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Editorial

Once again, I delightfully present to the readers a fresh issue (overall 4th) of The Nustian, the annual literary magazine of the NUST. Despite the fiercely competitive academic environment, our students were able to squeeze some time from their busy schedules and forwarded their essays, short stories, book reviews and poems for the magazine. Their ideas are fresh, illuminating, candid and positive. There is energy, exuberance and hope in their writings despite the pall of uncertainty looming over our national politics. One will find in this issue something about everything i.e., ethics, humour and stray thoughts on a variety of topics. For a pleasant surprise, our prospective engineers, scientists, doctors and corporate leaders have written short stories and composed verses as well. The Nustians have manifested the potential that they 'can do it well' even when it comes to writing.

The present issue of The Nustian is a happy mix of contributions from veterans and novices. It is heartening to note that the students' contributions account for as much 80% of the content. Veterans like Mr. Aslam Bazmi led from the front and contributed both in prose and poetry. The newly added section 'Book Reviews' elicited enthusiastic response in terms of a good number of fine review articles. All these endeavours are intended to make The Nustian an increasingly representative magazine of all NUST Schools and Colleges.

I owe my profound gratitude to writers, poets and the student editors who helped me a great deal in preparing the draft of the Nustian. Student Editor Asad Tariq did a fine job by meticulously proof reading the contents. He had made his mark as a responsive soul, responsible student, a sound editor and, more importantly, a thorough gentleman. He is also credited with creating different sections in the present volume. Student Editor Ehtisham lent immense assistance in collecting and forwarding valuable contributions from College of E & ME. With their sound command of English language and proficient editing skills, Student Editors Maryam Dodhy and Ramsha Khuram acquitted themselves admirably as valuable members of the editorial board this year. Ramsha is a first year student, and has quite a few years ahead to contribute to The Nustian. I am also indebted to our diligent composers, Mr Ahmad Raza and Mr Nadeem Shahzad for their assistance and a job very well done. Ahmad Raza is also credited with designing the title cover of the magazine.

Editorial Board gratefully bids adieu to student editor Adeeba Rehman on her graduation from NUST. We hope she stays in touch, and will keep contributing to the magazine with similar zeal. I lean on the enthusiastic support of the students and faculty of all NUST campuses in future too, and hope they will keep sharing with our readership their creative thoughts, views and reflections on various themes and issues.

Editor



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Cheating on Teaching

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

Of all the professions in Pakistan, teaching is perhaps the only exception in which anyone can safely walk in and play an innings with impunity. While quite a few individuals possess an intrinsic passion for teaching, some possess the exceptional gift of cheating on teaching—no lesser an art in its own right. Cheating on teaching essentially calls for a good deal of intelligence, aversion to hard work and a grave lack of intellectual integrity.

We all come across at different levels of our education, both bright and hopeless teachers. Those adept at cheating on teaching also include capable individuals who lack the will to teach. They espouse the philosophy that it is ill-advised to take pains to impart knowledge. They neither believe in nor demonstrate the dignity and sublimity associated with the calling of teaching. Such teachers are only costly liabilities. Equally blameworthy are incompetent and incapable teachers for playing havoc with the spirit and quality of teaching. Those cut out to cheat on teaching have their own sets of strategies. Some of them can offer even a comprehensive course on how to circumvent teaching without being caught.

At middle level, we had a pot-bellied wrestler-like teacher by the name of Lateef, better known by his nom de plume, Jamali. He was our Urdu teacher with atrocious pronunciations for instance, *garcheh* (for *agarcheh*), *karwai* (for *karrawai*); *Qachoo* (for *Chaqoo*); *Matbal* (for *matlab*), *hawal* for (*Ahwaal*), *lohore* for (Lahore) and so on. Jamali lacked both manners and aesthetics, and had the rare knack of butchering to shreds any

piece of Urdu poetry. He would enter the class at snail's pace as if he had been conscripted to teach. He had hardly any capacity to impart knowledge which he scarcely possessed, and would often complain of bad throat or stomach ache. There were twin brothers in the class whose parents hailed from Lucknow, India. They were virtually our teachers and the sole saviours of Urdu, against the teacher's several attempts of the rape of their mother tongue in the classroom.

At secondary level, our English learning was assigned to Mr Khalid whose vocabulary and spellings were hardly any better than those of a troika of bright students, including this scribe. He generally avoided speaking English and eschewed, with equal exuberance, writing words on the blackboard. When he did write something, once in a blue moon, on the chalkboard under some unavoidable compulsion like the most feared visit of our headmaster, there were copious spelling errors. When someone pointed out a spelling error and recited the correct spellings, the learned teacher would cleverly state that it was his technique to test students' proficiency in spellings. With the passage of decades, many classic examples have faded from my memory; I can recall only a few of them: *habbit* (*habit*); *fruitfull* (*fruitful*); *persue* (*pursue*); *pursuade* (*persuade*); *to loose confidence* (*to lose confidence*). In one of our lessons, we encountered for the first time the idiomatic phrase 'to pull one's legs'. The teacher's literal meaning of the phrase made no sense in the context until the following day one of the students learned from his father that the idiom actually meant 'to

befool someone'. When we conveyed it to the teacher, he said with his characteristic confidence that it was the same thing. When someone or you are sharing a joke, you often laugh or giggle and do stretch your several muscles, more importantly, the muscles of your legs. We sheepishly accepted the learned teacher's skewed interpretation but outside the class we all prayed for the honour of the poor English language at the hands of Mr Khalid who might be taking vengeance on our former colonial masters.

Equally "brilliant" was our Arabic teacher, Qasim Gilani. He claimed to have spent a few years in Saudi Arabia where he had the singular opportunity of rubbing shoulders (surely not heads!) with some native scholars. Once, Feroz, one of our class-mates who was notorious for his fondness of motorbikes, asked the learned teacher for the Arabic word for 'motorbike'. We were amazed to hear in answer 'himar' (donkey) as the Arabic translation of 'motorbike'. Almost everyone nodded his head in disbelief, and when Khalifa Naseer, our class prefect dared challenge the teacher that the word himar meant nothing but 'donkey' Mr Gilani lashed at him in such words: "Khalifa, don't you think a motorbike works like a donkey. Tell me, don't you use it as a donkey. And by the way, Khalifa, you are not any different from a donkey". Because of his filial allegiance to his spiritual father (Gilani) Khalifa, bowing most reverently, meekly uttered: "Yes, Sir! You are absolutely right." When I rose to protest on behalf of Khalifa, the 'erudite' teacher lost no time to show me the door, chastising me in such unchaste words: "You stupid human rights champion, what concern you have in this purely academic matter. You just get lost, and don't try to yelp any more". Fortunately, by a happy coincidence all our teach-

ers at college level were remarkably good and some of them were simply adorable legends in terms of competence, dedication and pristine humane values. At University of Essex, UK, all professors, especially Dr Hawkins and Dr Keith Brown were outstanding scholars.

