought protection of their lives. Display of this kind of modesty is unique in the annals of human history.

The first commandment that the Almighty gave at the time of man's creation was to caution him against vain pride. When in sheer defiance of Allah's command Satan (Iblees) arrogantly refused to bow before Adam, he was instantly sacked from his exalted station, and became accursed forever. All glory, indeed, belongs to Allah, the Supreme and Infallible Creator and Sustainer of this magnificent universe and the life hereafter.

Human power, wealth, status, grace and prestige are short-lived and destined to decay, decline and perish sooner or later. None can remain youthful, happy, healthy and powerful forever. Several glorious civilizations raised over the millennia have become extinct, with little or no vestige of their existence. It is therefore imprudent to indulge in morbid pride, arrogance and vainglory over things and qualities that are doomed to perish over this mortal planet of ours.

A certain measure of healthy pride and self-assuredness is a desirable trait of human personality. There is nothing wrong, socially or morally, in conducting oneself with courage, pluck and confidence. It is, in fact, the extreme form of pride and haughtiness known as 'arrogance', which must be

guarded against. In every society there are people filled with vain faith in their abilities to reach the highest peaks in their careers or professions. Impervious and insensate to the feelings and emotions of their subordinates, they tend to behave as if they have been specially built to shape their destiny according to their own whims and wishes. Such individuals may attain some visible worldly success, but true respect and honour is beyond their destiny. A person intoxicated by overweening pride tends to develop a sickening sense of self-importance. He / she would be found lacking in poise and serenity, and may potentially react negatively to situations demanding cool composure and sound maturity.

An offspring of ignorance and immaturity, arrogance shows itself starkly in lack of humility and wisdom. Modesty, one of the cardinal attributes of the sagacious and gentle, requires a person to sacrifice a bit of his / her false ego, but its dividends are immense. Still waters run deep, and beauty often shows itself best in tatters. It is cheap to blow one's trumpets and sing self-encomium when silence itself could be the best advertiser. Someone has rightly said: "It is a great ability to hide one's ability." A mature and modest person acknowledges his / her limitations, acts in humility, and has the capacity to forbear differences with others.

Arrogance is a grave malady of mind. Unless cured, it eats away gradually man's essence of nobility and the spirit goodness. Its victim remains consumed with a false sense of superiority. He / she loses touch with the realities of life, and leads a life of self-conceit and delusion. Being a captive of his / her own vanity, he/she has little courage to rid him / her of a perpetual state of self-misery and persecution.

All prophets of humanity, sages and people of great learning are celebrated and revered for their pristine humility and modest manners. Instead of holding others in contempt and ridicule, their tolerant and affectionate attitude towards the entire mankind as the clan of Allah won them true respect of the society at large. The Holy Quran singles out 'arrogance' as one of the chief vices of human character, expressing Allah's dislike of the arrogant in the following words:

And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster".

(XXXI: 18)

Lol Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful.

(IV: 36)

Allah loveth not all-prideful boasters.

(LVII: 23)

One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) approves of paying back an arrogant in the same coin. The underlying message is to discourage arrogance rather than, through approval and emulation, let it seep into the fabric of the society as an acceptable norm of behaviour.

Several victories of small and ill-equipped armies against heavy odds, and the fall of great empires throughout human history are a clear testimony that glory ultimately belongs to the modest. The plain and ill-armed Muslims overpowered the hordes of Persians and Romans. Deeply impressed by the strength of their faith and humility, the defeated Romans wrote to Hercules:

At night you will find them prayerful; during the day, you will find them fasting. They keep their promises, order good deeds, suppress evil, and maintain complete equality among themselves

The vanquished Christians were amazed to see the

Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Omar, when he arrived to take control of Jerusalem in 637 AD. Throughout the journey, the caliph and his servant shared a single camel, turn by turn. When they approached the destination, it was the servant's turn to be on the camel's back, and Omar, the great, was leading the camel on foot.

What is Wrong with Arrogance?

Arrogance is rooted in conscious or unconscious belief in one's being superior to others in some respect— wealth, power, status, physical or mental capacity, personal charm, intellect or scholarship and even piety. Such misplaced faith in one's supremacy misses to take into account the fact that all our acquisitions and achievements are subject to the pleasure and mercy of our Creator. It is not within our mortal power to retain them forever. Moreover, possessing something in greater proportion does not necessarily establish one's ascendancy over others. In certain physical qualities like strength, vision, sensory faculties, speed, physique, endurance and virility man stands poorly matched with many a beast, bird and insect. Besides being vulnerable to all kinds of perils and hazards, we all must ultimately die and perish. Arrogant people are apt to treat with indifference other human beings, with lesser abilities and resources. Arrogance also blindfolds mind's eye, thus distancing a boaster even from his Creator and Nourisher, and making him / her ingrate soul. Imperiousness has often produced tyrants and despotic rulers at war with the peace and prosperity of not only their own nations but also the world at large. Arrogance robs man of the sterling qualities of moral courage, broad thinking, modesty and compassion. Extreme arrogance has often incurred the wrath of the Omnipotent. History is a repository of myriads of examples showing the ruination of hoity-toity kings, chieftains and overlords.

Misplaced confidence in one's abilities and tall claims about one's 'perceived' talents and superiority speak low of a person's level of maturity.

It sounds shallow to parade one's supremacy and behave in a self-conceited and boastful manner. Self-conceit denies us the opportunity to own up our failings, make up our deficiencies and carry out self-analysis for personal improvement. In the words of David Hume, "When people are most sure and arrogant, they are commonly most mistaken." There is no harm in learning from any being on earth. To quote Chinese sage, Lao Tse, "The Sea receives the homage of a hundred rivers and turbulent mountain-streams because it keeps below them". People of modest nature have no pretensions about their scholarship, and they feel happy to learn from their juniors. To them, as William James puts it, "to give up pretensions is as blessed a relief as to get them gratified."

Love for power and authority, although legitimate, should not colour a person's behaviour. It does not sit well on the shoulders of a leader or manager to say to his subordinates, "I have decades of experience in this field. Are you trying to teach me?" Learning is a life-long process. A modest person, while in a position of authority, is not unduly concerned about his own importance and status. He cares to set a good example of mutual respect and regard, free from obnoxious authority. The people he leads feel honoured and exhilarated by the power exercised over them. Such an organization becomes a happy and highly productive body and everyone enjoys being a part of it.

Modesty springs from the nobility of one's character. It is a treasure lying in the depths of a mighty ocean. It is nurtured through education, sagacity and the true fear of God. And intellectually shallow person often tends to be egocentric. He/she is overly conscious of and assertive about his/her status. Exceedingly power-conscious, he/she disregards the principles of corporate life. 'Arrogance clamp', to use Edward de Bono's phrase, blocks communication, thus inhibiting the inflow and improvement of ideas. Such an individual sticks to his opinions and disdains minor jobs while being unequal to major ones.

How to Overcome Arrogance?

- **Get to Know the Price of Arrogance.** An arrogant person is least likeable. His presence becomes a source of discomfort for his colleagues, companions and subordinates who tend to avoid discussing with him matters of organisational interest. An arrogant leader or manager has myopic vision and suffers from many a complex. Through his snobbish and arrogant attitude, he deprives himself of very vital inputs bearing on the success of his mission. Fake humility— when one does not have means to pamper one's vanity— is even more conspicuous and ridiculous. Once unseated from a place of authority, an arrogant person is quickly reduced to his / her size, and there would be many to gloat over his misfortune. The pain of such degradation is extremely excruciating. We should think of our humble origins. The Quran repeatedly reminds man of his procreation through a stinky drop, and urges him to ponder on the grandeur and vastness of the universe. This will shed his mental cobweb and impart his thinking a positive direction. In fact, it takes considerable knowledge and meditation just to realize the extent of one's ignorance and wean oneself of arrogance thriving on it. In retrospect, to a person with the flickering flame of life, all human endeavours in self-gratification will seem futile— what Pascal called, "licking the earth".

- **Learn from Others' Examples.** It is the drooping branches that bear the bulk of fruit. Allah is always on the side of the modest and humble. One can unmistakably judge from the tales of doom of many a fallen hero in human history that human brilliance whenever contaminated with overweening pride has met with doom. This is equally true of all fields of life. It has been Allah's way to forewarn nations through His prophets and scriptures against the acts of defiance. It was not until the nations of Nuh, 'Ad, Hud, Thamud and Lut rose in open rebellion and arrogance against His messengers that Allah wiped them out. It was again sheer arrogance that caused the annihilation of Pharaoh

Ramses II of Egypt and Abraha of Yemen along with their mighty forces. In the recent history, the humiliation and defeat of the USA in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan furnish resounding testimony to the fact that arrogant use of brute force cannot alter the way of Allah Who is always on the side of the humble and persevering.

- **Cultivate the Spirit of Empathy.** It always helps to put oneself in the place of those whom one treats with disdain and arrogance. Human beings universally aspire to be treated with respect and kindness. Arrogant people, when they themselves have to face rude and insolent behaviour, feel extremely cut up and their wounds invariably take very long to heal. It is wise, therefore, to think before bossing others around in a haughty manner.

- **Show Tolerance.** Humans differ vastly from one another in terms of talents, endowments, abilities and capacities for achievements. If someone is gifted with an exceptional quality vis-a-vis his colleagues or subordinates, then it should be a matter of being grateful to Allah Almighty rather than being vainly proud. It is He Who bestows on us different gifts and abilities. To be worthy of our special charms and accomplishments, we should show tolerance and understanding to those who lack in those gifts. This will engender a congenial environment of collective benefit and harmony where weeds of arrogance have little chance to grow.

- **Be Courteous, in General.** Keeping people standing in submission, treating them rudely and withholding small courtesies to those who are low in social or economic status is attended with the risk of pampering arrogance. True courtesy consists in humility and showing concern and consideration to others, regardless of their standing in the society. It is a sign of nobility to be kind and courteous to people in general including janitors, peons, gardeners, sweepers etc. Inner peace, joy and serenity are the gifts accompanying a genuine spirit of courtesy and kindness. Courtesy though

costs nothing, but its dividends are always enormous. Researchers have identified 'courteous behaviour' as one of the powerful transformational force, which produces no backlash, has no downside, and no element of sorrow and despair. High thresholds of rude and arrogant attitude cause surges both in adrenaline and cortisol. Decent and courteous demeanour, on the other hand, along with feelings of love and tenderness stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby increasing calmness and reducing the levels of cortisol in human body. It greatly helps to curb arrogance by showing empathy; feeling regretful for an act of rudeness; making amends for arrogant behaviour; and constantly seeking Allah's refuge against the Satanic impulses of vain pride and haughtiness.

- **Tame your False Ego and be Forgiving.** Much grief in life is the handiwork of 'ego'. From false ego spawn the tadpoles of envy and arrogance. It is humility and gratefulness that keep our talents and abilities in a constant state of expansion. Those who attribute their inspirations and achievements to their ego are woefully mistaken. Looking inside ourselves and letting Allah help us will rid us of many cobwebs knit by false ego.

Conclusion

Arrogance is a form of revolt against divine order. An attitude of modesty goes well in all situations. It is dignified to be humble and patient. Lack of maturity shows itself in the acts of foolish pride and boastfulness. An arrogant person is easily vulnerable to public humiliation. If the goods are fine, they sell well; one doesn't have to undertake a promotional campaign in order to increase their sale. It does not become a civilized person to behave in a shallow and boastful manner. Allah confers true honour and His grace only on the humble and patient. Man tends to become arrogant with increase in power and status. We should seek to save ourselves from the demon of arrogance, which is quick to steal on us without our being conscious of it.

An Insight into Sufi Beliefs

Muhammad Ilyas Chishti

Despite Sufism is very complex to define, modern scholars of Sufism have put their efforts in exploring the term to a great extent. Some of them opine that Sufism is an attitude of mind and heart towards Allah and the struggles of life. Others view mysticism as a specific approach to reality by exploiting intuitive and emotional spiritual faculties. These powers are generally inactive but they can be activated through training under guidance. Annemarie Schimmel, a German lady scholar who dedicated her life in exploring Sufi thought, delineating the spiritual current, remarks that it is the realization of the one reality that can be called Wisdom, Light, Love or nothing. Mysticism is the love of the Absolute, for the power that makes true mysticism distinct from mere asceticism is love. For some, it is an expression of the inward or internal (*batin*) and esoteric aspect of Islam, as distinguished from its outward or external (*zahir*) and exoteric aspect while another study ranks Sufism as the mystical movement within Islam, whereas a Sufi, the one who links himself with this movement, is a person who is faithful to an inner pursuit for mystical union with his Creator. It also develops a personal trafficking with Allah. Mysticism has also been regarded as the inward or supra-formal dimension as opposed to the outward and formal expression of a religion. Sufis craved for a more emotional religion, one in which Allah appeared as a loving, succouring friend rather than as an abstract definition of undifferentiated unity, incomprehensible in His essence, enigmatic and arbitrary in His decrees. It is an attitude of mind, heart and soul that entails an individual's direct relationship with Allah with a profound comprehension of the Real and Absolute Truth. The core practices of Sufism lead to purification of the self which seek to regulate and direct the spiritual life of people. A Sufi aims at a bi-dimensional devel-

opment of his self; first, the strengthening of his spiritual and personal connection with Allah, and second, perfecting his inter personal relationships. The Sufis generally believe in three corresponding and complementary spheres of Sufism: *shari'ah* (the revealed law), *tari'qah* (the way or the method), and *haqiqah* (the ultimate truth). *Shariah* is the prescribed law in Islam for regulating the conduct of the individual and collective life. The *tari'qah* is the way or the method which guides a seeker on the path of Sufism, while the *haqiqah*, the ultimate truth or the knowledge of and nearness to Allah, is the goal of a Sufi's life.