One of my early-school classmates, Bashir, who had called to quit his further schooling after matriculation due to his family's economic straits, passed privately his FA and BA examinations. Then, to become entitled to a higher pay package, he also did B Ed, followed by master's in Urdu as a private candidate. A mere apology to master's degree in Urdu, he treated this elegant language like his mother tongue, Punjabi. I liked Bashir for his plain manners. He and I played truant from school together and his home used to be our safe haven. His late widowed mother indulgently treated me to popcorns and home-made cookies. While I joined PAF, Bashir became Urdu teacher at our hometown. Initially, we regularly exchanged letters. In reply to one of my letters in which I had praised his hospitality during my holidays at home, he described my compliments as 'husn-e-zan' (zan with zey (ج)) instead of zuey (ب). When I remonstrated and told him that he had challenged my 'masculinity, the naive fellow replied, "I am sorry for my grammatical mistake. Thank you for the correction." In reply, I suggested to the honorable teacher to be mindful of his spellings rather than blaming his poor grammar." And with that the coffin of our already dwindling correspondence was nailed for good.

At PAF Academy where I worked as head of Humanities Department (Directorate of Studies), we generally had academically sound education officers. Three noteworthy exceptions in terms of poor attitude rather than absence of professional

competence were quite elderly and senior faculty members—instructor of PAF Law and instructor of English. Although well-versed in PAF law, the former was more interested in playing chess and Scrabble and poultry farming at home rather than equipping young cadets with legal knowledge and skills. His law class was at times a scene of a picnic, with the students and the teacher sipping end bloc cups of hot tea over legal and illegal wild gossip. Cadets were extremely fond of him because their law class was a tremendous feast after the grueling sessions of PT and drill.

The English teacher was a ‘role-model’ in lack of commitment, always on the lookout for excuses and strategies to avoid taking classes as far as he could manipulate. A dodger (‘scrounger’ militarily speaking) of highest order, he would try to waylay a junior instructor and was often successful in cajoling some simpleton to go and engage class on his behalf for some time as the former had something urgent to attend to. He would seldom return to his class. He boastfully maintained that teaching was all drudgery that must better be left to junior faculty. His entire stock of instruction could last only 10-15 minutes, and it was not uncommon to see him repeat all over again his ‘mini’ lecture or dish out some class assignment to students whenever the head of the department entered his class. Despite his proverbial procrastination in other matters, he was always the first one to deposit marked examination answer-scripts and results duly entered on prescribed sheets. The

trick lay in first filling the result sheets with fictitious (imaginary) marks and then mark the scripts accordingly by drawing randomly a few odd red-pen strokes. Another teacher qualified to teach mathematics was quick to develop “classroom allergy” soon after landing at the academy. He mostly remained on some kind of administrative assignment which he seemed to dote on fondly.

At NUST School of Electrical Engineering sound competence is a prime requirement for anyone aspiring to join its corps of faculty. Equally intolerable is lack of dedication and commitment. Despite such foremost concern for quality of teaching, sometimes some weaklings in the garb of temporary visiting faculty but the moment they are exposed in classroom, they are bid quickest riddance. In three cases over the past six years, we sadly observed a serious lack of intellectual and moral integrity on the part of three visiting teachers.

Far from being everyone’s cup of tea, teaching is a calling of the noble, capable and dedicated souls. People with the propensity to cheat on teaching are a grave threat to promote quality education in the country. All front and backdoors of our academic institutions must be closed on all those lacking in substance and right attitude to be worthy of this noble undertaking. They should honestly do only things of which they are capable of, and spare the sublime territory of education from their unwelcome intrusion.

Revenge of Mother Tongue

Safdar Ali, DD

Majority of the literate people in Pakistan are trilingual i.e they know their mother tongue, surro-

gate mother tongue (Urdu) and learnt language i.e English. However, this trilingual class is fast turn-

ing into pentalingual with addition of two more languages i.e Roman Urdu, Punjabi, Pashtu, and SMS language, which is mixture of every spoken language on God's earth. If you happen to listen to these pentalinguals, you may hear a conversation like this "*Meen kal baji val gia san, but she was not there*". I asked her servant about her whereabouts, "*Magar! Kam wali Massi Boli, Gi Begum Sahiba tayar ho kay apni kisi friend val gai nay*". But, sir *sada* UPS is not working and it's very hot without electricity. Meanwhile, you get an SMS which reads "*Aap ka das lakh ka inam nikl ayea hey mubarik ho*. To get this huge amount, you need to get registered with us. Please deposit Rs 5000/- in account 92888888502 and confirm via SMS at this number so that amount can be released."

What all is happening to English language is not the retribution of enslaving us for about two hundred years, but a humble reminder to make the English people realize that what they speak is not global language. Americans have already announced their disenchantment with it and have their own version. EU is devising its own, then why should we be left behind? So we have invented our own language which has broader spectrum than the original one. I met a British Professor and Research scholar in Faisalabad, who was staying there for the last ten years. But, once I asked him if he had learnt Punjabi by now? His reply was negative so, then I asked him another question, as to how he communicated with people in Faisalabad? His reply was rather astonishing. He said, I don't have to learn Punjabi, because in Punjabi people speak 50% English words and the rest I can make out easily. Then he narrated a long list of English words, being spoken daily by the people

in Punjab i.e car, bus, truck, road, signboard, airport, mineral water, mutton, chicken, beef, bread, paper, cook, lock, door, table, chain, chair, egg, driver, maid etc. He told me that even if he asks a simple cart pusher that he wants to go to Jhang, he will say "*Sahib, yeh road, straight phir turn left straight jao*." This explanation is enough to make me understand, as to why he has not learned Punjabi so far. Mobile phones and Facebook have added new hues to the Pentalingualians' vocabulary. Even, the indecent words of Punjabi which we normally avoid using in spoken Punjabi can be written in English (Roman Punjabi) and I dare not quote such words as an example even. Our political workers and their critics are fully aware of these words.

Being pentalingual is not restricted to Punjab only. This is a nationwide phenomenon found in all provinces, replacing Punjabi words with Sindhi, Siraiki, Pashto, Balochi etc. The capital city is no exception to this trend in lashing English language. Interestingly, anybody who can bash and lash English in a cruel way gets the nick name of Tipu. Tipu Sultan was known for his bellicosity towards the English people and showed a lot of resistance to British occupation of India. Therefore, anybody who follows his suit in punishing last remnants of the English occupation is named after him, but I apologize in advance to those gentlemen who had been given this name by their parents and not as reward for English bashing. I also apologize and sympathize with the English for being retributed for their own doing, because what is happening to English in pentalingualism is not my fault but revenge of mother tongue.

Hidden Lesson

Haris Bin Saqib, NBS

It is human psyche that no matter how much we achieve, inner desire for getting more never fades. Inner urge to move forward remains there and lust for power keeps on tempting us to go beyond boundaries. Same is the case with our daily lives. We only care about our petty issues and always pursue our personal interests and tend to ignore the common good. We always complain no matter how blessed we are. We tend to ignore the blessings part and stress more on issues that we are facing. It becomes inevitable because sometimes incidents in our lives force us to respond that way. Sometimes small incidents leave a big mark on our personality and it becomes quite difficult to make a comeback, but it doesn't matter how we start. What matters is how we end; so coming out of it is the only thing that matters. Failure is not failure if you learn something out of it. If we try and fail and keep on trying that won't be a failure; instead failure is to give up. At the end of day these small incidents are the ones which make us stronger and give us the courage to deal with this cruel world.

I, Haris Bin Saqib, was a passionate fan of the Pakistan Army and I wanted to join Armed Forces since my childhood. I planned each and every thing with respect to it but a few years back I was diagnosed with bronchitis and I became asthmatic. I was told that I am not fit for the army and I could not be a part of it. Dreams were altogether broken and hopes were shattered. It was a complete disaster for me as I was completely blank about what to do with my life. I started asking questions like why me? and crazy stuff like that as if I am the

only one suffering in this world. My bond with Allah started to loosen but somehow I managed to keep alive some hope. The time when I was so close to giving up. He gave me a reason to believe by blessing with something I never imagined. I met people who were suffering from diseases like endobronchial Tuberculosis, brain tumor, brain hemorrhage, bone marrow cancer and so many other cases, in much more pathetic condition and then I realized how blessed I am. The life I curse is a dream of millions and I felt ashamed of myself. And then I built a new aim in my life to just keep on trying no matter what the output is and since that day I started respecting what I had. I started neglecting the negative aspects and started focusing on the positive side of it and Alhumdulillah after some struggle life is back on track. I am living an amazing life and fulfilling my dream of serving this country so what if I didn't make it to the Pak Army there are so many other ways of contributing. You just need a heart to follow your dreams.

The thing is we humans are ungrateful, naturally. No matter how much He blesses us we will still ask for more. It is our mentality that we crave for things we don't have. We pray to Allah and ask for these and when He blesses us instead of thanking him we act self-righteously and pretend as if it's not Allah's blessing but instead our own individual effort and there our downfall starts. It is the biggest weakness of humans that we fall for temporary temptations of power. We ignore the bigger part of it that success is not the end of a journey but it is just the start of it and the real journey is

afterwards which is to stay humble and genuine in times of success. Success and power drives humans mad and only a few of us can sustain it.

So the moral of my story is it is never too late for anything. You can be what you want to be, all you need to do is just follow your dreams and remember one thing that the sky is the limit. No matter how hard your goal is if you work hard and stay dedicated you will achieve it. Time may come

when you will be torn into pieces but always remember that Allah puts on us only that amount of burden which we can handle. So we just need to get ourselves back and give our best shot because life is not a math test. It is a completely different test. Key to success is to stay humble and follow His way and indeed He will guide us to the right path. The actual path, the path of a believer.

Homecoming

Varda Dar, S³H

You know those days when you feel like shutting everything out around you: all the voices, the faces, the eyes watching you and looking inside your soul to the core. You want to cocoon yourself within the premises of your heart, never to open your eyes, never to look beyond the veil and never to expose yourself to light. The days bring with them the horror of being alone, being quiet, thinking and thinking to the depths of your little intimate space, fighting with your inner fears, the bad times, bad days, judgments, the feelings of utter hopelessness, the negativity crowding your heart, and taking control over you. Its dominance, you keep letting it washout, stop and end through anger. But then you surrender. A total surrender. And it's over. You accept it. You stay firm. You carry it. Harness it. Let it be there. You go back from your oblivion into the world. It dictates you. You obsess over it. You live with it in the melancholy of life.

But there's no changing it. It's a new day; you put on that mask, that farce of a personality, and go about your life. Those days, they happen and you surrender. Oh, well. What's up? He was there

again. There was something about the old house that had always captured his fancy. The high ceilings, the arched windows, the sunlight filtering in through the tinted glass, casting hues: blue, red and green. It had always fascinated him. He sat in one of the arched windows on the top floor that afforded him a view of the busy street below and an overwhelming sense of nostalgia engulfed him; all those memories, their chatter, their laughter that had once echoed within these very walls. The early morning trips to the shop at the corner of the street for halwa puri, the usual breakfast. The distinct call of the fruit vendor as he went about his daily business, pulling his fruit laden cart and calling out to potential customers. How they used to run out of the house at the first hint of the arrival of the man who sold *gola ganda*.

It saddened him at times to see how quickly things had transformed. How quickly the traditions were discarded, values altered and hearts changed. He didn't blame anyone. He couldn't. Because he too had changed. He couldn't blame his siblings for leaving. He was the first one to leave. But he had come back. This city did that to people who called

it home. It called them back.

Despite all the changes in the world outside, this place had remained the same; the memories intact. His mother wasn't there to welcome him home but her scent lingered on in the chipped paint on the walls and the termite infested wood work that

framed the doors and windows. His father's cane rested in his room, propped against the bed side table. These things, these little relics of the past saddened him but he never got rid of them. He didn't want to.

His lips slowly curved into a smile. He was home.

Metamorphosis to an Existence Unreal

Dr Muhammad Sami Bilal, Faculty NUST

"I believe in everything until it's disproved. So I believe in fairies, the myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it's in your mind. Who's to say that dreams and nightmares aren't as real as the here and now?" -John Lennon.

It was just another ordinary day that began with the dawn of the sun from the same quarter that it always did. The birds flew in unison toward something or somewhere as they always did. The animals had started grazing the pastures that were fresh and sparkling in the morning light with dew spread on grass blades. Shaista and her neighboring friend Nabila, both pupils of 7th class, were kissed goodbye by her mother partly as a ritual and partly from deep rooted love that she had for her daughter. Their heavy satchels loaded with books were tucked on their shoulders and their weight was not even felt on these delicate shoulders.

Like all other days, this was a similar day that Shaista would head towards her school which was about 2km from her humble abode, attend classes, and show the homework that she and her friend had done last evening and then enjoy the roll of paratha during the break session that her mom had made early in the morning for her. It was a day supposed to be another ordinary day with no sur-

prises folded in it. Yet fate had something really jolting in store that none could have known prior. The assembly on this Saturday had started by half past seven and by eight all the pupils were settled in their classrooms. Shaista and her friend, Nabila, sat side by side on a desk for two and had the pleasure and comfort of knowing that the other one was close. Two lilies swaying together to a beat. It was this physical presence of each other that made life such a delight and school worth going to. The first period was always of English and finished by 8:40 am. The second period was Urdu but the Urdu teacher was a little late today. Shaista was waiting halfway in the door when she felt as if she was feeling dizzy - as if the ground under her feet was becoming soft and giving way. In disbelief she looked at her class and saw other students with a similar awe struck expression and it was then that the world around her fell. Her hands tried to grasp the door handle firmly with instincts but her eyes were witnessing a vision that would haunt her for so very long only if she survived the chaos. The fan had fallen and roof had started to pour down as if bricks were not falling rather some cereal flakes. Her classfellows caught by surprise and struck by numbness were caught under the falling debris. The shrieking sounds and

crying deafness was adding to the confusion. The smell of dirt was infiltrating the air and making breathing difficult.