Prominent Sufi Doctrines

a) The notion of **gnosis or intuitive knowledge** (*ma'arifah or hikmah*) as a way of understanding Allah encompasses intuitive or mysterious knowledge contrary to the knowledge acquired through the five senses and reason which results in understanding of the Absolute. In other words, it is super-intellectual knowledge of Allah.

b) The conception of **the annihilation of the mortal self** (*fana*) was central to the thinking of the Persian Sufi Abu Yazid al-Bistami. In spiritual annihilation in Allah, the dichotomy and distinction between I and Thou ceases to exist. *Fana* signifies the death of self-will and self-consciousness.

c) Another associated doctrine is that of **subsistence or permanence** (*baqa*). Love for Allah in the Sufis' life holds the hope that beyond personal annihilation there will be divine restoration or permanence. The doctrine of *baqa*, it signifies actual permanence in the Real; it represents the stage when a person loses his status in the at tributes of the Real and achieves a vision of Allah Himself.

d) According to the doctrine of **unity** (*Tauheed*), Allah is the only reality and He is unique in His timelessness. He is incomparable, and nothing is like Him. It signifies the negation of Allah's temporality, and the affirmation that Allah is eternal.

e) The early Sufis such as Hasan al-Basri believed in and propagated the concept of **fear** (*khawf*), signifying the fear of Allah's wrath, of the Day of Judgment and that of punishment of hell fire.

f) **Love for Allah** (*mahabbah*), however, emerged as a central idea in a Sufi's life, which requires exertion, discipline and patience, but it is Sufi belief that he may be blessed with love inspired by Allah, love satisfied with nothing less than Allah Himself.

g) Junayd al-Baghdadi advocated the principle of **sobriety** in Sufi practices and behaviour. His apparent behaviour, actions, and utterances were in consonance with the *Shari'ah* (the Islamic law), and for this reason his Sufi doctrines and practices were generally approved by his contemporary theologians, jurists and 'ulama'.

h) The principle opposed to **sobriety** is that of **ecstatic intoxication or 'drunkenness'** (*sukr*), characterized by loss of self control because of an excess of longing and extreme love. It was propagated by the early Sufis such as Abu Yazid al-Bistami and al-Hallaj.

i) Historians and scholars of Sufism have pointed out that the ascetic impulse, based on otherworldliness and utter renunciation of worldly pleasures, was a part of the Sufi tradition from the very beginning. One of the foremost Sufi doctrines was the doctrine of **voluntary poverty** (*faqr*) which was characterized by a denial of material needs. The lifestyles of Sufis exhibited indifference to wealth, and that was why they came to be referred to as *faqir* (poor or destitute). The manifestations of poverty included extreme simplicity of living, lack of worldly possessions, wearing of coarse clothes, having very simple food such as herbs,

and even continual fasting. The early Sufi texts are full of exaltation of poverty, since it was treated as a celebrated virtue practiced by the Prophet (PBUH) himself. One of the earliest Sufis, Hasan al-Basri, cherished the values of hunger and poverty, while branding wealth as an evil which distracts people from their righteous goal.

j) The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition) gives us insight into the Sufi belief that hearing the recitation of the Quran, chanting of poetry or music may induce ecstasy in an individual. For this reason, **devotional music or sama** is considered by a large number of Sufis to be a source of ecstasy and a method of spiritual realization, and hence, permissible. Devotional music and ecstatic dance were meant to arouse spiritual ecstasy and rapture, and many Sufis are said to have died from the heightened emotions caused by it. The formal practice of *sama* was supplemented by ritualistic ecstatic dance or *raqs*, which was intended to plunge the dancer into a state of concentration on Allah. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A) of Konya, the famous Persian Sufi poet, practiced it along with his disciples and associates. Hazrat Ali Hajveri (R.A) has devoted an entire section to it in *Kashf al-Mahjub*, and has dealt in detail with its various principles, functions, conditions of performance, and aspects such as dancing and rending of garments. Similarly, Imam al-Ghazzali, (R.A) approved of it in principle, required certain conditions to be met before listening to it.

k) Another important Sufi doctrine is that of **companionship** (*suhbah*), which specifically refers to a Sufi's return from seclusion, as well as the company of the Sufi master for the disciple (*murid*). Hazrat Ali Hajveri (R.A) has elaborated *suhbah* to a great extent.

l) Another related doctrine is that of **retirement** (*khalwah*). Adherence to the Sufi way of life did not necessarily involve continuous seclusion or solitude, breaking ties with the people at large, though the Sufis used to retreat from the worldly life for some period of time for spiritual gains.

This is known as *khalwah*. The early Sufis, while practicing it, retired to forests, deserts or wilderness. In some cases it lasted for months, while in others it stretched over years and even decades. Nevertheless, it should not lead one into thinking that the Sufis generally led quietist and secluded lives. It is essential to bear in mind that the practice of *khalwah* was a temporary phase after which the Sufis used to resume living among the people. It is important to note that all Sufis stressed the principle of service to humanity, which was, of course, not possible while in retirement.

m) Other important doctrine is that of the concept of **sincerity (*ikhlas*)**. It required that only (*khalwah*). Adherence to the Sufi way of life did be sought in every act of obedience to Him, and also implied sincerity in every thought and action.

n) Hazrat Ali Hajveri (R.A), commonly known as Daata Gunj Baksh, explicates the concept of **repentance (*tawbah*)** which includes repentance from sin as well as from forgetfulness and distraction from Allah.

o) The concept of heightened or concentrated **piety (*zuhd* often mistakenly translated as asceticism)** is another Sufi doctrine which signifies the avoidance of even the permitted pleasures of worldly life, and eventually giving up of everything that distracts the heart and mind from Allah.

p) The concept of **trust in, or reliance on, Allah (*tawakkul*)** is another prominent Sufi doctrine.

q) Another doctrine is that of **self-examination (*mahasabah*)**.

r) **Tolerance in social behaviour and universal-**

ism in approach was one of the attributes of Sufis. They had an inclusive approach towards people belonging to different sects, juristic schools, racial or ethnic groups, and even religions. They displayed more tolerance towards all, including non-Muslims, as compared to the upholders of juristic Islam or theologians. The Sufis held discourses with Christian priests, Jewish rabbis, and Buddhist and Zoroastrian sages. Sufism left an indelible mark on the life of the Muslims, as the Sufis often rose above sectarian affiliations. In addition, though many of the Sufis taught *fiqh* in various madrasahs, they discouraged these juristic differences to become bones of contention.

s) Sufi doctrines: The doctrine of **spiritual territory or domain (*wilayat* or *wilayah*)** and the **doctrine of hierarchy** were also significant in Sufi settings. According to the doctrine of *wilayat*, various geographical territories are considered to be under the spiritual jurisdiction of different Sufi *shaykhs*. The entire world is considered to be divided into various geographical regions like different units of administration, each one of which is believed to be spiritually ruled by a Sufi *shaykh*. The heads of various *silsilahs* used to dispatch their *khulafa* (deputies) to these *wilayats*, and these *khulufa* in turn used to appoint their subordinate *khulafa* for towns and small cities. In this way, one main Sufi centre used to control a whole network of *khanqahs* in various regions. As for the doctrine of hierarchy of Sufis, it was clearly articulated by Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi for the first time. He argued that there are different hierarchies among the Sufis. On the top of it is *qutb*, the spiritual ruler of the entire world, who is coexistent with the temporal sultan or the king. The *qutb* is assisted by two *imams*, under whom work four *awtads*, and seven *abdals*.

Daata Gunj Baksh (R.A) significantly contributed to the spread of Islam in South Asia. His most famous work is *Kashf-al-Mahjub* written in Persian. He maintained that attainment of *marifat* (gnosis) should never be claimed, as it was prideful; true understanding of Allah should always be a silent affair. Hazrat Moin-ud-Din Chishti (R.A) paid homage to him in the following words:

سچ عشق یعنی عالم مظہر نور خدا
تقواں را بحر کمال کلاماں را رہنما

Provider of treasures, benefactor of all, a manifestation of the light of Allah. A spiritual guide unto the imperfect and an inspiration unto the perfect.

Terrorism - An Enigma

Seemal Mushtaq

Terrorist or a Freedom Fighter? How exactly would you be able to differentiate between the two? Now-a-days, while going through global happenings, one often encounters situations where an act of same nature is being termed as terrorism and at another place as legitimate freedom struggle. After years of struggle for liberation, many nations have emerged on the map of the world. It, therefore, becomes difficult to identify where exactly the line exists between a terrorist and a freedom fighter.

It is saddening that the precious word "freedom" has been associated with terrorist activities. A situation like this can get confusing for a simple mind. It is a subject of great interest to know what exactly terrorism is and what does freedom struggle stand for? For better deliberation, one has to peep through the corridors of history and then gradually build on so that a subject which is mostly mixed up is well separated for clarity. To refine the understanding and clear the perception, both terrorist and freedom fighter are described below. Terrorists do not believe in the ideals of liberty, democracy and human life is a mere statistical figure for them. Their cause can justify absolutely anything; moral codes, human rights and law do not stand a chance if they become an obstacle in their way. Terrorism celebrates indiscriminate murder and generating absolute mayhem but the fact remains that nothing can justify killing of innocent beings. Blowing up of schools, a bus full of children or any act that harms innocent people, that is terrorism! Terrorist acts differ from criminal acts in the sense that the intention of a murder is simply to kill but a terrorist's intent is to create fear among people of a deadly fate. A terrorist wishes for its victims to live in fear of being killed and plans to use this threat as a means of

bargaining to coerce its sufferers to give in to his demands. The goal of a terrorist is to cause destruction, acquisition does not concern him. A terrorist cloaks his motives by hijacking the will of exploited and subjugated populace. The objective of terrorism is to instil a sense of fear among the masses and threaten their lives. Violence is one of the sole strategies and it is directed indiscriminately. Until their object of hatred is destroyed, terrorists can never be assuaged.

Freedom is a solemn word. It brings with itself rights as well as duties, privileges as well as responsibilities. Violence threatens freedom; it can never safeguard the rights of individuals or uphold global security, Freedom struggles are inspired by nationalism. The main objective of a freedom struggle is to gain independence, secure civil and political rights for the suppressed masses. Violence, if used to achieve the objective, is directed solely towards the authority.

Many are of the opinion that the difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter is merely a matter of perception. Similar acts get labelled differently considering who is doing the labelling. Acts of enemy are labelled as terrorism while the death of fellow soldiers is that of a martyr, a freedom fighter, One might reasonably conclude that the only difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist is whether the person describing them likes them or not.

The United Nation recognizes the right to self-determination as an inalienable right of the people. Freedom struggles over the years have not resorted to terrorist activities in the quest of their goals. Take the example of people from Eastern Europe and their struggle to bring down the Berlin Wall.

Let's not forget Martin Luther King's campaign for equal rights for all Americans. It must also be noted that no country can hijack a legitimate freedom movement under the pretext of terrorism. India, under the iron-fist control of some 700,000 security forces, has subjected Kashmiris to appalling bloodbath. The acts of Kashmiris are a clear struggle for their freedom from any accounts of scrutiny. Terrorism, if identified as freedom fighting, may encourage the growth of sub-nationalism.

A situation of this nature would result in annihilation of societal and socio-economic-political life. It would nurture a state of lawlessness where territorial integrity, political stability are under constant intimidation and threat. The fact that as long as someone holds nationality of a sovereign state, he has no moral or legal right to claim himself as freedom fighter, make the struggle for freedom enigmatic. There certainly is need to differentiate between terror and freedom struggle.

Charter of Perfect Life

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) summarized the Islamic world view in this unique farewell address to the Muslims. Revolutionary in nature, these values were given to humanity over fourteen hundred years back, long before Rousseau and Voltaire espoused "equality, liberty, and fraternity" in the eighteenth century.

"All praise is due to Allah, so we praise Him, and seek His pardon and we turn to Him. We seek refuge with Allah - from the evil consequences of our deeds. Whom Allah guideth aright, there is none to lead him astray; and there is none to guide him aright whom Allah leadeth astray. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah - His is the Sovereignty and to Him is due all praise. He grants life and causes death and is powerful over everything."

"O People, listen to my words for I know not whether we shall meet again and perform Hajj-" Human Equality. "O People! Allah says: O into tribes and nations, so that you may know one another. Verily in the sight of Allah, the most honoured amongst you is the one who is the most God-conscious- There is superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, or for the white over the black or for the black over the white, except in piety. All mankind is the progeny of Adam and Adam was fashioned out of clay-"

— Extracts from: *Khutba-e-Hajjah-tul-Wida'*

Syndrome of Corruption

Shanza Usmani

Syndrome means a group of symptoms of a disease. All symptoms taken together constitute syndrome of a disease. Corruption is a deep-rooted disease which stands for overall rottenness prevailing in a society. It destroys the purity of things. Bribery, hoarding, smuggling, favouritism, jobbery are the different forms of corruption to cause putrefaction in a society. Corruption destroys moral fibre of a nation. Corruption means misuse of powers or misuse of opportunity for one's own immoral and illegal gains. In short, corruption is a complex phenomenon which cannot be attributed to a single factor. There is a multiplicity of factors, some economic, others sociological, political, so that one has to have a thorough background of related social disciplines in order to grasp the implications of corruption.

Corruption is universal and often its echoes are heard in developing countries. Economically advanced countries are involved in various forms of corruption. They indulge in the worst form of corruption when they through the iniquitous, inegalitarian international economic order, endeavour to extract blood out of the veins of poor countries for sustaining their economies. The developed world aims at perpetuating the rich-poor country relationship at the international plane by sticking on to the existing rotten international economic order.

It is relevant to discuss here rather briefly the cause of corruption. First we take the economic factors to analyse corruption. Let me state here that the poor people are the least corrupt. Corruption starts when some of the basic needs of the people are fulfilled. That gives rise to rising aspirations to have other needs met, which the people can't do with the limited economic means. Cor-

ruption does not exist at the subsistence level as people are not conversant with corrupt practices. When, however, all physical needs are met the desire or gaining social prominence arises. At this stage, people begin to indulge in various kinds of corrupt, fraudulent practices, and morality is discarded in favour of economic values. People are fascinated by the idea of higher living standards, which itches them to acquire illegitimate economic means to achieve the objective. Besides people who manage to come out of poverty group constantly struggle to be out of it irrespective of the means. Legitimate or illegitimate, they have to choose. It sets in motion cumulatively the cruel economic forces which have the effect of eroding ethics/morality. People are least influenced by morality in practical course of action. Morality is professed but not practiced. Corruption thus is the consequence of economic growth which is rather inescapable. Economic growth cannot be withheld to grow moral values. Morality is voluntary as it springs from the desire to mould oneself according to the dictates of a religion. The number of people practicing the Quraanic values is negligible in our society. People observe the religious rituals but yet practice immoral ways to augment their money resources. Islam is a practical code of life which is demanding of action and profession. Action appears to have slipped out of our practical life rather surreptitiously. That is why the society is stripped naked of virtue, which is enjoined upon the followers to demonstrate in every walk of life. Every section of the society appears to have been engulfed by corruption, though it is highly pronounced in urban centres where there is the operation of government machinery and that of economic development. Rural people are, by and large less corrupt than the urban people. Economic poverty thus cannot be considered as the

main cause of corruption.

Sociological factors cannot be considered independently as they are linked to economic ones. Owing to the operation of international forces, material-oriented values are transmuted to the developing countries. People begin to feel inferior culturally and that downgrades their own culture which used to be hallmark of their civilization in the past. Culture tends to be affected more rapidly by technology than any other factor, nonmaterial part of the culture lags behind and that pressurizes life of the people with economic forces. Aspirations tend to be far higher than achievements, and particularly the educated class begins to feel frustrated as it cannot have the former fulfilled, corruption is the result of the sociological imbalance between achievements and aspirations.

The undemocratic rules depend upon bureaucracy and in the absence of representative institutions they have no direct contact with the public. Bureaucracy, assumes unchecked authority without any fear of accountability in the absence of political institutions. During this period, bureaucracy strengthens its hold and indulges in corruption without any let or hindrance. This paves way for the emergence of the forces of corruption. Inability of authoritarian regimes to eradicate corruption embolden the government servants in their corrupt practices.

Over-regulation is another cause of corruption. When corruption increases, more laws and rules are framed, realizing little that corruption occurs not as a result of any flaw in the existing laws or procedures but because of lack of effective supervision. Corruption owes much to the surfeit of laws, cumbersome procedures and discretionary powers enjoyed by bureaucracy, a permit or a license can make a person rich overnight. The bureaucracy which has the powers to make a person rich overnight would also like to make hay while the sun shines, through ill-gotten wealth. Political factors also contribute to corruption.

Politicians spend money to recover it many times greater after being elected. Only the elite element comprising feudal landlords, robber barons, retired bureaucrats are capable of contesting elections. Elections are a game of the rich. The elected representative get a price of their loyalty in various forms and ruling governments are obliged to appease them. They can get loans from the banks, never to return them. They may secure import licenses, which they could further sell at high prices. One comes across a contradiction when one observes that the political element, which is supposed to lend its weight for lessening the social evils, is seen in the vanguard of corruption. Democracy curbs social evils through accountability, but in underdeveloped countries, under its umbrella, corruption is sustained. One may say that when democracy takes firm roots as a result of the growth of political institutions, it might create a bulwark against corruption and other social evils.

Analysis shows that corruption is the result of inter-twined factors. Struggle has to be waged on a number of fronts at a time. Before considering the remedial measures, one should admit, that no commitment by any regime has been demonstrated in the right earnest. Lack of commitment has let *status quo* prevail. Corruption has stayed with the people throughout and is likely to persist in a severe form in time to come. It is only the committed leadership, having no fishy motive of any sort, which could fight against the evil with a resolute will and determination. Total commitment on the part of government is called for. There should be no compromise with any of the political exigencies.

While political activity gives rise to corruption, it equally can operate to cut it down. The institution of accountability is a vital one. While accountability should operate unhindered, governments must rise above parochial considerations and not let the accountability axe fall on its opponents or those who differ from its policies. Accountability should be even handed. A heavy responsibility

falls on the political governments to allow it grow by refraining from indulging in any political opportunism. Let the politicians, government functionaries, high or low, be accountable to the nation.

As far economic solution, one may suggest to narrow down the growing income disparities through the correction of the existing socioeconomic system. That calls for taking practical steps to ensure the dispensation of social justice. Social justice must be inherently built into the economic system, so that with rising growth rate, the fruit of economic development also accrue to the poor strata of society. Equitable distribution of development-fruit is the answer. That appears to be difficult to achieve as filtration with growth would take you away far from social justice. I advocate most vehemently that the State should ensure the provision of basic human-social needs. Particularly the low grade government functionaries find it too difficult to make both ends meet. The disparity in pay scales should be narrowed as much as possible. One understands the resource constraints, but reducing the top scales, could yield resources to raise the emoluments of lower grade employees. The condition of government employees who believe in honest, righteous living, whose number could be counted on fingers, are corned like anything by the mounting economic pressures on the one hand and the fixed means they have on the other. Government would have to evolve a different yardstick to compensate this innocent lot, otherwise, the honest and corrupt would continue to sail in the same boat. The system of rewards should be instituted in the form of grant of advance increments and accelerated promotions to encourage government servants who display exemplary integrity and efficiency. It should be made a regular feature.

The process of accountability should be initiated

from the top as the fish starts rotting in the head. The political personages at the top level should solemnly pledge that offer of millions of rupees would never tempt to succumb to getting jobs or other favours for their near and dear ones.

Swindlers, tax-dodgers and loan-defaulters must be hounded, irrespective of any position or political affiliation and sent to jail as quick as possible.

Feudal lords have usurped the freedom of people and a farce democracy prevails where people have nominal role, as they do not have any other choice except to cast their vote in favour of the ever contesting classes, comprising landlords, industrial tycoons, etc. The political system needs to be amended in a way as to render it possible to hold elections on class and cadre basis. The *hari* should be represented in assemblies by representatives drawn from his class. It is a case of vocational democracy.

Discretionary powers of government servants in the higher hierarchy should be done away with completely. The president of the US is the most powerful president, but cannot spend a dollar at his own discretion. He cannot go beyond the authorized amount as provided in the budget.

Corruption has emerged as a cancer in the society. Marginal, make-shift or expedient measures based on a weak-willed policy, instead of alleviating the disease, would cause it further aggravate like cancer. Half-hearted measures fail in desperate situations. A relentless struggle would have to be forged on a number of fronts to fight against the octopus of corruption. Corruption has the potential of wiping us out of our existence as according to the Holy Quraan, Allah destroyed nations in the past that spread anarchy on the earth, indulged in corrupt practices in trade and commerce. Allah loveth not the corrupt folk!

— *“And eat up not one another’s property unjustly (in any illegal way e.g stealing, robbing, deceiving etc..) nor give bribery to the rulers (judges before presenting your case) that you may unknowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully”*

— Al-Baqarah:188

Time to Finally Let Go

Muhammad Waleed Waris

It is every father's wish that his children outlive him, that it is they who bury them in old age and not the other way round. But a wish is a wish. At the end of the day, it is divine fate and destiny that befalls all of us. My name is Tariq Jehan and I am a Muslim, living in the city of Birmingham, in the year 2014. Three years ago, on 9th August, 2011, our world shattered around us just as Birmingham's peace was shattered- but my loss was more personal than most, and more painful than most. However, earlier today, sitting alone on a bench, waiting for my wife to finish one more lap of the park's track, my thoughts strayed, as they often do, to that night when I had to perform a CPR on my own flesh and blood.

Riots had started in London less than a week before my family had to go through the torture of losing a loved one, and had spread to this part of England. I have been living here in Birmingham with my family for decades. I had witnessed the riots spreading to our peaceful community. Before it had affected our lives directly, me and my son saw the destruction caused in London on television with disbelief.

"What is the point of this?" I asked of my son, Haroon, as my frustration boiled over seeing Britons destroying Britain.

Haroon recognized this as a rhetorical question, and understood my meaning: the riots are unjustified; no one gains anything by violence. And he, having lived in England all his life, felt the anguish for his country. His heart ached for his fellow Englishmen, whose lives and property were in danger. No one was used to seeing flames in what has been known as; perhaps, the most civilized city in the world. Even as we watched the

flames in London on our television screens, we wondered if we had anything to worry about. Less than a week later, our worst fears were confirmed.

The London riots, of 2011, had reached our street in Birmingham.

I had heard of the unrest back in my country of origin, Pakistan. I had heard of the recent target killing incidents and gang wars in the streets of Karachi, thousands of miles away from where I presently lived, in an entirely different continent. But now I realized, the world was a small place, after all.

"I want to help," said Haroon to me on that fateful night. I ask myself everyday why I let my son step outside the safety of our home. The answer, always simple, always unhelping, is that if I wanted to do what I could for my community, how could I deny that to my son? And so, despite my wife's worried stares, I let my son, who worked as a mechanic just down the road, to join me.

Out on the roads, we tried to protect the mosque and help those who were in trouble. I was engaged in my own efforts to do what I could, to help as many as I could. There were fires down the road; the rioters had also broken into a petrol station and the social club. The worst part, in my opinion, was that the rioters had beaten up a few people. It disgusted me. How someone could beat up another who was in a weaker position? This was another example of how the human race was merely a pack of domesticated animals, pretending to be something more. All around us, there was chaos-Tires screeched. More thuds!

Three men knocked down by a van. Adrenaline drove my legs towards them. They were not very

young. I bent over one of the men, fatally injured. I wondered desperately how to help him. This was one of the kids who had been trying to stop the rioters, begging them to stop.

"Tariq! Your son!"


My entire body spun around to where the man calling out to me was pointing. One of the three men knocked down by the vehicle, lying just behind me, was "Haroon," I yelled my son's name at his unmoving form. My head spinning, something still drove me to my son, as if by instinct. He was covered in blood and CPR was all I could think of. There I was, desperate. And there he was, dying. My world shattering. The memory of my wife's stare before we had left the house echoed in the corners of my brain as I desperately tried to save my son.

The rest is a hazy memory; the ambulance, the hospital, the final hours, and the funeral. I don't remember every detail of those hours. Though, my mind had been functioning; yet it was numb. The very next day, something gave me the strength to face the world again and openly accept my loss without losing my composure. As I told the reporters after Haroon's death, it is impossible to describe how it feels to lose a son. So many years later; I still can't, not even to myself.

It was later determined that Haroon was killed in a hit-and-run attack, which was described as racially motivated. The tensions between the Asian and the Caribbean communities is no secret here. But I have since refused to acknowledge it as a

racial attack. We all live in the same community. I received condolences from all sections of the society, every race and ethnicity. "A day from now, maybe two days from now, the whole world will forget, and nobody will care," was what I told the reporters after the funeral. And sure enough, nobody remembers Haroon or Tariq Jehan anymore. That's the way the world works. Nobody remembers my loss now except those close to my family. I don't mind, though. If the human mind wasn't able to forget, how would it heal? How would I myself move on if the world didn't forget or consoled me for the loss every day?

As I lifted my stare from my feet to look at my wife who had finally finished her lap, a tiny; perhaps, subconscious smile lit up the edge of her lips as it often did when our eyes met on a good day. Back when the void left by Haroon's death was fresh, I could not have imagined that this smile would ever return to her grief stricken face. Fact is, Haroon was dead and may Allah bless him. Not much has changed in the grand scheme of all things. The riots and the looting had stopped but there are still opportunists living amongst us. Amir Khan is still the unbeaten boxing champion but England still hasn't won a single Cricket ODI World Cup. The world was still tilted at an angle of 24 degrees to the sun and Pluto was still not a planet. The universe had moved on, and so had my wife, at least as much as a mother could after losing her son. There was still enough in our lives to look forward to, enough worth living for. And so I now knew, that it was time to finally let go.



Asma (R.A) said, "My mother who was a pagan, came with her father during the period of the peace pact between the Muslims and the Quraish infidels. I went to seek the advice of the Prophet (PBUH) saying, my mother has arrived and she is hoping (for my favour)." The Prophet (S.A.W.W) said, "Yes, be good to your mother." ("Be good to" implies good behaviour; helping her financially visiting her.)

— Bukhari

Monochrome Grief

Tayyaba Iftikhar

The sound of sirens and gunfire pounded against his ears and he stumbled once before regaining his balance. A pink tinge was spreading across the horizon, eliminating the inky blue and the birds, in-somniac in this part of town, took flight soundless. He watched them, slightly confused. Time seemed to have lost its significance long ago but now, it seemed that he couldn't fathom when night ended and dawn began.

"Dammit," He grumbled, kicking the ground. Dirt sprayed all around.

The gunfire shots were still there but distant and he forgot to pay them any attention as he struggled with another dilemma. The ground was stark white. Exactly like undulating alabaster. In his 23 years of living on this very land, he had never come upon anything of this kind.

And come to think of it... he squinted up the sky, and found it to be washed in black with pin pricks of white poking out from the eastern horizon. He blinked once, then twice and whirled his head around.

Before him, lay a stretch of the earth with tiny gray houses a couple of miles away. The trees, bent and gnarled, were dark as the night. The shrivelled blades of grass appeared to have lost its natural colour and lay there like burnt charcoal. Far off in a distance, he could see the spire of smoke rising up the sky - a dreary and desolate landscape. Bewildered, he spun around in circles. Realization dawning all over him.

It wasn't Time's fault. It was just that all the colours have been siphoned off from the painting, to mislead him.

What is happening?" He cried, teetering on the spot. The monochrome world whirled with him, rendering him blind. Fear, which he had been trying to suppress, rose up to his throat and he blubbered something. Blood rushing to his face, the heat he could feel coursing through his veins. His heart battered against his ribs as if he had been running. The dull throbbing in his head intensified and he clutched it in horror. When had this happened? Yesterday had been full of colour; this was definitely a new development. He groped for his pockets, hands desperately searching for the water bottle and found it, nestled at the bottom. Fumbling with the cap, he tipped the bottle over and greedily poured the warm liquid all over his face.

"Ahmed!" A shrill yell made him choke and double over. Water rolled down his face in rivulets and spotted the dry, cracked earth. The heat emanating from his cheeks didn't stop but now he didn't care. The mere sound of his name being called had sprung his body into action and he leaped upright, his neck snapping in the direction.

"Da'ud?" His voice was barely a croak as he stumbled towards the man who was hurrying in his direction.

The man, in question, was short with a dozen cloaks and scarves around him that it was difficult to determine if he was stubby or lean. His dark hair was caked in mud which had stained his forehead as well. The pale face was drawn in worry and his eyes had shadows underneath which accentuated what life had stolen from him. Reaching up to him, Da'ud grasped his arm by the elbow and shook him as if testing if he was still alive.

"Ahmed!" Cried Da'ud, "Where were you? We

have been looking everywhere - Do you know? Do you know?"

"I..." He dreamily started, scanning Da'ud's face, relieved at the sight of a friend in this horrible situation. "Da'ud...I..."

"You have to come with me," Da'ud tugged at his arm in urgency. "Now!"

He didn't move, suddenly overcome with vertigo. Swaying, he gripped Da'ud's wrist causing his friend to come to a sudden halt and whip his head towards him.

"Ahmed!" Da'ud cried, looking up at him. His dark eyes revealing nothing. "You have to see!"

"I can't..." Ahmed tried to mumble a coherent sentence as Da'ud made him hurry along with him, nearly tripping over rough ground himself. "Listen...the colours..."

"I've just gone out for an errand," Words started spilling out from Da'ud's mouth as he scurried towards where the little box houses were. "Just for five minutes...Five minutes...it was all impossible -"

"No...Please," He wanted so desperately to tell him about his dilemma, but Da'ud didn't seem so interested. It was apparently getting hotter too since a slight sheen on Daud's forehead had appeared. "I can't see...the colours...vanished."

"My fault that I wanted to get some milk for the children," Da'ud kept rambling. His feet moving even faster causing Ahmed to jog to keep up with him. They were getting closer. The houses enlarged in size. "I didn't know a thing. Then I couldn't find you -madness! Oh! Those horrid planes!"

"Listen," Ahmed tried again, running out of breath even though he wasn't running that hard. His pulse had quickened again, he felt a sinking swooping

in his stomach like something had dropped in the pit of his stomach. "It's all black. Something is happening to me!"

"Of course! It's a black day!" Da'ud wailed. His beetle eyes glazed and blank, "where were you, Ahmed? Oh dear brother! Where? I didn't know. I didn't know!"