This was just the beginning of what lay ahead for her and her family and so many like her. She does not remember when exactly she passed out but she had unwittingly witnessed more than enough. She felt pain in her right arm and this brought her back to life and the painful reminder that she was still in the midst of the rubble in her classroom. 'Nabila', she shouted. But there was no response. She now could see arms and legs sticking out of the debris. She stared in disbelief and it was only the pain in her arm that reminded her that this was all real and actually happening. She moved herself slowly and got out of the collapsed building and saw a scene of death and disaster. She could take no more.

This is the story of Shaista of 7th class as she was, before she forgot who she was. Before which she created a parallel world of comfort and serenity that had all the people that she had lost in the devastating earthquake. This was a world that had love for her and there was no yearning or desire for anything or anyone. The real world had seen

her as a disheveled little girl with no shoes in her feet and a dress that was torn in different places and tethered with strings found in garbage dumps. Now she was a street urchin. She was now known as a girl who would not ask for food and certainly never begged for it or anything else. Besides an occasional bellow of the word 'Nabila' her presence was hardly felt in the world. She enjoyed the comfort of the presence of her parents in that parallel world that she had started living in the wake of that October 8th earthquake when actually the reality was far too distressing to live in.

Why is the world now going to jolt her world again and why do they want to make her face what she has so painstakingly forgotten? What's left there in the real world that she must return and face the dereliction? Why should she be brought back to be re-associated with a world that is so empty and desolate for her?

"We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves".

Buddha.

The Oal

Muhammad Waqas Razaq

Speaking the truth can sometimes feel like self-abuse, but I will share with you one thought and one vision that keeps me going, when the path is dark.

In my mind's eye, I see a world where people can be honest without fear and where the desperate terror that truth-tellers feel now will only be felt by a few liars and cheats. I see a world where re-

laxed and benevolent intimacy is the natural state of human relations. I see a world without masters, not without hierarchy, since ambitions and talents vary but without coercive, exploitive and destructive monopolies like church, state and the cult of the family. I desperately want to live in that world, but since I cannot, the best that I can hope for is to do my part to help create that world for the fu-

ture. I cannot live in a free world. I can barely see it from where I am. I squint at it though, like a man at the bottom of a well searching for a star in distinct circle of night sky above him. I wish with all my heart that I lived in that world and, if I did live in that world, I would feel such enormous gratitude for the above souls who did everything they could to bring that wonderful world into being. I would admire their courage to sacrifice immediate personal comfort for the sake of creating this wondrous world. I feel that gratitude flowing down the steps of time from the future. I feel the joy of those who live in a free world that we can only begin to create.

I feel them looking back in time to us poor struggling courageous souls, and thanking us for making their world so beautiful. It is their gratitude that picks me up when I fall. It is also the near-infinite sorrow that I would feel if I knew that such a world was to never come into being. Imagining an eternity of human experience that is little bet-

ter than what we have today - where good people cower like beaten dogs, while evil braggarts strut and rule would make the story of our species an infinite tragedy especially given our wondrous potential for truth and beauty. Evil will fade from this world if we act with integrity now. Evil will fade from this world, but we must give up many seemingly pleasant things in order to end it. Surely we are glad that the early pioneers of science did not bow to the difficulties of their struggle, but persevered against torture and oppression, giving us a world of technology, medicine and wonders that they did not live to see. We do not live in their world of medieval ignorance only because they were willing to imagine our world of science and knowledge, and work to create it. The world we will create will be as wondrous to those who live in it as ours would be to the medieval mind.

I just wanted to remind you of the world we are in fact creating, because the beauty of the goal, even though we shall never live to see it, makes the difficulties of the journey all worthwhile.

Panacea for Terror

Sidra Saadat

The seedlings of bigotry and dogmatism hitherto have grown into a gargantuan canopy for terror and extremism. Many nations around the globe have been afflicted with ailments of despair and economic catastrophes as well as the excruciating mourning of their citizens for their loved ones. The top two countries affected by this man-made calamity are Iraq with a terrorism index of 9.56 and Pakistan with a terrorism index of 9.05, followed by many other nations including Somalia,

Afghanistan, Syria and so on.

When the map has become bloody red with the annihilation of families of these nations, and when no politicians, peace NGOs or world discussion forums have succeeded to make a difference, the world looks up to the only trustworthy messiah, Science.

Science, which has solved the formidable dilemmas of the world miraculously, may also engender a solution for the causes and effects of terrorism

on the world populations. However, to produce a logical, scientific solution, we have to look at the causes and effects with a scientific eye.

Before exploring the physiological science of the causes of terrorism, a profoundly scientific methodology of preventing the capricious terrorist attacks should be explored to depth.

There are various technological gadgets and softwares that have been extremely beneficial for protection of lives. However, our only predicament is that the terrorists are well aware of these technologies. They have access to these and also have trained themselves to be resistant to these. The only possible way to divest this exponentially growing immunity of terrorists is to produce and use the latest technologies that are inaccessible to these terrorists, and whose mechanisms have not yet been exposed to any of their masterminds.

An incredible example of this new technology is that of the latest explosive detection methods. The hymenoptera training is the process of training insects such as bees and wasps, (rather than the conventional method of training dogs) via classical conditioning, that is exposing them to an odor and then rewarding with a sugar syrup solution, which causes proboscis extension reflex (sticking out of tongue) within minutes. This is how extremely sensitive olfactory senses of these insects can be used for the detection of explosive materials including TNT, SAMTEX as well as gun powders and propellants.

This is a very unique and latest form of explosive detection technology that is most probably not exposed to terrorists. Therefore, many of them have not learned the most profound of the details regarding this technology.

Moreover, latest technologies of intelligence and

counter intelligence tools for detection of chemical warfare agents and gases in the atmosphere are also among the most latest and efficient inventions. One of these would be the remote sensing system that uses infra-red detection to detect chemical warfare agents and gases that are used in the manufacture of nuclear and chemical weapons of mass destruction. A laser beam is aimed at the suspected vehicle, building or object, and the scattered beam is collected by a receiver telescope from which it is imaged on to a detector, which it gives a final signal to be processed, hence, the concentration of a certain chemical is then figured out. This is also the kind of technology which is hard to handle, and is not very much exposed to the public, hence its technological information is not disseminated to everyone.

Similarly, the technology of biometric surveillance using one's physical characteristics such as, DNA, fingerprints and facial patterns, and behavioral characteristics including ways of walking and voice, for identification purposes are also the latest and efficient ways of ensuring security in public places.