Thrall gripped him. He seized him by the shoulder and spun him around so they can see eye to eye.

"What the" Da'ud mouth snapped shut when he saw Ahmed - angry, desperate and belligerent.

"Stopit" Ahmed said through clenched teeth. His head clearer than before. "Listen to me! My world has gone... Colour less! I can't see couloirs anymore. Do you get what I'm saying? The colour has gone! Take me to a doctor."

Da'ud stared at him in amazement. "W-what?" He pushed him aside and ran his fingers through his hair in misery. "I don't know how it happened. I don't know. I don't know."

"Ahmed?" Da'ud spoke quietly. "I'll-I'll take you to a doctor after we go somewhere first."

"Where?"

He didn't answer just started trundling towards the dwellings; his shoulders now sagged in defeat. His clothes hung limply over him and there was sadness in his stride now.

Ahmed watched him in confusion. One minute that buffoon was frantic, the other minute, he completely changes. He thought as he followed Da'ud.

He didn't have to go further. A crowd of people were gathered in front of the wreckage. Smoke was lazily rising from it and he could see the vestiges of chairs and tables scattered across the dirt

road. Da'ud walked confidently towards the crowd with his head thrown back. Whispering and muttering grew as the people with their ashen clothes and dark expressions parted to let them through.

"Da'ud, what is this? Ahmed's whisper was too loud but no one cared that time. Da'ud stepped aside in a saintly manner and Ahmed got the full view.

Even in gray scale, it was revulsion, terror and ultimate heartbreak. The world ceased to exist. Time held its breath and he was frozen.

His wife and his two children lay there amidst the wreckage. Three white creatures among the black.

Their faces cold, still and, marred by dark lines that glistened here and there. A total breakdown of beauty. His chest heaved up and down, his eyes affixed at one point. He was vaguely aware of a feral roar that ripped through his lungs and the pain in his knees as he thudded to the ground. He had life but he felt lifeless that moment. In that few seconds, he realized why he couldn't see the colours of the world because the colours that lit up his life like fireworks were no more.

The puddle of blood was gathered along the bodies and he could feel it soaking through his pants. Red. Absolute Red.

The hail of gunfire began again.



You are Wonderful

It happened several years ago in the Paris opera house. A famous singer had been contracted to sing, and ticket sales were booming. In fact, the night of the concert found the house packed and every ticket sold. The feeling of anticipation and excitement was in the air as the house manager took the stage and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your enthusiastic support. I am afraid that due to illness, the man whom you've all come to hear will not be performing tonight. However, we have found a suitable substitute we hope will provide you with comparable entertainment." The crowd groaned in disappointment and failed to hear the announcer mention the stand-in's name. The environment turned from excitement to frustration.

The stand-in performer gave the performance everything he had. When he had finished, there was nothing but an uncomfortable silence. No one applauded. Suddenly, from the balcony, a little boy stood up and shouted, "Daddy, I think you are wonderful!" The crowd broke into thunderous applause.

We all need people in our Lives who are willing to stand up once in a while and say, "I think you are wonderful. "

OF FACTS AND FICTION



Pakistan and the USA

Zainab Khawaja

Pakistan's foreign policy has shifted with the rise and fall of each successive government in the country's history. The US-Pak alliance surfaces as a predominant and re-emerging theme. From Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to Ayub, to Zia and Musharraf, to the present PP regime, the United States has grown increasingly involved in Pakistan, and has shaped not only how the international community views Pakistan, but also how the Pakistani state defines itself.

This relationship has been described as an "international political version of bipolar disorder". (Hagerty, 2004) This thought paper will attempt to explain why the US has played such a large role in the development and growth of the Pakistani state, and the nature of what is often referred to as a "master-servant" alliance.

Today, a stable and democratic Pakistan is considered fundamental to US foreign policy interests. US concerns regarding Pakistan can be categorized as: 1) regional and global terrorism, 2) Afghan stability, 3) democratization and human rights protection, 4) the Kashmir dispute/ Pakistan-India tensions, and 5) economic development. How have these interests played out in the last 65 years? I will lightly touch on each of these points while outlining major shifts in the political alignment with the United States.

It started in 1948, when Pakistan initially had an independent foreign policy, approaching the United States and Soviet Union with friendly intentions. Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the US in 1949, and subsequent pro-West inclinations signalled Pakistan had chosen a side. At the time of the 1955 Baghdad Pact, Pakistan was viewed as one of the US's closest allies in its goal of containing

the Soviet Union by having a line of strong states along the USSR's southwestern frontier. The US also operated U-2 intelligence flights over the USSR from bases in Pakistan. Throughout Ayub Khan's era, Pakistan's decision to align itself with the US in the Cold War led to a healthy relationship between the two countries, equaling \$3 billion in economic development grants and loans. (Ahmed, 1998)

I view Pakistan's initial alignment with the US as based mainly on its insecurity as a nation. Security problems with India and Afghanistan acted as catalysts to the search for allies. The early 1950s brought an economic crisis where the price of Pakistan's main exports of jute and cotton dropped, adversely affecting foreign trade. The US came to the rescue with a gift of wheat and saved the day. Also, Pakistan's attempt to involve the UN and Commonwealth in the Kashmir issue proved futile, and it was clear that only the strength of external parties would give Pakistan the leeway necessary to confront India. (Thornton, 2004)

The US's decision to cut off aid during the 1965 war with India led to a sense of betrayal amongst Pakistanis. For the first time, it was realized that this friendship "was not based on mutual interest but on the interest of Washington alone". (Burki, 2007)

Pakistan started focusing on nuclear weapons development in January 1972 under the leadership of Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto; this caused a degree of alarm in the US administration. It was in response to this that Pakistan was cut off from US aid in accordance with the Symington Amendment in April 1979, which stated that economic assistance be terminated to any country that im-

ported uranium enrichment technology. (Pakistani Nuclear Weapons, 1997)

Zia-ul-Haq's regime, while initially shunned by American officials as an anti-democracy dictatorship, was soon pivoted into a position of paramount importance, as Pakistan became America's front-line ally in the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Pakistan provided airspace rights, military bases and intelligence services, and was rewarded with over \$1 billion in economic assistance, debt re-scheduling programs with the IMF, World Bank & Asian Development Bank, as well as a removal of the remaining nuclear and pro-democracy sanctions. (Hagerty, 2004) Whereas at first his military regime was seen as an obstacle to advancement in developing countries, Zia was now welcomed in the West, presented as "a champion of the free world". (Burki, 2007)

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan resulted in a complete loss of US interest in Pakistan. All of a sudden, we were no longer important. We had served the purpose, and thus capital flows declined. Nawaz Sharif's 1998 decision to test nuclear devices led to the imposition of Western sanctions. Musharraf's consequent coup and the return of military power was once again shunned. No longer was the military a "champion", and Bill Clinton even refused to shake Musharraf's hand in public. (Burki, 2007)

In accordance with the now-regular fluctuations in America's disposition towards the country, Pakistan was once again called to duty after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This time, it was the carrot-and-stick approach. The US threatened it would "bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age" if we did not comply. (Burki, 2007) Immediately Pakistan abandoned its support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, becoming an active member of the hunt for Osama bin Laden and the War on Terror. For its shifting loyalties, Paki-

stan was handsomely compensated in the form of economic/military assistance, and reduction of its ever-growing debt burden. To this day, Pakistan continues to officially support the War.

The India-Pakistan-Kashmir dispute has festered for over 65 years and has now come to include the issue of "Islamic insurgency". The US has chosen to maintain a relatively neutral policy in this regard, even though both sides have been vying for support. America's objective is to avoid war in the region. The American government is not, and has never been prepared to definitively support Pakistan's claim to Kashmir and involves itself only when its own goal is threatened.

Time and again, we've seen, as a nation, that the US is a fickle friend. American foreign policy is guided by the notion "if you aren't with us, you're against us." Though some may argue that Pakistan has benefitted in economic terms from its relationship with the US, deeper analysis reveals that it has paid a heavy price. The enhancement of sectarian violence, militancy and terrorist activity are by-products of the Afghan war. Numerous examples can be cited. The question we need to ask ourselves now is what will we do the next time the US loses interest, or if it chooses India as a more reliable strategic partner?

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Entry Test Woes

Tayyaba Iftikhar

There is a feverish electric atmosphere in the air around the time when universities announce test dates for admission. There is a flurry to buy the prospectus, put together the required documents, fill the form and then mail it all before the last date of submission. After all this, the looming test date hangs over the victim's head like an ominous cloud, as a reminder of what is to come... Honestly, I find it the most irksome period, especially when you are with people who are over zealous and brimming with enthusiasm or racked with nerves. Getting admission into a particular university seems to be their sole raison d'être. A friend of mine obviously suffering from the strain of work load snapped at me, while I chatted about mundane things.

"How much hours do you put in studying?"

I glanced at her and answered albeit reluctantly, "Uh...Two?" She stared at me in incredulity and then muttered something under her breath, misconstruing my honesty which is understandable since I have met many people who nonchalantly shrug when asked the same question and say, "Oh I'm not studying - not right now...abhi chill karl" which is not correct since they are the ones who then ace the same tests they supposedly spent time 'chilling'. Or maybe they are just very intelligent. I digress, however. My woes were only just starting to poke their head out.

As the entry test season nears, a plethora of academies promising instant success in top universities also start to crop up. You see their advertisements in newspapers and magazines, flyers being distributed at random spots and some are even pasted on electrical poles so you do not forget. Looking at my abysmal two hour study schedule, I decided to join one in the hopes of conquering a subject I dislike so I do not fail the test just because of

that. To my amazement, instead of finding dunces-here-to-learn like myself, I found some geniuses sitting in the back benches who answer the questions coming out of the teacher's mouth as if it was a race. All I wanted to do was crumple up the paper in my hand and throw it against their heads for making me feel stupid as if trying to understand all the concepts was not enough and being very well aware that the competition I would be facing would be a tough one if the back bencher geniuses were anything to go by.

The tension still surrounds me like a thick fog threatening to trap me. Everywhere I go the first question I am asked is what university would I be applying in? Naturally, human beings are curious but after the one thousandth time, it becomes a tad bit tedious. My father, acting like a sage, told me to apply everywhere but he is not going to be the one giving the tests - that would be me. Also, for the love of all that is holy, filling the dreadful forms and the pandemonium that ensues with it makes me want to tear my hair out; applying everywhere and getting the stack of forms would be enough to make me insane. Twice, my father had to mail the forms on the very last date of submission. I seemed to only remember them when the voice in my head starts to shriek like a banshee. My bed is cluttered with heavy books from the Princeton Review to the NAT guide and yet I don't feel that I've studied enough. Maybe it is the nerves or maybe it is really because I haven't studied! And as the tests approach, I feel the same banshee shriek amplify with every passing day. I gnaw my bottom lip, finger tips rasping anxiously across the upholstery as I skim the pages and then shut the book with a snap! When I couldn't study - read: skim - anymore. My woes would only end when the admission season would thankfully be over with me in a top university.

Alternate Energy Resources

Naila Azhar

The annoying electricity and gas disruptions and extremely high fuel prices have made life difficult for people. One of the major bottlenecks that have hindered energy prosperity in the country is short-sightedness. It is a consequence of unwise energy policies over the last three decades. The approach has been project-oriented, rather than goal-oriented. Another aspect of the wrong policies is the politicisation of projects of national interest. The most significant example is that of Kalabagh Dam. It has been politicised to such an extent that it now appears to be impossible. It has to be realised that the delay in project has made the country suffer a great deal.

There is no quick solution to electricity shortage and the trend of rising prices is irreversible. The problem can not be prevented from aggravating without a sustainable solution. The decisions need to be made and executed with commitment. The concept of long-term and sustainable planning of energy should be adopted. As Pakistan is currently facing unprecedented financial crisis, that may not allow the government to go for huge and time consuming projects of building new dams. Therefore, we need to weigh our options for practical as well as sustainable solution of energy crisis. There are a number of alternative energy resources other than just the use of water in our dams.

But still the government is stuck to the dependence on availability of water in dams for generating electricity. The government and our private sector should also focus on short-term measures to produce more electricity for poor Pakistanis.

Therefore, it is need of the hour to permanently shift country's domestic and agriculture sectors to alternate energy to permanently end load shedding, reduce electricity bills and cut costs on import of ever increasing fuel prices. In this regard, affordable wind turbines, solar panels, photo voltaic panels, biogas plant and waste to energy technology can play an important role to cope with the situation. It is also important that lessons be learnt from the past mistakes. The crisis is still addressable as long as there is due vision and devotion.

In order to tackle the existing crisis and ensure a prosperous energy future, the backbone of the future energy policies will have to be reliant on domestic resources (hydropower, coal, solar and wind energy) and energy conservation. The government should take initiatives to overcome the energy crisis by enhancing the efficiencies of different energy consuming products being produced in the country. The increased efficiency will result not only in reducing consumption of energy but also help conserve energy.

Decisions on energy projects should revolve around national interest rather than political and personal gains. Energy offices should be run by qualified, committed and selfless people equipped with due mandate. Relevant ministries and departments should also be overhauled. Consideration of nationalization of energy sector and adoption of alternative energy technology can go hand in hand with already approved long and medium term policies and projects based on traditional resources of energy generation.

China's Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC) came up with a plan to initiate energy projects of 10,000 MW capacity in Pakistan with an investment of \$15 billion to help overcome the power shortage. They discussed several energy projects with Pakistani authorities including Kohala Hydro Power, Bunji, Bhasha and Dasu in Upper Indus Valley and some others in lower Indus. While Pakistan is in the grip of severe energy crisis that is affecting our economy adversely, the offer by the Chinese Corporation is very timely and deserves appreciation.

—IPRI- July 2012

Energy Crisis: Problems and Solutions

Syeda Raiha Raza Gardezi

An energy crisis is any great shortfall (or price hike) in the supply of energy resources to an economy. It usually refers to the shortage of oil and additionally to electricity or other natural resources. The crisis often has effects on the rest of the economy, with many recessions being caused by an energy crisis in some form. In particular, the production costs of electricity rise, which raise manufacturing costs.

For the consumer, the price of gasoline (petrol) and diesel for cars and other vehicles rises, leading to reduced consumer confidence and spending, higher transportation costs and general price rising.

Alternative Sources of Energy

Some experts argue that the world is heading towards a global energy crisis due to a decline in the availability of cheap oil and recommend a decreasing dependency on fossil fuel. This has led to increasing interest in Karrick Process, alternate power/fuel research such as fuel cell technology, hydrogen fuel, biomethanol, biodiesel, solar energy, tidal energy and wind energy. To date, only hydroelectricity and nuclear power have been significant alternatives to fossil fuel (see future energy development), with big ecological problems i.e, residues and water spending. Hydrogen gas is currently produced at a net energy loss from natural gas, which is also experiencing declining production in North America and elsewhere. When not produced from natural gas, hydrogen still needs another source of energy to create it, also at a loss during the process. This has led to hydrogen being regarded as a 'carrier' of energy rather than a 'source'.

There have been alarming predictions by groups such as the Club of Rome that the world would

run out of oil in the late 20th century. Although technology has made oil extraction more efficient, the world has to struggle to provide oil by using increasingly costly and less productive methods such as deep sea drilling, and developing environmentally sensitive areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The world's population continues to grow at a quarter of a million people per day, increasing the consumption of energy. The per capita energy consumption of China, India and other developing nations continues to increase as the people living in these countries adopt Western lifestyles. At present a small part of the world's population consumes a large part of its resources, with the United States and its population of 296 million people consuming more oil than China with its population of 1.3 billion people.

Efficiency mechanisms such as megawatt power can provide significantly increased supply. It is a term used to describe the trading of increased efficiency, using consumption efficiency to increase available market supply rather than by increasing plant generation capacity.

The Crisis

Energy resources have depleted over the years. Whatever resources are available are simply too expensive to buy or already are acquired by countries which had planned and acted long time ago. Delayed efforts in the exploration sector have not been able to find sufficient amounts of energy resources. Nations of the world which have their own reserves are not supplying energy resources anymore; only the old contracts made decades ago are active. Aeroplanes, trains, cars, motorbikes, buses and trucks, all modes of transportation are coming to a standstill. Many industries have closed due to insufficient power supply. Price of

oil has gone all-time high. At domestic level, alternate methods like solar, biogas and other methods are being tried for mere survival.

The above is a likely scenario of Pakistan and around the globe after 25 years. A pessimistic view, but realistic enough to think about and plan for the future. But are we doing anything about it? Let's have a look at the current energy situation of Pakistan and the world. Pakistan's economy is performing at a very high note with GDP growing at an exceptional rate, touching 8.35% in 2004-05. In its history of 65 years, there has been only a few golden years where the economy grew above 7%. This year official expectations are that GDP growth rate will be around 6.5 - 7.0%. For the coming years, the government is targeting GDP growth rate above 6%. With economy growing at such a pace, the energy requirements are likely to increase with a similar rate. For 2004-05, Pakistan's energy consumption touched 55.5 MTOE (Million Tons of Oil Equivalent).

The energy consumption is expected to grow at double digit if the overall economy sustains the targeted GDP growth rate of 6% by the government. Pakistan's energy requirements are expected to double in the next few years, and our energy requirement by 2015 is likely to cross 120 MTOE. By 2030, the nation's requirement will be 7 times the current requirement reaching 361 MTOE. Pakistan's energy requirements are fulfilled with more than 80% of energy resources through imports. On the other hand, international oil prices have not only broken all records but are touching new heights, with every news directly or indirectly affecting the black gold industry. Moreover, speculators all around the world expect oil prices to touch \$100 per barrel in medium term. With concerns over Iran's nuclear program, terrorist issues in Nigeria and high economic growth in China & India and their ever increasing energy requirements, oil prices do not see another way but to shoot upwards.

Electricity crisis is such a big problem that if not properly dealt with, our country can go back to the time of Stone Age. In today's Pakistan, 41% of the people cannot survive if there is no electricity, 88% of the industries will stop working, our own system will collapse. Therefore, it is of importance that some steps should be taken. At present the country has about 28 Trillion cft of recoverable gas available to us, the yearly consumption is about 1.2 Trillion cft, which means that even if gas consumption is increased a lot, the existing recoverable gas will be sufficient for the next 16 years. Therefore one solution will be that the additional thermal generation should be based on gas, but in order to make additional gas available, the gas pressure and its transmission system will have to be enhanced. Talking about substitutes to resolve electricity problems, we should further discuss the time during 2010 (floods) and 2005 (Kashmir earthquake) when power stations, power distribution and transmission and other energy infrastructures were damaged. During the floods the recently constructed Jinnah Hydroelectric Power Plant was flooded in addition to severe damages to transmission and distribution network and installations while several power plants and refineries were threatened by rising waters and had to be shut down. Natural gas fields output had to be reduced as the flood waters approached the wells.

Solutions

Kalabagh Dam may offer a number of benefits including availability of water for entire *Rabi*, sowing and maturing of *Kharif* crops, 2600 MW electricity and flood alleviation between downstream and Indus-Punjab confluence. Wind, solar and wave technologies are not proven and are expensive toys which hardly contribute a few percentages of power demands in the most rich and technologically superior countries. Coal power plants are a very attractive option, since Pakistan has coal reserves to provide its energy needs for several dozen years.

Kashmir

Sumayyah Khan

The land of sparkling rivers and sleepy lakes, of startling gardens and regal Chinar trees, Kashmir boasts of the world's most beautiful meadows and snow-capped peaks. Perfection beyond this would make this 'Switzerland of the East' a paradise. But from the midst of this mesmerizing splendour, we hear the screeching cries of mothers, fathers, and children. A cloud of misery hovers in the dark, deep blue sky while teargas and rioting presents a dreaded scene in the middle of the streets.

Kashmir is designated as a disputed territory by the United Nations, where claims of human rights abuses have been made against the Indian Armed Forces, Kashmiri women are among the worst sufferers of inhuman violence in the world,

Such atrocities are being carried out as we speak, yet there is no attention, whether political or through the media, being directed to such gruesome attacks. When are the Kashmiri people going to get their freedom? This issue has been raised time and again in the UN General Assembly. Resolutions have been passed, and renewed oaths of commitment have been made, but to no avail. The Security Council directed in its Resolution 47, passed on April 21, 1948, that a plebiscite be held, but no one complied. Security Council

Resolution 2001, adopted in 2011, 'reaffirms the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.' Amnesty International has repeatedly urged armed groups to act in consonance with minimum standards of humanitarian law and to spare the physical integrity and lives of non-combatants.

It has been over 64 years since these resolutions and pleas have been made, yet the plight of Kashmir is relegated to the back burner as a result of recent events on the world stage, such as the Middle East crisis. The blood of Kashmiris has been splattered across the pages of history, and yet they still look to the distant horizon with the hope of a long and glorious morning to come.

But the arduous and crucial task of implementing the difference lies with us, the international community, and organizations of power such as the UN, Organization of the Islamic Conference

Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?
Expediency asks the question - is it politic?
Vanity asks the question - is it popular?
But conscience asks the question - is it right?
And this is the time to take a stance because
IT IS RIGHT!!

"United Nations has a principal responsibility to seek a solution not only as the chief international agency for maintenance and enforcement of peace, but also as an organ which was asked by India and Pakistan to intervene in the conflict and which has committed its prestige and authority to its solution through numerous resolutions. In terms of its future, it cannot tolerate a prolonged flaunting of its decisions. In this light, a possible fresh start should take into careful consideration at least the spirit of the original resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations Commissions on India & Pakistan (UNCIP), which were and still are the only legal foundations for a settlement of the Kashmir Conflict."

—Danger in Kashmir: Josef Korbel

Food Security

Anum Jawed

Hunger is exclusion - exclusion from the land, from income, jobs, wages, life and citizenship. When a person gets to the point of not having anything to eat, it is because all the rest has been denied. This is a modern form of exile. It is death in life. . .

—Josue de Castro

The concept of food security originated in mid 1970s and it happened during the discussions of International Food problems at the time of food crisis in the world. Initially the problem was considered from the prospect of supply problems being faced. This prospect included the assurance of availability of the food items, the price stability of basic edibles at the international and national level around the globe. The supply direction international as well as institutional set of concerns reflects the changing organizations of the food economy globally. A process of international negotiations followed which paved the way for World Food Conference of 1974, which focused on a new set of institutional arrangements and covered the information, resources for promoting food security and various fora for dialogues and discussions on the policy issues.

Food security refers to the accessibility of food to the people of a particular country. A country is considered food secure if its citizens are provided with food in adequate amount and they do not live in hunger, starvation or misery of not getting the food in time. This issue has gained significant importance in the era. Governments, organizations, NGOs, various societies and voluntary organizations are rendering services to help feed poor countries.

According to the estimates of (FAO, 2003) it is said that 852 million people around the globe live

in a chronic situation of being hungry, around 2 million people lack food security and spasmodically due to varying degrees of poverty. The opposite of food security is food insecurity which exists when people do not have considerable and sufficient physical, social and economically viable sources to make their access to food. The recent recession, rise in oil prices, depreciation of Dollar have adversely cascaded to the poor living conditions and lifestyles of the people.

The depth of hunger, or food deficit, is measured by comparing the average amount of dietary energy that undernourished people get from the foods they eat with the minimum amount of dietary energy they need to maintain body weight and undertake light activity.

According to the statistics provided by FAO, the diets of most of the 800 million chronically hungry people lack 100-400 kilocalories per day. Most of these people are not dying of starvation. Often they are thin but not emaciated. The presence of chronic hunger is not always apparent because body compensates for an inadequate diet by slowing down physical activity especially in the case of children growth. In addition to increasing susceptibility to disease, chronic hunger means that children may be listless and unable to concentrate in school, mothers may give birth to underweight babies and adults may lack the energy to fulfil their potential.

In terms of sheer numbers, there are more chronically hungry people in Asia and the Pacific, but the depth of hunger is clearly the greatest in sub-Saharan Africa. There, in 46 percent of the countries, the undernourished have an average deficit of more than 300 kilocalories per person per day.

By contrast, in only 16 percent of the countries in Asia and the Pacific, the undernourished suffer from average food deficits this high.

Whereas in the world at large, the average kilocalorie deficit is very high, many people's diets are deficient in everything, including the starchy staple foods (carbohydrate-rich maize, potatoes, rice, wheat and cassava) that provide mostly energy. But where the deficit is more moderate, people generally get enough of the staple foods. What they often lack is a variety of other foods that make up a nutrition efficient diet: legumes, meat, fish, oils, dairy products, vegetables and fruit that provide protein, fat and micro nutrients as well as energy. Rounding out their diets is crucial to food security.

Lack of cash income is one of the most important factors hindering both urban and rural people from obtaining the diverse foods needed for an adequate diet. Even when poor rural families are helped produce a greater variety of foods on their household plots, they often sell these items instead of consuming them because of their high market value. Thus, their food security improves only when overall household income rises to a level that permits them to afford the other foods they need.

Article 38 (d) of the Constitution of Pakistan ensures provision of basic necessities of life including food for the citizens of Pakistan. It says:

“The State shall provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and

medical relief, for all citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, as are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment”.

Food Security Analysis (FSA) of Pakistan conducted by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) does not agree with the commonly held opinion that Pakistan is moderately food secure at macro level. The FSA's findings support the argument that hidden hunger is more pronounced in Pakistan that what macro picture of food security presents. In view of growing population pressure and resultant demand of food, the study estimates an annual shortfall of 3.2 million tons of wheat alone, the main staple, on the basis of average annual wheat harvest of 18 million tons.

People in the country have also taken initiative to fight the cause and many volunteer services are rendering services to improve the situation and help the undernourished. Thali-an effort, is one such independently run organization which is run by Sayyeda Zoone Abbas, The objective of Thali is to feed the less fortunate through meals which the more fortunate take for granted. Food, being the most human basic need, is denied to many in a country like Pakistan. It started as an effort in 2007, evolved with time in a charitable trust and later established as formal legal entity in August 2009. It has a record of serving 65,000 beneficiaries to date. Such efforts do show that Pakistanis have the potential to make things possible and accessible for those in need.

Remember, that the establishment of Pakistan is a fact of which there is no parallel in the history of the world. It is one of the largest Muslim States in the world, and it is destined to play its magnificent part year after year, as we go on, provided we serve Pakistan honestly, earnestly and selflessly. Nature has given you everything: you have got unlimited resources. The foundations of your State have been laid, and it is now for you to build, and build as quickly and as well as you can. So go ahead and I wish you Godspeed —Pakistan Zindabad

—Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah: Message on the first Independence Day of Pakistan, 14 August 1948

Reforms in the UN Security Council

Vaqas Arshad

The League of Nations was established at the end of the First World War in 1919 with the primary aim to maintain world peace. However, it failed to prevent a number of armed conflicts between different nations, with the Second World War as the last straw. The Allied powers that emerged victorious in the War dissolved the League of Nations in 1943 and established the United Nations (UN) as its successor with essentially the same mission: to maintain global peace and security. The Security Council was one of the principal organs, which was to carry out this mission. Chapter V of the UN charter was devoted to the establishment of the Security Council. It was laid down in Article 23 that the Security Council should have fifteen member states: five permanent and ten nonpermanent members elected for a two year term. It was convenient for the victorious five major allies in the War to secure for themselves the five permanent member seats of the Council to protect their own interests. Thus, the United States of America (USA) Russia, France, China, and the United Kingdom are the only permanent Veto-wielding members of the Security Council from 1946 to date, meaning they can block any resolution that is not to their liking. A recent glaring example is that of the USA, to protect its strategic ally, blocking UN resolutions aimed at dissuading Israel from undertaking actions that have ominous implications for the peace process in the Middle-East. Resultantly, securing of global peace which was the major objective has largely remained elusive.

Ever since the creation of the UN, the institutional structure and functional framework of the Security Council have basically remained unchanged while the international environment has changed radically. It is argued by many that the structure of

the Security Council raised to cater to the needs of 1945 is incompatible with the contemporary realities and that the Council in the composition of its membership no more reflects the realities of the 21st century. Its structure was perhaps founded on the premise that except for the Permanent Five (P-5), other member states are not able to assume a meaningful role in the decision making process related to maintenance of international peace and security. In the present day challenging environment, five permanent members and ten nonpermanent members are no longer able to effectively respond to the security threats.

The Security Council has been a target of criticism for a number of reasons. The present structure of the Security Council was established more than 66 years before and is out of sync with the modern international environment. The geopolitical circumstances have changed drastically over the past six decades. After the Second World War, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA) emerged as the two superpowers. The world was transformed into a bipolar world, with the Western bloc led by the USA as the Eastern bloc led by the USSR. However, the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 transmuted our world into a unipolar world once again with the United-States as the sole super power. In the post-Cold War era the severest blow to the international system has been the notion of Unipolarity. An immense vacuum was left by the former superpower which different nations contended to fill.

Because of its failure to live up to the expectations, the UN has lost credibility as the pre-eminent international forum. In the words of Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, “It is common knowledge that the United Nations is often unable

to exert an effective influence on global economic and political issues of critical importance. This is due to its what may be called as “democracy deficit”, which prevents effective multilateralism, a multilateralism that is based on a democratically-evolved global consensus. Therefore, reform and restructuring of the United Nations system can alone provide a crucial link in an expanding chain of efforts to refashion international structures, imbuing them with a greater degree of participatory decision-making, so as to make them more representative of contemporary realities”.