The use of such expeditious and latest technologies not only ensures improved security systems for public places but also provides a unique technology that the extremists would definitely find challenging to combat with.

Building up an invincible force to defeat the enemy is not enough. We have to realize that theft can be defeated by not only defeating the thief, but also poverty. As Edward R Murrow once said "No one man can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices."

A deep exploration of the root causes of terrorism

will prove to be beneficial in using scientific logics to cut off the roots of terrorism.

Much of the world says that many of the extremists and terrorists are made with the raw materials of an abduction of an illiterate child or adult and years of brainwashing. Even if that is true, the world cannot do much to prevent them from making their own terrorists. So, what can we do?

Not every child, woman or man has to be brainwashed to become a terrorist. Amidst our own nation, we see these explosions detonating the lives of people, leaving many orphaned or widowed. The common populace would suggest this trauma to be a major reason for metamorphosing a human into a beast.

However, it's the trauma coupled with the deficiency of opportunities to build a purpose in life that leaves these targets of terrorism with nothing but vengeance. An analogy would be that of a young boy with hopes and aspirations for his future. In one single day, his residence is bombed, his loved ones decease, and the world he lives in is not so compassionate. He might be rewarded with a little money, but after the world has forgotten his story, he would have nothing. Employment, education, recreational facilities and most importantly the ability to trust, will vanish from his life, throwing him in the abyss of depression and dysphoria. This is when he would embrace vengeance and extremism as his sanctuary.

In a report by Rex A Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why", the physiological approach toward terrorism, discusses the three substances released in the bloodstream in stress. Norepinephrine, a 'fight or flight' compound released by adrenal gland and sympathetic nerve endings, acetylcho-

line, produced by parasympathetic nerve endings, and endorphins, responsible for narcotizing the brain as a response to stress. Based on this analysis, David G Hubbard mentions that the roots of terrorist violence are not in the psychology but in the physiology of the terrorist, also because of "stereotyped, agitated tissue response" to stress.

Oots and Weigele have the physiological approach toward terrorism in which they define a potential terrorist as "a frustrated individual who has become aroused and has repeatedly experienced the fight or flight syndrome. Moreover, after these repeated arousals, the potential terrorist seeks relief through an aggressive act."

All this evidence clearly suggests that the roots of terrorism are beyond the imagination of our political or military officials. It's like a vicious cycle, aggression begets aggression, and depression begets depression. Its roots are strongly linked to a 'scientific' analysis of behavior, and can only be cut off by a 'scientific' approach.

Albeit, there have been researches and a few actions in this path, this essay will merely provide possibly useful notions based on personal research that might prove useful regarding the physiological treatment of potential homes to terrorism in the minds of certain people.

Undoubtedly, the best social, psychological and physiological cure of such a profound and deep rooted loss is the inception of education, which would not only provide the reason to live and earn, but also everlasting companions in the form of one's books. However, this cure is not available in every developing nation to all the citizens, hence we can try to alleviate the psychological loss by scientific methods only, whose logic may not even make sense to the people who are being

treated.

Since antidepressant medications, being very expensive, are not affordable to all, a general treatment can be utilized. The only possible solutions appear as recreational facilities, but the one whose family has been bombed in a procession would never go out to watch a movie to forget the pain, nor would any widow or widower go for scenic pleasure to snowcapped peaks of Himalayas, especially when they are unemployed.

A general treatment of these emotionally drained minds refers to the indirect stimulus that would trigger the kind of hormonal activity which would, 'calm' them or at least try to provide an alternative pathway to their emotions so they would not fall into the embrace of vengeance and terrorism.

An inception of this might be the selection of the most emotionally traumatized individuals and inhabiting them in a familial environment, for instance, adoption of orphans, marrying the women as well as young widows and so on. What is the physiological or scientific effect of that? It's beyond our imagination.

The processes of childbirth, lactation or even orgasm engender the release of a hormone called oxytocin in the brain which is affiliated with emotions of conjugal or maternal 'love' that eventually not only relaxes the brain but also provides the most important reason to live and work hard for their loved ones. Volunteers given doses of oxytocin in an experiment, experienced arousal of feeling of trust and compassion for other people, reassuring that this hormone, when released, prevents feelings of hatred from being aroused.

Similarly, opportunities of employment and free education, especially for the affected families can also have an effect beyond all of our imagi-

nation. Such opportunities would trigger the release of a hormone called dopamine, which when squirted on the part of the brain called nucleus accumbens, causes feelings of euphoria and achievement to rise, which result from any achievement the individual has made.

This way teenagers can be given books and pens instead of weapons. Their lives could be replenished with aspirations and aims of academic and social attainments and saved from becoming a potential terrain for the growth of the seedlings of terrorism and extremism.

If all of us, in the microcosm of our own thoughts, could give a minute or two, to discover the ways of protecting lives from becoming desolate lands and saving these lands from growing hatred, instead of thinking about our new tweets and display pictures, all of us could, indeed, come up with a panacea for the disease of terror. "What can bombs know of the illuminated fields so golden with heaven in your heart's sacred lands?"

Power

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

—Alice Walker

Mind

The mind is everything. What you think you become.

—Buddha

Gift of God

Asad Tariq, SEECs

When a baby enters this world, it looks around and observes its surroundings. It notices the shapes and colours of this world. When it grows up, it starts to realize the importance of its eyes, which help it see here and there, watch television, read books and almost everything else. It understands that this gift of God, its eyes, is something without which its life would have been incomplete.

But what about the babies who, even on opening their eyes, cannot observe their surroundings? When light falls on their eyes, they do not feel it. They are blind! They have eyes which are of no use. Thousands of babies born don't have the ability to see. They live their whole life without them. Out of these thousands, one such example was Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Marshal, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Marshal, was born on 15 September, 1972. Unfortunately, she was deprived of sight and couldn't see the world as everyone else could. She was a very beautiful girl, however.

While growing up, Elizabeth had to face plenty of problems, problems relating to her blindness. She had splendid beauty and some extraordinary abilities. But still, people never acknowledged them and would always find a way to mock the blind fairy for her blindness.

From her neighbourhood to her school, most of the people used to look down upon her. She had friends, though rare, but really good ones. Walter and Jessica, her neighbourhood friends, were always very supportive. They never discriminated her from others for her blindness and never let her

feel her lacking.

Elizabeth and her friends, Walter and Jessica, were very brilliant, but Elizabeth couldn't read and write like them. She always required a typewriter and Braille to write and read respectively. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Marshal, never felt their daughter to be less than anyone. They were very happy for what they had; a perfect daughter, blind though, but still perfect.

Elizabeth was unique. Though blind, she had some strange interests. She loved arts: calligraphy, painting, etc. And she was very good at them. That's why she had joined an arts school for polishing her skills.

One evening, when she was returning from arts school, her mobile rang.

"Hello!" said Elizabeth.

"Hi!" replied Jessica, "Are you free from your arts class?"