The situation certainly calls for a change through reforms in the UN. The key reform that has been under consideration in various circles over the years is to reform the size and membership of the Security Council. The procedure of Veto is also seen as a major hurdle that adversely impacts on the effectiveness and responsiveness of the UN to international security threats. Although the reforms of the UN have been actively debated at various forums for about two decades, yet no substantial progress has been made to date, due to lack of a consensus in the international community.

The new centres of power emerging in various parts of the globe have started to challenge the old structure and are lobbying for permanent member seeking seats in the Security Council. These are Japan, South Korea and India in Asia, Germany in Europe, South Africa in the African Continent and Brazil in South America. India has emerged as the second-fastest growing economy in the world after China. It is also the seventh largest and the second most populous state in the world. Japan is the tenth most populated state in the world and the third largest economy. It has made substantial contribution towards the cause of international peace and security. It is the second largest contributor to the UN's regular budget, contributing approximately 19% of the total assessed contributions. In Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany has risen as the most populous state and the leading economic power. In Latin America, the

Federative Republic of Brazil has emerged as the world's seventh largest economy. India has been elected seven times to the Security Council, Japan ten times, Germany five times and Brazil ten times.

According to the criteria that are broached as basis for permanent membership, these are the key candidates that press most strongly for permanent Member seats. The expansion of the Security Council, in the category of both permanent and nonpermanent members, and the inclusion of countries as permanent members, is seen by them as a first step in the process of making the United Nations a representative body. However, due to insidious designs of some countries, there are serious differences with regard to expansion of the Security Council.

The major approaches towards the inclusion of a state in the Security Council that are under consideration are two: one is the region-based approach and the other is criteria-based approach. The region-based approach demands that Japan, Germany, and a country from Africa, South America and Asia be accepted as permanent members. The United States is the main advocate of criteria-based approach. It advocates an approach “under which potential members must be supremely well qualified, based on factors such as economic size, population, military capacity, commitment to democracy and human rights, financial contributions to the UN, contributions to UN peacekeeping record on counterterrorism and nonproliferation.” Although it supports overall geographic balance of the Security Council, but proffers “effectiveness” as the benchmark for any reform.

On the basis of these two approaches, there is no single Muslim state that is likely to fulfil all the criteria. On the basis of the region-based approach, the global population would like to see one representative from every region as a permanent member. But this criterion also puts the Islamic states in disadvantageous position. Out of the 193 sovereign UN member states in the world,

48 are Muslim majority states, which is approximately 25% of the total world population.

Muslim states cannot be denied their representation in the UN Security Council permanent Members. This was also voiced by Malaysian foreign minister at the UN General Assembly's General Debate in 2012. The Middle East is one of the most volatile regions of the world which is one more reason why a Muslim majority state should have veto power in the Council. Critics contend that an Islamic state as a permanent member will have counter impacts towards the establishment of global peace, but this is exactly the role that was and is being played by the United States. A well-known example is that of the Obama administration's first veto at the UN Security Council, which put down a resolution condemning illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories. On the contrary, in November 2010, President Obama openly acknowledged his country's support for India's candidacy, one aim of which is to contain China's growing influence in this region. Pakistan, elected seven times to the Security Council and India's arch-rival, has always rejected India's membership for reasons that are unknown to none. A veto-yielding India will jeopardize Pakistan's national security and create regional instability.

But despite its poor record on many accounts, India's candidacy is supported by almost all five permanent members. Japan's candidacy has been rejected by regional competitors South Korea and China, whereas Brazil's has been resisted by Mexico and Argentina.

Pakistan has played an active role in an effort to bring about a change through reforms in the working methodology of the Security Council and resist its expansion. It advocates an “equitable, fair and democratic” solution. A movement by the name of Uniting for Consensus (UfC) was established in the late 20th century of which Pakistan is one of the founding members.

Security Council reforms are of fundamental interest for all member states. There is a need to pursue realistic reforms. Failure to arrive at an early consensus solution will, according to General Assembly President, Joseph Deiss, “marginalize the United Nations and important issues will be discussed in other forums and groupings which are perceived to be more efficient and more representative of the new realities of the day”. There is a need for a constructive, flexible and realistic attitude lest the organization ultimately becomes impotent and obsolete.

Iqbal's Lesson for Youth

It is action, that enhances the personality of Youth. A hawk can grab its prey in the first attack, but it does not do so, because it wants to enrich its personality through struggle. Even when looking for food, the bare necessity of life, it finds excuse for activity and struggle, because it wants to keep its blood warm:

بھینٹا، پھینٹا، پھینٹ کر بھینٹا، لو گرم رکھنے کا ہے اک بھانٹا

(To pounce, return and repounce is only an excuse to keep the blood warm)

Iqbal wants the directive energy of Ego to be occupied, in the struggle of life with its purpose to seek to find out, to conquer and not to yield. This struggle thus passes through three stages i.e. seeking, discovering and conquering. If we juxtapose it with the idea of progress as developed in the West, we will realize that Iqbal's concept of struggle is more comprehensive because the act of seeking is a logical result of the consciousness. The intensity of desire to seek would result in the discovery or restoration of what man has lost. It is obvious that these two i.e. discovery and restoration, are inter-related. The next stage, therefore, is the conquest either of any anticipated fear or of the result of consciousness. Struggle thus is presented as a logical outcome of the consciousness of human mind which ultimately leads to the fulfillment of desire.

—Eqan-e-Iqbal: Prof Muhammad Munawar

RANDOM THOUGHTS



Point to Ponder

Rafay Zafar

It is the last week of May 2010. More than a dozen students are sitting in ordered rows with silence dominating the room. Occasional rustling of papers and pens break the monotonous silence. Only moments remain and then it happens. The clock struck the hour and a nasal voice resonated through the room, "Pens down", marking the end of the last examination. As we got up from our seats ready to exit the room, a sense of extreme happiness and delight dawned on us. We had just taken the "very" last exam of our formal education. The door of dull routines and last minute stress was bolted shut, albeit temporarily.

Without realizing the full extent of what saying goodbye means, we rush outside to celebrate the end of what we would often carelessly put as "tyranny". Hugging our friends and autographing items of clothing, promising to stay in touch and wishing best of luck, we are completely prepared to say goodbye to this place.

And then it hits us. As the high of the last day wears off and we sober down, we realize the dark chasm that is our future staring back at us. Up till now we always had the "next level" clear in our heads. Whether it was the next grade in our secondary institutions or next semester in the university, we always had our goals clear to us. We always knew what was coming next and one way or the other, by putting in just the right effort, we would get there.

Now standing on the edge of the professional world overlooking the chaos and anarchy we were left disappointed. We had no "next level" defined for us. From here on it was the survival of the fittest or the richest, as in our society. Those of us with modest and humble backgrounds begin to

question themselves, "Are we fit? Are we ready for the real world? Where do we go now? Where do we bring the "strings" necessary to pull and tweak the system?"

After several hours of "net suffering" forwarding our CVs, or as I like to call them our lives on a page, to a gazillion HR people and with no call backs, we finally give up. Sitting at home becoming couch potatoes, we look to blame someone for our misfortunes and then we see it with a bulls-eye painted on its back, NUST. We are quick to award the blame to the institution where we spent four of the best years of our lives. Maybe we should reconsider before pointing the finger.

Coming from sheltered limited environment, NUST exposed us to diverse varied surroundings. We were made familiar of different opinions and points of view. In its literal meaning, our vision and thinking was broadened. Though many can choose to deny it, the diversified interactions with peers coming from different backgrounds and social standings prepared us for the real world. We were - for want of a better word - "growing up" and becoming adults.

We never realized the privilege associated with the institution. We were the cream of the cream studying in the best institution of Pakistan. We were made available to the best instructors and teachers, not to mention the state-of-the-art facilities. We were here and we never realized its entirety. We always took it for granted. Having the NUST name associated with ours we always thought of it to be a free pass, little did we realize that to maximize the potential of name we had to apply ourselves to the fullest. We believed, soon after graduation industries would line up to hire

us just because we had NUST insignia imprinted on our degrees. We never realized that the name NUST has, is because of what it gives to its students, the very same facilities we never used to the fullest and often skipped out on.

Coming out of NUST we believed ourselves to be leaders of the world, that everything was ours. Then when no jobs came our way we grew frustrated. We never stopped to think, whether engineering really is our cup of tea or not? We blamed our institution for not preparing us for the real world, for not providing us with ample career opportunities. We never for once thought that the reason we came into engineering might have been the social and parental pressure rather than our own aptitude for the subject. Hell bent on pointing the finger anywhere but ourselves, we blame the easy target - our institution. This is not the case; our institution gave us all the tools we needed to get ahead. If we are not getting ahead maybe we should ask ourselves, "Are we holding the right tools? Do I really have an aptitude for this field?" We, the alumni, represent our institution in the real world. Just to appease our own guilt we should abstain from slamming the place that holds countless precious memories.

These truly could not have been the best years had we not had the most important ingredient - our friends. As we left our secondary institutions and entered the universities of our choosing we were anxious, perhaps even sad about leaving our decade long friendships behind. However, we soon realized the error of our thoughts. Everyone here was going through the same thoughts and we took to each other almost immediately. It took us but a few hours to bond and realize that we had

cultivated something special and long lasting. We stuck by each other through thick and thin, ready to lend a helping hand to our newfound friends or do I dare to call them - our brothers. The unity and solidarity we enjoyed amongst ourselves earned us our self appointed title of "Band of Brothers." For those living away from homes, we truly became a family.

Dwelling in the past and reminiscing for all the joyous occasions and the wild adventures I shared with my friends during our university life made me appreciate the blessing in disguise that NUST came as into my life. A bitter fact of life dawned upon me - that nothing in this world stays the way it is forever. Friendships are lost, hopes are broken, dreams are shattered, blissful events turn into old forgotten memories, and the carefree banter and laughter of a happy-go-lucky student become the sad ramblings of a bitter unemployed man, hell bent on spewing his anger and frustration on anyone he can blame. Soon after, however, another realization hit me (it was a day of epiphanies for me!). Everything changes and so do bad times. Someone much smarter than me once said that we are the architects of our own futures or was it lives? Crying over spilt milk and playing the blame game does not do anyone any good. Our mistakes are what pave the path towards our triumphs. All we have to do is learn from them and try again. As they say that success is only achieved when we get up again and dust ourselves off one more time than we have fallen down. It is about time we stop pointing our fingers at others, get up, and start changing the world around us one bit at a time. Who knows tomorrow our juniors and our children would not have to face the same difficulties. Now that is a point to ponder upon.

The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change.

— Carl Rogers

Why Environmental Engineering?

Sana Jehan Ansari

Weird! I thought when I first heard the name "Environmental Engineering." How can anyone connect hard-core technical science involving nuts and bolts, to trees and flowers? Highly juvenile, yes, but my definition of "environment" before I started this degree some three years ago was exactly that; trees and flowers.

Juggling against my love for maths and mechanics, while reckoning myself as a thorough nature girl at heart, I thought this may be my life's calling, finally the right answer to give when someone asked me what I wanted to be when I "grow up".

Hence I applied, and when the first merit list confirmed my seat, I jumped at the first opportunity and never looked back. Ideal, isn't it? Well, here is a slight twist: there is a lot more to this degree than just getting to appreciate the marvels of nature, something I was naive enough to initially expect.

Let's start with the basics. Firstly, why is there a need for such a degree? That's because since time immemorial, we humans have been polluting our air, water, and soil. This contamination not only deteriorates nature, but can also cause irreversible damage to all life forms. I often think that an environmentalist is more beneficial to a society than medical doctors, as by treating our surrounding they prevent the outbreak of many epidemics, otherwise caused by contaminated drinking water and air. Prevention is better than cure, as goes the adage. Pakistan, for instance, is enduring a whopping loss of about Rs 1 billion per day due to environment degradation, according to a report

by World Bank!

Enter Environmental Engineers. Harnessing the trademark Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and blue field jeans, they use the principles of maths, biology and chemistry to clean up the messes you've made and prevent new ones from happening. Their primary duties are involved in water and air pollution control, recycling, waste disposal, and public health issues. For example, they might figure out how to clean up toxic material that has seeped into the ground at an old gas station or design an effective way to treat wastewater. Environmental engineers conduct hazardous-waste management studies in which they evaluate the significance of the hazard, offer analysis on treatment and containment, and develop regulations to prevent mishaps. They design municipal water supply and industrial wastewater treatment systems. It is essential for them to conduct research on proposed environmental projects, analyse scientific data, and perform quality control checks. Studying and attempting to minimize the effects of acid rain, global warming, automobile emissions, and ozone depletion is all part of the job. Some may also be involved in the protection of wildlife.

This pretty much sums it up. So for all those of you who choose this as their career choice, be fully prepared to combat a wide range of subjects head on, get used to enduring long hours of lab work, field work- and the smell of raw sewage. Honestly! But jokes aside, once you get the hang of this, being an Environmental Engineer is one of the most satisfying careers ethically and financially!

It took me fifteen years to discover that I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous.

— Benchley Robert

RHYTHM

I am a Dreamer

Kulsoom Abbas

I am a dreamer; and I hope some of my dreams will come true one day; Neither do I wait for them to come true nor do I get disappointed when they don't, but it never keeps me from dreaming, it helps me survive whatever the real life has in store for me; which isn't always bad or good, but certainly is different than what I dreamed of.

This was my answer when I stopped myself from knitting yet another beautiful blanket of dreams to sleep in that night; the answer to why do I even bother with dreams.

And some of you might disagree but I think this is very therapeutic. Yes, I do call it a therapy sometimes and being a scared chicken at others. It really depends on how you look at it and how you let yourself be influenced by it, but let me tell you one thing, it has helped me through some pretty scary times. And my dreams have ranged from absolutely ridiculous ones like owning a potato farm so that I can eat various potato dishes everyday to considerably mature ones like becoming a successful engineer and from totally random like introducing highlighter coloured, totally funky buses in Peshawar to very ambitious ones like starting an architectural firm where most of the employees will be from my hometown, Nowshera (KPK).

I don't think anyone should ever stop dreaming no matter what perspective you choose to look at it from. I just can't see any reasonable logic behind that.

Religiously speaking. . . it's a sin. . . and a big

one too. It clearly shows you don't have faith in Allah anymore. Otherwise you would dream and pray that they come true and then trust Him that He will listen to you and will grant you enough strength to make it happen for yourself.

Sean Covey and his father have written these books on effective teens and effective people in general which say you must start with the end in mind. Which means highlight the result that you want but don't just start blindly. . . think through a plan. . . dream about something. . . something outrageous, something ambitious. . . doesn't matter what it is. . . as long as you think about it in detail and formulate a plan. . . that's what dreaming is, highlighting what you want and then going after it strategically.

Ben Walsh once said, "More bad news for pessimists; according to Dutch study, optimists live longer." And I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out who the optimist is.

I have always told my friends just dream for the heck of it. We can try right!!! And even if we don't get what we planned for. . . what the heck, we enjoyed dreaming. And to all the silly people out there who think just because one little thing (or even a big one) didn't go the way they wanted Bad things happen people!!! Find a new route to follow your dreams and if they are broken beyond repair, find something new to dream about, but don't stop dreaming.

Oh and I almost forgot, make sure you are the hero in your dreams. . .

All successful people are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose.

—Brian Tracy

An Efficient Person

Rafia Hafeez

Every one of us wants to be successful in his life, to be more efficient in his sphere of duties and to render his services for activities in the community.

Let's look at following ways to become efficient, capable, competent and well-organized.

Schedule your day.

If you have to do a lot of jobs, get up an hour early each day and write out your plan for the day. Then prioritize each task on your list and put it in order of priority. Schedule what you need to do into a planning sheet and block out time to get it accomplished.

Do this every single day, even on the weekends.

Stop interruptions during task.

Turn off the email notification function on your computer. Email kills your concentration and makes you lose focus on what you were doing. Don't get side lined by interruptions from others. If you are trying to finish a report for an important client or meeting, don't accept a request from a drop-in visitor who "just has a quick question"

Learn to control self-interruption.

You are at your desk absorbed in your work, when all of a sudden your brain starts drifting away from your on-going assignment. It may remind you of something that you need to tell a coworker or an important task that you need to take care of. Instead of grabbing the phone or shooting off an email, write down what you need to tell that person or the task that you need to do in a separate diary that you keep for such purposes. Keep working on your current project and set aside time later for the things listed on your diary.

Say NO more often.

Most of us are willing to render our services to

everyone, ready to say yes to every request that comes our way, eager to do any thing and go anywhere. What happens with all this giving is you become so heavily loaded with liabilities that the most important things in your life badly suffer. You have to sacrifice time for yourself and your family. Know what your priorities are. When someone requests something of you and it doesn't fit into your priorities, just say no. No need to justify your answer with a long explanation or excuse.

Delegate as much as you can.

We often think we can do everything ourselves, or that others will not devote as much care to the task as we would do. That is delusion, as other coworkers or other members of your family could easily do some of the tasks. Get rid of thinking that you are the only one who can do the job right.

Stop trying to be perfect.

Some tasks can be done and are just as successful even if they are not perfect. Trying to be perfect with everything will slow you down and cause too much unneeded stress in your life.

Value your time.

Your time is a very precious resource that should not be wasted. Time is required to HAVE the things you want, to DO actions, to produce results and to promote valuable products or services.

Recognize your identity.

Work out the identity you must BE. List the characteristics, attitudes, appearance, qualities and features of this identity. Work out the correct actions for what you need to BE. Jump in with both feet to DO to get what you want to HAVE from life. Remember: if one does not work more than he is paid for, will not be paid more than he does work.

A Habitual Reader

Zohaib Shahid

Unlike TV, reading requires you to use your brain, thus urging you to think more and as a result, become smarter. Reading is an important skill constructor. Books help in explaining difficult subjects, and give more intellectual information than the common classroom discussion. Reading helps build up your word bank or vocabulary. Through reading challenging stuff, one finds himself or herself finding new words that would not be found, otherwise. An improvement in concentration and focus result from reading, as reading takes brain power. You are somewhat bound to focus on anything you read for long duration of time. By reading, you become well-informed and more of a specialist in the topics you read about. Such expertise builds into a great degree of self esteem. Reading improves memory as cross word puzzles counter Alzheimer's. If one out of four people do not read books, a discipline issue appears. Adding a book to your daily routine and sticking to it, hones discipline. Through reading, you familiarize yourself to more complete information, thus helping you to develop creative ideas. Hence, reading improves creativity. We all feel really uncomfortable when we run out of stuff to talk about to our friends, relatives etc. If one reads a lot, one may discuss various plots in the novels he or she has read or share some new thing he or she has learned. Sharing possibilities increase. As you read more, the depth of your knowledge is boosted. The knowledge you gain, improves your reasoning on that particular topic. If you feel bored, just pick up a good book to read and as you become interested in the topic discussed, the boredom is warded off. Reading serves to relieve stress. Reading freshens us, and works as a remedy for a tired mind.

Some people are jeopardized by the thought that how should one develop a reading habit. This

does not require reading those old Shakespearean classics but only some small steps.

In your routine, set times for reading like 5-10 minutes everyday. The best time is before going to bed. Increase your set reading time when you feel like it and be persistent on it. Anywhere you go, take your favourite book, journal etc along. You can read during free periods at school, during break at work or when you are waiting for your appointment at the doctor's (except at the movies). Prepare a list of all the books you want to read. Whenever you hear anything good to read from a friend or online, add it to your list. Here is some more innovative advice: Create a small account for your reading list. E-mail the address every time you come to know about something worth reading. Now your inbox is your reading list. When you have read anything from that list, file it under "done". Find some place quiet like in your home, where there is a comfortable chair (do not lie down unless you want to sleep) and read without interruptions. No TV or computer should be nearby, so distractions may be minimized. According to some people, nice books may be large expense. No worries, pay regular visits to "used book shops" and get discounts on all your favourite books, magazines etc.

Read things that really grip you and keep you going, even if they are not literary masterpieces. Develop your reading time into a pleasure. Have a hot chocolate, tea or coffee or any other snack when you read. Somewhere after "lose weight", "stop procrastinating", "read more" is one of the life goals set by many people. Reading teaches us about things beyond our daily horizons. It improves your personality and can even help ward off solitude.

Happiness

Kulsoom Abbas

“Oh you got into NUST. I am so happy for you Summi”, my sister cried when I told her about getting into my second choice university (first being PAF). I was really happy too. In fact I was so happy, so satisfied and relieved that it could hardly be described in words. I hadn't got into my first choice discipline and as I mentioned before, it wasn't my first choice university either, but I was so grateful to Allah, I could burst. I couldn't stop crying for hours; I didn't even realize that hours had passed by. Not too sound conceited but I don't think my family was materialistic ever but we were never saints either. Life meant pretty much same to us as to the family next door; joy, sorrow, pain, satisfaction everything meant the same as it does to every other family. But last year the meaning of happiness was changed; of blessing; of joy; of sacrifices; of contentment was changed. Happiness was redefined. Life was redefined. And I am so happy it did. It did before I turned old and grey; it did when I still had time to live a happy life; it did before I wasted all my life in chasing happiness.

It is what we are chasing right? Happiness... Do you actually achieve happiness when you chase it? What is happiness? What makes you happy? These questions aren't merely about a feeling or an emotion; these are about the way you look at life.

Happiness means something different for each of us. For some, it is having nothing to worry about; for some it is struggling to fight the problems; for some it is setting challenges for themselves; for others it is actually winning those challenges. Some think happiness lies in the smiles of their loved ones; and some think it just lies in smiles no matter whom it belongs to. For me it lies in every-

thing, in the blooming of a flower, in the chirping of a bird early in the morning, in the playful bickering of two sisters, in the mischief of a brother, in the struggle to pass a test, in the compliments of a teacher, in learning how to cook for the first time, in burning your fingers while trying, in forming a theory, in a beautiful sight... Happiness has no boundaries, no origin, no apocalypse; it just has existence and it only requires realization and acceptance.

Today man has really raised his standards: Standards of education, standards of social system, standards of living, standards of happiness. What is it that you and I don't have? Al'hamdu Lillah, Allah has been so Gracious while dealing with us, He has blessed us with so much and yet we take it upon ourselves to find something that we need to chase, that we don't have it yet and absolutely need to have, something to complain about, something to be unhappy about. “I didn't get higher grades”, “I don't have a motorbike”, “I need new shoes”, “Their furniture is so much better than ours”, “Why can't you be as good in cooking as Mrs. ABC's daughter”. Why can't we be happy about what we have; the grades I got and probably even deserved; the bicycle my mom bought me; the shoes that I have only worn for a month; the furniture that we already have; the smart daughter? I don't mean to sound cynical, but look around and you'll find not one but trillions of things to be happy about. According to Paulo Coelho, “*The secret of happiness lies in looking at all the wonders of the world and never forgetting the two drops of oil.*”

In our everyday life, tons of bad things happen to us, tons of things that we think we don't deserve to have happened to us, tons of things that don't

make sense at all. This is where we try to use our logic, to somehow calculate and prove that we didn't deserve this, to show that life is so unfair. This is where we scare away the happiness. What we need to learn is that in life, not necessarily everything makes sense; it just doesn't have to. We cannot control everything that happens to us, cannot control the weather, cannot control the load shedding, and cannot control infliction. And even if we can control some of the things, we can make a mistake every once in a while, we are entitled to... that makes us human. I read another cheesy but true statement somewhere which goes something like, “Being happy doesn't mean everything is perfect, it just means you chose to overlook things that aren't.”

*Aint no rhyme or reason,
No complicated meaning,
Aint no need to over think it,
Let go laughing.
Life doesn't go quite like to plan it,
We try so hard to understand it;
But the irrefutable indisputable fact is...
...it happens.*

If someone doesn't agree with Sugarland, there is another way of being happy too. Stephen R. Covey in his book “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” says being proactive is the most important characteristic of a person. If we want to be contented with our life, we need to be the driver of our life, and if we can't do that, we lose the right to complain. He strongly believes that once we actually put an effort into everything we do, and don't let anything or anyone affect us the way we don't want to be affected, we can live the life we want. Our life we live is the result of the choices we make, whether the choice is to ignore

the authority or to take the responsibility. Got bad grades? Spend wisely next time or find a job; got pimples? Don't eat oily food. Covey says “it is not about what is happening to us, it is about what are we going to do if we don't like it.” Blaming is very easy, and so is self-pity and compromise; and even if we don't realize, these things make us either sad or angry and sometimes just dull. What is hard is actually earning the life that you want, struggling for it, and fighting the fate (if you really think it's against you). And once we start doing it, we'll realize that it's actually this struggle that makes us happy; earning our way to our goal is actually very satisfying. Swami Sivananda says, “Life has only meaning in struggle. Triumph or defeat is in the hands of Allah. So let us celebrate the struggle.”

Sometimes we do all of the above, we change or try to change the things that we have power over and overlook the ones that we don't and somehow we still have this strange feeling of emptiness. Actually happiness is such a loose word that you never know what actually happened to make you happy and what exactly went wrong to make you sad. But one thing affects us to a great extent. It is ourselves, people we love and The Creator of people we love. I firmly believe if we have this feeling of emptiness, it must be because we are not giving time to one or two of these parties. We just need to keep a check and give time to all three of these important parts of us and it will help us chase happiness.

Smiles were never dished out in a silver platter, they were sprinkled all around us, to collect them sometimes we just need to look around and other times look behind the bushes, behind the dark closet and under the table.

The person who seeks all their applause from outside has their happiness in another's keeping .

—Dale Carnegie

Hero Edhi!

Tribute to Dr Abdus Sattar Edhi

Aslam Bazmi

O the Angel of peace, the symbol of pure humanity
 O the torchbearer, the dealer in hope
 You command respect in every throbbing heart
 For your lofty vision, courage and commitment
 I salute your creed of love and compassion
 Your passion to serve mankind at all cost;
 A messianic monarch in humble attire
 You rule the hearts of millions around the globe
 A beacon light in the sea of darkness
 You are an ambassador of kindness;
 A mother and father to suffering souls
 Quietly sharing others' sorrows and pains
 Your clan embraces abandoned sucklings
 Poor widows, crippled humans, forlorn waifs
 All happily living on your care and affection;
 So loving you are to their souls and hearts!
 Oblivious to your personal safety and pain
 You swiftly plunge into the pools of blood
 Undeterred by curfew, bullets and fire;
 Picking stenching limbs of the mouldering dead
 Forcing their way into the thick of disasters
 Your ambulances rescue hapless souls;
 From sheer ashes you're building an edifice of hope
 O the saviour of humanity, second to none
 This nation of languishing millions
 Desperately needs an Edhi at the helm;
 Only the like of you, Dr Edhi, can deliver masses
 From the clutches of loot, misrule and corruption
 Your humanitarian mission may not win a Nobel Prize
 And I gather it's neither your passion nor your dream;
 But Dr Edhi, you are a towering hero indeed
 I thought I must honestly assure you!

NUST Kaleidoscope

(A Picturesque View from Gate No. 10)

Aslam Bazmi

On approaching the speed sign SLOW 40km	A riveting kaleidoscope of the light of learning ;
From its northerly vantage point	A gladsome blend of domes and buildings;
NUST looks majestically robed	Rows of exquisite hostel blocks
In ravishing graces;	Named after great Muslim legends;
With a patch of lovely hills	Aptly labelled roads and avenues;
Garlanding its westerly flank	Neat, well-kept winding pathways
	Spectacular structures; bewitching landscape
	An enviable array of scholastic facilities;
	Fabulous Cafeterias, par excellence;
It looks like gliding down a hill	An elegantly built rectorate, perched atop
Into a vale-city of academia	Overlooking the whole span of the campus
Bristling with men and women of learning;	Under its wings
Young bright, promising youth;	
Capable administrative corps	
What a feast for eyes to behold!	NUST, God willing, seems destined
A magnificent modern university	To flourish to new heights of glory
Boasting a mosaic of architectural marvels;	As a burgeoning National University;
A yester-years' sapling	A prized asset of the nation;
Nurtured into a stately form;	The proud flag-carrier; a beacon of light;
An island of excellence	A pace-setter and model of excellence
Nestling in tranquil serenity;	For sister-seats of learning across the nation;
A sprawling campus bejewelled	A rainbow of hope, vision, enlightenment, courage
With a galaxy of top-notch schools	Creativity, dynamism, and pervasive excellence.
NUST stands out as a different class;	

I am a Soldier

Sumaiya Gul

I am a soldier caught,
 In troubles of war and ruins of battle,
 I want to survive to see my brothers, held victorious.
 But all is so doubtful,
 So unobvious,
 I can neither see the horizon, nor the ground meeting it.
 My soul is leaving me,
 My life is being defeated, so violently, so rashly,
 I can see it there.
 I see death is taking me,
 Because all is so dark,
 And my vision blurred.
 I can see the foggy images of my brothers,
 Falling in the darkness,
 With their eyes fixed and hearts cold.
 I am going to die,
 Because I see the trickle of blood,
 That is oozing out of my chest.
 My only wish; to see my country,
 Free from ruin and trouble,
 All those whom I am leaving behind,
 Oh Lord! Bless them all.
 Illuminate their hearts, their very soul,
 Give them valour and courage,
 Make them able and well enough, to defend my country,
 And fulfil my wish.