"Yeah! Just on my way to home. Have you got ready?"

"Not yet", said Jessica.

"Jessy, hurry up! We have to reach Walter's place at 8 sharp."

"Yes, I remember. I'll be ready in 5 minutes."

"Ok Jessica, let's meet at my home. See you."

"Bye, Sweetheart."

Suddenly something happened.

"Wait... H-Hello, are you there?" asked Elizabeth.

"I'm here, what happened?" replied Jessica.

"There's something wrong over here," whispered Elizabeth.

"What? What happened?"

“I can sense some danger, something like...”
“Like what?” asked Jessica, astounded.
“Like this car is gonna burst in a while.”
“What? Are you sure?”
“Yeah, I can feel it... there may be some kind of leakage.”
“Then, stop the driver.”
“No, I can’t. He’s not gonna believe me, rather he will laugh at me. You know how it is!”
“But at least try...”
“No.”
“Ok. Then tell me where are you right now?”
“Wait a minute,” said Elizabeth and asked the boy sitting next to her, “Where are we right now?”
The boy replied, “We are at the Crossroad Street.”
Then, Elizabeth told Jessica, “Hey, we are at...”
“I heard that. I will be there with Walter in a while. Ok, take care.”
“Bye.”
But before they could reach, the moment came when Elizabeth couldn’t wait anymore. She could sense that very less time was left.
“Stop it!” shouted Elizabeth. The driver stopped the bus and came to Elizabeth. “What happened?” asked the driver.
“The bus can’t go on anymore”, replied Elizabeth.
“But why?”
“Because it will burst if we proceed this journey.”
“And how do you know that?”
“I can sense that...”
The driver laughed loudly, and along with him, everyone in the bus started to laugh; “I am serious”, shouted Elizabeth. “Go and check it yourself.”
The driver still couldn’t believe her. On checking, he found out that she was right; if he had continued to drive the bus for even a second, it could

have burst. He returned to the bus and thanked Elizabeth. Then he asked all students to get off the bus.

Walter and Jessica reached there at the moment and took Elizabeth out of the bus.

“Are you okay?” asked Walter.

“Yeah, I am fine,” replied Elizabeth. “Ok. Let’s go home.”

While holding Elizabeth’s hands, her friends noticed that all the other students were staring at Elizabeth. They were wishing to thank Elizabeth for saving their lives, but hesitated as they had laughed at her when she was asking them to believe her. Though Elizabeth couldn’t see them, she sensed their feelings, and smiled at them.

Planting a Tree

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

–**Chinese Proverb**

Life

An unexamined life is not worth living.

–**Socrates**

Success

Eighty percent of success is showing up.

–**Woody Allen**

Too many of us are not living our dreams because we are living our fears.

–**Les Brown**

Change Starts from Inside-out

Amjad Hussain

Love has been a sign of peace and tranquility, but I had been witnessing deteriorating situations for the last 1 year in my beloved country Pakistan. Love has been erased at grassroot level and tolerance has no name in the streets of our country. People quarrel on petty problems. With the above thoughts in my mind, I decided to pen down that love is the only remedy to solve issues in this era. I was determined and committed to contribute into reshaping a secure and good Pakistan. After a series of observations and interviews from normal people, I came up with dozens of reasons behind pervasive hatred in Pakistan. I, however, decided not to stop and I started to take interviews of senior citizens and pundits working in the system of governance in our country. I found brain-drains, flawed foreign policy makers, and the power stackers were also involved in worsening the condition of Pakistan.

One day I went to meet a celebrity; he was an eminent person of our area, though he was not famous worldwide, so it was not difficult for me to meet him. I was triumphant in portraying my work to him; he appreciated me and encouraged me. He even vowed to publish my project in a well-known magazine after accomplishment of my project. I was over the moon and it boosted my energy to sort out more reasons behind this perplexing situation in the country.

Ultimately I was accomplished with my collection and it was time to pen down what I had worked out. I spent 3 hours in front of my tablet and typed each and every word worth publishing. I was

amazed to see that my project has been compiled in 10 pages and it was an honor to me that, individually, at least I have done something to change the society. I sent an e-mail to the celebrity and waited for his reply to come but my patience ended in smoke. I thought I had overplayed my hand and my project was inane for an intellectual of high caliber. I, however, did not lose courage and strength, I showed the compiled file of my work to my academic advisor but he eschewed by saying he would go through it later. Hereafter, I was voracious to find out what was wrong with my assignment and I started showing the project to more lecturers musing that there is always room for betterment. Everyone was unresponsive and gave no importance to my accomplishment despite diligence and fair work. It took me four years to find out what was wrong with my project but failed. My every effort was in vain. Yes, I lost my courage and antiquated.

I threw the project in the dustbin and started to live the same mundane life. I decided to act ampa-thetic to every aspect of life. It was a turning but a disappointing point of my life when, finally, my father tracked down the reason for my project failure. One day my father came to me and told me in a mild voice. "Son! Have you ever tried to change yourself? Son! You never tried to change yourself, how you will be able to change the country?"

Eventually I was satisfied and found results that change starts from inside-out. No matter how hard we try to change the society, unless we change the world will mock at us!

A Love Letter to Life

Aneeqa Pervaiz, SNS

Like that legend people call Van Gogh, I do not think life can be “Infinitely Vacant”. But that’s just me. I like to disagree with legends. But that’s besides the point here. These are not the best of times. These are also not the worst of times. These are the times when the lapses of past sadness crawl into the skin and stay there. There is something so fulfilling about pain. A kind of fulfillment that joy could never provide. I know what you are thinking. Pessimism at its best. But it is not. But then you might argue that it is not exactly optimism either. And you are right. But then why does it have to be anything at all? Why do we crave of labels? Why do most of us walk around with an authority to diagnose everyone else around us?

We are where we wanted to be in life. You may also call them choices. Destiny, some might say. Well I don’t know about that. We are here because we believed it was worth taking the risk. So we went through hell in getting ourselves here but somehow we made it to the mountain top or perhaps rock bottom. But we made it here nonetheless. Depending on the circumstances, I would say, go ahead and hate this life you have created for yourself. You can love it too if you want. Or it can be somewhere in between. But as long as you are not indifferent I do think that you will be okay. Indifference to me is like slow death. It is not reversible. The damage is permanent.

And you know what else? That feeling of alienation is killing you inside. But that is okay. You will

get through it. Look at the flip side of it. You can only feel alienated and secluded because you’ve belonged somewhere else. You are lucky because you’ve called a place out there home. Because there are plenty of us who have never belonged anywhere simply because we have never called a place home. And no, it has nothing to do with not being privileged. It has nothing to do with our status in the society. Some of us are just simply unfortunate. And no we are not invisible, only our pain is.

Then people might ask you about how many times life has kicked you in the gut? And you might not be able to come up with a number. And that is also okay. But the ways to deal with that pain probably outnumber the times you have been hurt. Because I know a thing or two about life as well. It cannot be that harsh to anyone. Then you might tell me that you were on top of that beautiful glass tower when life came crashing at you and suddenly you were hitting rock bottom. You were living all the cliches as on the bathroom floor and what not.

And to be really honest it will never go away. The pain. And that laughter sidelined by more pain. Also why should it all dissolve into nothingness? It is only fair that it stays and creeps upon you from time to time. You signed up for this life? So deal with the down side of things as well and it cannot be that bad because I will tell you as to why. Today a child lost his mother. Today those parents buried their first born. Today they found another girl on the streets after she was raped. To-

day a father found out that his daughter will never wake up from that coma and today was the day you witnessed it all but you know what else? Today was also the day when none of that happened with you. It happened around you but did not happen to you.

Today was also the day when a plane did not crash into a tall building. It was the day when no drone attacks were reported. Today no earthquakes tore a town apart. Today also happens to be the day

when someone waits on the other side. You just have to meet them there and never let go of that hand. A hand offered to you when life was way too unkind. So, dear life, I love you only because it is only fair. It is because you have loved me as well, without any limitations. I thank you for everything that you've given me and the things you've taken away so far. Thank you because today indeed has been okay.

*Love,
Me*

The Chaos in Fragility

Aneeqa Pervaiz, SNS

Fragility of the soul kills you at times. Life is, but a snarled whimsy. The involvedness it has will splinter the flesh you are made of so intensely, that you would not be even able to amass your very own lifeless chunks of lump. The wind – it certainly does not always refer to bliss, appeasement and allay. It does not always mean the whispers it makes will utter the songs of harmony. It surely does not always bring the call of elation. It can be the silent killer mostly. It will kill you in the sheer silence of a dark, lonesome black night by the murmurs of despair.

Life is a desolate, miserable and most upsetting word when it sucks the life out of you, when you have to live with the scars given by your own loved ones. "I live in moments", how sparkling this phrase reads but then, when these moments shatter you into irreparable chips, you die in the

moment you live. The wildest and the hardest stage in life comes, when you just get wedged in a certain phase. When there is a continuous ache and throb through your soul. You never wanted to be an epitome of misery, but the fate ended to be too cruel upon her nascent spirit. It was like a moment of tumble, a sheer cease and a full adversity. How did you feel? You probably never knew. For in this hour of severe sting, you were almost numb. Your eyes were void, the face with no features of any sensation or mood and your very own inside was a long, narrow, cutting channel. Broken expectations have more intensity in the sting than any other emotion.

How often it happens that you try to yell and bawl at your own being? When you have a certain lump in the throat every moment? When you always breathe in sighs and survive in despair? How does

it feel when there is a carpet of despair underneath the levels of fury? The illusion of the picture that frames the flash is certainly fascinating but reality scares. However, at a certain stage, how would you feel when that very glee illusion turns into a black rain of bitterness? When you lose your own self and your very own charm?

Life and this world is certainly a stage of woes and miseries, troubles and despair. You get a moment of happiness, the very other second you are being slapped by a sheer fall, a hard luck or the broken dreams' throbs. It is not always about letting go. When the fragile soul is tangled in the net of severe miseries, you turn into a dead living being. It crushes you. It forces you to lose, the very own you. You try to run on one path, the life pulls you to the other, and while in this battle, the delicate soul is torn apart. Not everything that shatters you makes you strong. No. Sometimes, it is all about survival while being broken inside and it is certainly not strength, but, misery, coercion and demand. The cross road junction in life's walk where you are severely perplexed and baffled is

something a curse. Usually, you're just cursed. There is no other point. No escape. No way to go anywhere.

Sometimes, no choice, no option and nothing is given. The battle of the heart and mind really tortures you a lot. The point where the hope dies, the will puffed/pulled away and you see nothing but a vast, dark and lifeless path. When life sucks, you die. When in life nothing seems to happen but bad luck, that is the point where your own heart beats against you. When life is a narrow cage and the iron bars around you are even more dense and intense.

This is how survival happens in despair and the miseries embraces us. When it becomes a routine, you die every other second. When you end up losing all the threads of relations you turn into a lifeless lump. It is but a chaos in fragility and it shows you with your own broken pieces.

Before expression could be given words, the expression already finds its way down the cheeks.

Allah - The Obvious

Sajid Ali Khan, SCEE

My weekend came to an end, so as to ensure my presence in the morning classes I had to leave for my university. I bade good bye to my parents and siblings and left home with a heavy heart. I had reserved my seat earlier. I reached the terminal on time and soon the van started its journey. I always wanted to grab a seat beside the window because nature is my obsession and I love stalking Divinity. But fortunately or unfortunately this time I got

a seat in the first row and also on the aisle side. That meant I was now sitting in front of the dashboard and the gear box. The wide space between the driver's seat and front seat was a plus point as it left me a room to get on with what I crave for.

The van had just started when a heavy voice came from the back, asking all the fellow travellers for "Dua-e-Safar". Silence prevailed with a short

murmur. The driver was engaged in making his way through the dense traffic, at times followed by sharp turns. I saw people busy in their own chores, everyone so indulged in his own world. After some time with a turn all the bumps disappeared and with luxury and comfort the Motorway offered its services.

My hand slipped into my pocket emerging out with my hands free, a youngster's most valued gadget. I plugged it into my phone and soon my favorite music was playing in full swing. I pressed my head against the back of the seat and my gaze fixed upon the front view mirror. Soothing music and the literally beautiful scenery beyond that 3 foot glass seemed to be relieving my wretched soul. I forgot when exactly I got lost in the echo of ecstasy. The fairy meadows along the M1 (Motorway 1) from its one end to the other end presented a breath taking view. I felt unaware of the world inside the van. I was so much absorbed in the things and life outside that piece of glass, constantly looking in front.

The traffic was thin as it always is; smooth, wide, clean and the perfectly, carpeted road attracted attention. Some vehicles we surpassed and others surpassed us. I was observing every vehicle that overtook us, kept gazing at it till it was out of sight.

My mind's wandering came to an end with a man's gentle push on my shoulder, sitting behind me. Numb for a second, thinking to understand the situation. On regaining my senses, I turned back detaching my hands free. I came to know he was having a problem with the AC fan right above him and asked me to convey his message to the driver. The driver's one single move brought back

peace in the van's atmosphere.

I soon indulged in my world again, looking into that mirror straight. The sun seemed exhausted hence making its way down into the distant mountains. Darkness won the war and light was about to surrender. Birds flying here and there flew to their homes. Night was about to take charge. Nature needed a break. Nothing on earth can depict the haunting image of the sands of time draining as vividly as dusk itself. There I was sitting, looking straight ahead. I was over absorbed, totally unaware of my mass, physique, sitting weightless, totally transformed into a thought.

With a gentle left turn we left motorway and took the road to the capital. The rising turbulence inside and a few ringtones around brought me back to consciousness. And then suddenly like a lens of a camera my eyes changed focus and my sight right away stuck a small velvet cushion hanging from the back view mirror in front of me, beautifully embroidered with the Arabic name "ALLAH".