Repunzel

Sana Jehan Ansari

Up on the highest tower of the tallest hill
 Lived a little princess, as beautiful as a million dollar bill
 Captured for eternity by her evil step-mother witch
 To get all her wealth so that she could be rich
 With a long flowing river of golden hair
 She was the perfect picture of any princess so fair
 Unlike the princess, the witch had hair as black as coal
 She was wild and barbaric like a troll
 She would say,
 “Repunzel, Repunzel!, let down your hair
 So I may climb the golden stair”
 Passing by, a handsome prince noticed the glittering hair
 He was quite blinded by the gloss and glare
 Wanting to rest his eyes upon the mistress of beauty herself
 He ventured to the tower to meet her himself
 “Repunzel, Repunzel!” he cried, “let down your hair
 So that I may climb the golden stair”
 As soon as those words were uttered from his lips
 He watched with delight and touched them gently with his tips
 Soon he was flowing up in that golden mist
 They felt soft, smooth and silky, clutched in his fist
 At last he reached the top of the never-ending tower
 He meets the vivid blue eyes of his beloved, so full of power
 He held her tightly in his arms as if never to let her go

He gazed at her face and found it as white as snow
 "O, my only true love!, at last I have found you
 I swear to my soul that I will love you and only you"
 At this the princess squealed with joy and cried
 "O, my hero, you have at last come to rescue me, So
 please hurry and set me free!"
 As soon as he was about to bring her a little closer
 His eyes fell upon the sneering witch, who was
 standing next to his shoulder
 In the wink of an eye he let goes the princess And
 turns to the witch and says, "You are truly ruthless!"
 "We'll wed in Paris, and honeymoon in London
 We'll live together and leave her in a dungeon
 Where the Minotaur dwells, half bull, half man
 He will rip her into pieces and cook her in sauce pan
 What will I ever do with these golden locks?
 When I only need someone to clean my socks!"
 As soon as these fateful words were uttered
 A smashing punch and the prince fell into the gutter
 "Come on ma", said the girl,
 "Who wants Prince Charming?
 When I can be equally tough, and harming!"
 "Now comb my hair; bring my golden dye
 For I am waiting for another guy"

Five Senses

Farooq Sarwar Malik

The sweet memory of those spots of time,
 Resounding with melodious rhymes,
 Of all those chants, which ever you spoke,
 Ringing out in ears like a bottle of smoke

With half closed eyes I see thy vision,
 Is never complete due to fission,
 I close and open, but of no avail,
 No alternative but to wait for mail

Mingled with Zephyr, fragrance visits me,
 O ! how charming ! it comes from thee,
 Refreshes my minds and makes me smile,
 But only for a moment only for a while

A gentle touch of heavenly fingers,
 Is in hurry but I wish it lingers,
 The more it says, the more hungry I feel,
 Elates but fades, ignoring my zeal

Thy sweet company I always seek,
 When you are with me, I know no peak,
 Everything is bitter when you are away,
 Present me poison I won't say nay,

These are the five senses and see their effect,
 One feels about them but can't reflect,
 When she is before you they are dormant,
 Sticking with you but like a dumb garment,
 She leaves you dead and they are vigilant again,
 Planning and plotting and you feel pain,
 Suggesting and proposing like a clever guide,
 They 'll buck you up and themselves hide,
 Never rely upon them for they are deceivers,
 Open your mouth and hold the receivers.

The Nature of Beauty

Nauman Munawar Bajwa

Why was I not made immortal for humanity,
 Beauty asked Providence in all its splendour and vanity;
 Because transience is my reflection came the reply
 A shallow grave where only illusion comes to die,
 Creation of which was born in colours eccentric and divine;
 Only that which perished had an essence sublime,
 Proximity proved fatal; for the moon had overheard
 Devastation spread on the heavens; the morning stars came undone,
 Dawn heard beauty's shriek falling from heaven as a burning bird;
 The secrets of the ether smashed terra firma; the horizon saw kingdom come,
 Drops of dew and rain surprised, Flora and fauna wept alike;
 Oceans whimpered with sobbing rock; thus went the first night,
 Thus went the green spring with head low many tears trailing,
 So were to come the sad summer and cold snow with winds wailing,
 Unmoved yet man remained;
 His brow furrowed his body stained
 He conquered nature as it mourned;
 Ignorant he was; perpetually scorned,
 Seeking everlasting beauty; he still ploughs,
 He cuts and breaks; kills and grows
 All would serenity be, Angels on eternal duty;
 Alas! If only man could see; the Nature of mortal Beauty;

Man and the Angel

Hareem Ikram

He got up and he looked,
 There the Angel stood
 Your time has come,
 You shall cease to run
 Oh Angel! tell God,
 All my life I fought
 To wise, and to shine,
 Please, I need more time
 True, I was not a good man
 All my life I drank and sang
 But now I am afraid to die
 Please, a little time to do right
 The Angel looked at him sadly,
 Oh man, Oh man!
 Don't be so insane
 It is God's will, the rest in vain
 Your mother was unhappy day and night
 Your father hated you on sight
 You were a curse on your family
 Your true friends tried to guide,
 But you laughed, and brushed them aside.
 Your company was of that type,
 God's will, they never could abide
 The man cried, in anguish, and in shame
 Ah Angel! spare my life all the same
 What ever I did, I will undo it
 Give me, one little chance, I will prove it
 For if you would have been good
 And tried to be a better person
 Would not have been afraid of death
 And would have gladly accompanied me to heaven
 The man looked at the door, and jumped in to run
 But, death, no mortal can shun
 The next moment he crumpled and lay dead
 The Angel looked down upon him, and sadly left.

Uncovered

Syeda Raiha Raza Gardezi

He wanted me to burn in hell,
He wanted me to be among those who fell,
He wished to lead me astray,
From my Lord mercy he tried to keep me away.
Was he my friend or enemy?

It was because of him I was deprived,
He had deceived so many,
He kept coming at me until I died,
I still didn't realize amidst all the agony,
Was he my friend or enemy?

He whispered evil to me every day & every night,
He defeated me without me even putting up a fight,
I didn't even try,
I thought I can just ignore him and let him pass by,
Was he my friend or enemy?

This is why I was drowned in sins,
All along he was sitting back and laughing at me,
Then death hit me, now I can see,
But it's too late,
There's no going back to change my fate.

His task had reached its end,
This was his plan all along,
He wasn't my friend,
I understood it all wrong,
He was the Devil, my arch enemy!

Get Well Soon

Sumayyah Khan

No matter what the hurdles
No matter what the pains
The sun will always smile down
Upon you after the rains
Soon a light will shimmer in the darkness
After the storm, the dust will settle
Destiny will shower you with kindness
All you have to do is strike metal with metal
Don't lose hope and brave the battle
Till the last ounce of strength
Till the last ray of hope
Till the last drop of blood
Challenge the cancer
Nip it while it's still in the bud
Kill it before it kills you
Prevent the egg from hatching into a serpent
Rearing its ugly head
Don't let it confine you to the bed
God's test
Comes only to the best
When they can't hold back the cries
The Holy Qur'an says
"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"
With fortitude and resolve, willpower and faith
The impossible can be overcome
You've gone through so much
You know you have the courage to go through
A lot more
We pray for you with all our heart
With bright dreams of the new era you'll start
Hero of our nation
Legend of the times
Invaluable asset of the Islamic world
Image of glory
Plethora of dignity
Father of our pride, our joy
Leader of our defense, our honour
Miss you, love you, need you
Perhaps more than ever.

Earthquake and Tsunami

Faizan Rasool

High and low, the Earth groans,
Tearing all asunder as it grievously yet again moans,
Turning all it touches to bare dust and bones,
Hey ho! Misery hath come and laughs,
Amidst many a screams in earth's crushing trough!

In deeps and shallows seethe putrid streams,
Tearing deep, within rending the earth's sunken seams;
Watery wrath pouring forth from the eye of a hellish pool,
A threat, moving silently with its intent in evil's rule,
A thunder of silence nigh too near;
Wrath's form of a watery beast now in a bloodthirsty drool!

Toys a-tumbling in watery depths,
Bigger playthings of humans in earth's fevered hands,
A tremendous shaking did begin in earthly depths,
A fury of whom unknown yet still hot and grand,
With evil intent so full and yet such power in measure!

Remember where it all began, o ye people!
A suffering soul-rending and deep,
Many souls now rest in the silence of the deep,
A ticking nuclear shell around aggrieved people,
Unforgotten shall be the hurts of this era,
Rise, let us pray and help, become people now strong together!

The Message

Farhana Bashir

Neither mythic, nor mythology
Neither legend, nor tale
An unrivalled story of an incredible event
Extending over Centuries of Centuries
Trapped in the lively scraps of History
No inception.
No illation
But from infinity of eternity
Heard in the waves of Water
See in Glaciers
But Present only in hearts
Of those shores, where no one would have to
In those revines
To rub it.....ages passed
Oceans to deserts
Deserts to Oceans
Cataracts tired to rush and
Driven to bay
But still
Lives on splashes, drops
Ay, becoming Immortal
When an alien of far far away
Alienates it away
Abducts it through the atmosphere
To disperse it in the Vestiges of the Universe
Then, it becomes the Message
The platonic Message
From Cosmopolitan to Cosmos

To All the Mothers

Waseem Ahmed

Leaping in your arms gives me pleasure of paradise
As if I'm swinging through the loveliest moments of my life

How much I raise taller or how many years I get older
I still see you akin to a toddler

You taught me to speak; you teach me how to count
Still are there your countless love deeds

Through my coldest & darkest times
Always there to cheer me up

From you I May be oceans apart;
Still oceans depth can't compete the affiliation of you in my heart

You beat, you hurt, and you scold at my childish mischief
It's not untrue heaven lies beneath mother's feet.

Nothing in this world can give me pleasure than what I still miss
You are the God's greatest bliss

Serenity

(An Evening in Lower Dir)

Rehana Khan La'lkhani

The glades wear a dark wreath
The birds chime no more,
The mist spreads its lovely sheath
And shields the entire glow

Golden rays pierce like shots
And show life to be serene.
Such things cannot be bought
Priceless though they seem.

LIFE

Faiza Azeem Usmani

And when you want to have all
Your hands are tied with ropes around,
And when your dreams tie you all around
Then you are left with nothing except
Letting yourself go with them,
And your real enemy is this real world
That always creates hurdles in your real way,
And when you want to fly high
But this cruel world never lets you be,
And when the bravery blooms inside you
That your smile makes people think about you
That no other face could be smiling all around
And no one can mingle that amount,
But there is burning fire inside you
That no one can see and no one can feel,
And that is how you can dodge the world,
Through this art of awesome acting.

Contentment

Rehana Khan La'lkhani

Serene and calm the breeze that blows
Teaches not to fret nor frown.
Counsels not to envy those
That through effort win renown.

Soothes all the minds that ache
Shedding all fears that are fake
Preaching patience, love of man
Love of Allah, all good we can.

My Two Best Poems

Sumaiya Gul

I woke up today with sounds of gunshots,
And shrieks of pain,
It was still dark,
But the world seemed wide awake.
I could see piles of dead bodies,
With horror in everyone's eyes,
So they have done what they wanted,
I thought bitterly,
But nothing could be done then,
Hundreds were dead and millions injured already.
Supporters of love,
Defenders of peace,
Are here at last,
To destroy the world,
From now onwards,
Every day is going to bring,
Havoc, destruction and misery,
Because they are here at last,
They are here at last.

2

A fear resides my very soul,
It says I am not going to get, my greatest wish.
I refuse this cruel fact.
I say 'I don't believe you',
But then it whispers,
May be you are denying the fact, girl.
Those whispers are filled with much horror and evil,

A chill sweep passes me,
And takes away the confidence I have in my future.
I wonder then,
Is that fear even powerful than my wish?
And a voice answers.
I recognize it to be the voice of my heart,
It says,
No! It isn't.

Prayer's Solace

Faizan Rasool

Prayer, be my solace,
Until the cold night of the winter solstice,
For if I fall,
Into the hell's thrall,
I'll be maimed,
Left tamed,
Goodness lost,
In eternal frost!

Prayer, be my solace,
Until the warm summer solstice,
When birds will chirp,
And I shall sing a new tune on the harp,
And shall eat plentiful carp,
For I now go,
Leaving a diamond behind,
For new people to treasure,
And for good measure,
No trap has been laid but naught for my leisure...

Optimist

Noshaba Sheeraz

Forget the woes and grief of the past.
Don't trouble yourself for what has been lost.
You will wither away if you repent,
What's the use, when you can't mend.

Try to make the present day
Happiest of all, merry and gay,
So that it leaves behind memories sweet,
For you and the people whom you meet.

And your future is free of tears,
Free of sorrows and all kinds of fears.
May it be set with golden hours,
Joy and glee like blooming flowers.

Here's a golden rule to remember,
True as Madonna and bright as amber.

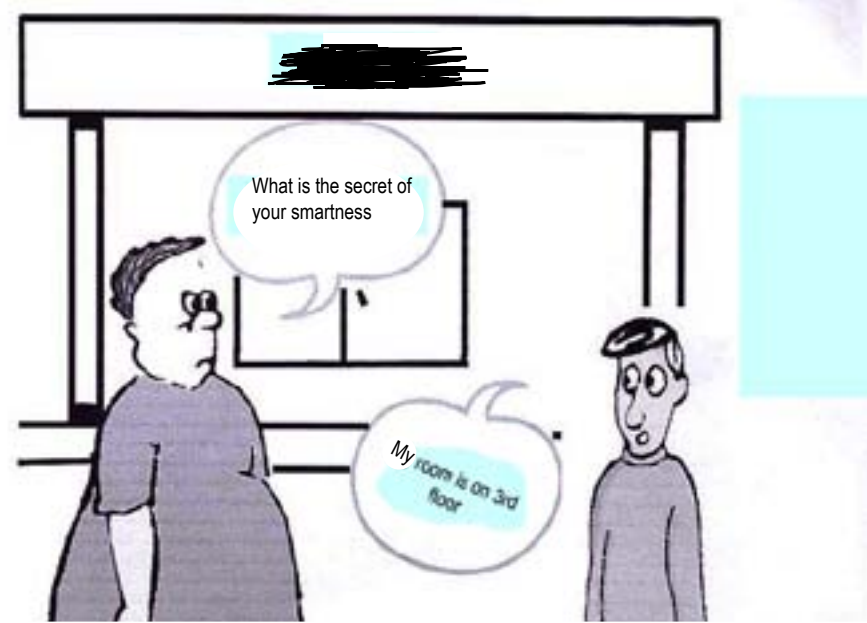
"Keep the brightest side in view
And don't let worries blind you.
Make the source of light your goal,
And the shadows will fall behind you."

REFLECTIONS



Reflections





To Whom it May Concerns