My whole body shivered!

I felt that my whole life has been overlapped with my last couple of hour's journey. All these hours I kept looking in the same direction and indulged in things on the other side of that glass, things that I knew would be left far behind, and I missed the obvious, right in front of me.

A question came wafted before my eyes.

"Do my senses miss Allah the obvious, in my real life as well? Have I focused on the obvious or the worldly amusements and things I know would be left far behind?"

And I heard silence all the way down inside me.

A Rainy Day

Umar Nisar, EME

“According to the Meteorological department it’s going to rain all over the country after Friday”. A bizarre tone squeaked in my ears when newscaster announced this sinister news. Apparently these words would seem harmless to many and some would perceive me as a defiant creature of God but not after you look it with a biker’s perspective. “It wouldn’t rain on Saturday” I said, with a mystical gesture but with bitter tone, “neither on Sunday, but on Monday and between 7-8 am for sure”.

So on Monday when I woke up I heard the squall of rain, and I wasn’t surprised a bit as it was perfectly corroborating with my conjecture rather it filled my heart with the mysticism and confidence about my foresight. I thought about giving lectures on mysticism or becoming a Sufi with hundreds of followers around me. Mere thought of it gave me shivers of joy but then I tried to focus on the task at hand of getting to the college without being the victim of nature. I rose from the bed after figuring out the whole plan of reaching the destination sound and safe. Here the phrase ‘safe and sound’ connotes 80% dry mass of a homosapiens’ body. My reason for being so resolute was that substantial evidence suggested this morning that nature was with me and I was looking forward to a career out of it already. So I mustered up my courage and packed myself with as many clothes as I could. If I am not mistaken there were seven or eight layers of clothes on my body. When I went out to my motorbike a thunder after lightening whispered out loud that “Nature has sent compliments to you”, for which I deliriously murmured thanks

to her. Before riding the bike, I tested the arena by going on land without roof. I can’t say for sure but it did bewilder me. I couldn’t understand the reason for this harsh treatment and I named it as ‘error of judgment’. I kicked my bike till it started. I went out on my bike with normal speed and I had to slow it down as a burst of water drops blurred my vision by charging on my glasses and a layer of pain went through my nose cartilage as it experienced the cold out there. Nature had already hit my exposed spots I thought. As wind blew two separated flaps of my waterproof under waist began to flutter in excitement. It exposed my thighs too, as I was willing to lose my fibulas and had calculated 20% damage, but the wind, an unforeseen force in my battle with nature changed everything. I endeavored to keep the waterproof on my thighs while driving and ended up in showing some extremely retarded somersaults to the audience at road. I resisted for some time but after reckoning my inappropriate posture I gave up my femurs too.

I hadn’t abandoned hope yet when I felt something cold around my cervical area and in a matter of seconds, I fathomed out that water had found a path under my helmet, at the very moment I criticized the anatomy of homosapien and became skeptical about the theory of evolution. When I assessed the damage afterwards, my damage report said “two fibulas, two femurs, feet, partially cervical area, an unprecedented insight about wrongdoings of nature and four layers of clothes”. I, quite honestly but hesitantly, pronounced my defeat against nature.

There comes a point in rain where you think that now you can't be hurt by blatant acts of nature. This again is a guerilla war tactic of the nature. In reality, it's an ambushade by nature to roll you in dirt and mud as it happened with me. As I said when I thought no more harm could be done to me an idea came to my mind why not enjoy the rain as a normal person would do, I tried to seek pleasure from the idea of driving a bike in such rain. I was so absorbed in my thoughts that I didn't notice that speed of my bike had increased. As I reached nearer to the leading bike I discovered that it didn't have a mud guard A stream of diluted mud deprived me of the remaining glory. After which I sang an assorted collection of 'foul words' in honor of nature and I sang it twice to make sure nothing was missing. The mud had drawn an inex-

plicable symbol on me from which I deducted that nature is an enthusiast of some secret society as it was not of any religion for that I am sure. It was like some murderer who would leave some unique symbol with corpse.

Of all the other things, one thing which nature has taught me is the power of context. It was really a powerful lesson. As I have mentioned when I was saving my femurs, I saw a biker in front of me, who instead of wearing his waterproof like a jacket, wore it like an apron around his waist. It would be funny for the people without the context, but I appreciated his shrewdness as he had affectively saved his legs and it would have been 1-0 against nature hadn't his calculation gone wrong as one jacket was not enough to save him from the water.

Art

Joveria Rubab, SEecs

Art, basically, is a discipline which helps individuals to present or let out their emotions, ideas, thoughts and abilities in visual or audible form. Dancing is a form of an art, to exhale all tension and sorrow. But unfortunately in our society it is eyed as an unethical act, just a way to increase vulgarity.

Until the 17th century art referred to any skill or mastery and was not differentiated from crafts or sciences. In modern usage after the 17th century where aesthetic considerations are paramount the fine arts are separated and distinguished from acquired skills in general such as the decorative or applied arts. (Wikipedia)

Art may be described in terms of expression, communication of emotion or other qualities. There is no single universally accepted definition of art but it can be attributed to such traits as creativity, aesthetics, feelings and sentiments either in poetry, prose, singing, dancing or sculpture.

It is actually wrong. There is a need to correct this wrong perception. Dancing is a form of art just like any other form i.e painting, sculpturing, writing etc. Just like other forms of art, it is an innate skill which individuals have in them from the beginning. A painter puts his ideas into a picture through colors or pencils. A singer puts his thoughts and emotions into his voice, a writer puts his observation into his compositions and similar-

ly a dancer puts his soul into the moves he makes.

Dancing is a form of expression which can be used to express any feelings. Stressed and tense people should often try dancing; because our brain sends continuous signals to the moving body limbs which in turn help to release the stress in moves or steps of dance.

There are many types of dancing; my personal favourites are:

Sufi dancing – usually practiced by Turks, a way to present/unite our soul with God.

Classical – originated from India, difficult form of dancing, used in testing, focusing and measuring precision skills.

Contemporary – A form of expression, used to express feelings i.e, joy, sorrow, love, hatred etc through dancing.

Street Dancing – originated from America, used in groups to show anger, competition etc amongst young people.

Salsa – originated from France a form of love expression amongst the people.

This list can be carried on as dancing is a vast field and many universities offer engineering degree in this field.

“Dancing is a vertical expression of a horizontal desire”.

– Rober Frost

Precipice

Saad Khushnood, CEME

12th March. 6 am. Another dream ends. Another day begins. The gruesome torture and monotony that the day heralds is enough reason for me not to get out of bed. But I have already tried spending my own moments in bed and it does me no good. Despite all the vexing I know I shall face, I climb out of bed and begin my morning rituals.

The same toothbrush. The same toothpaste. The same lukewarm water from the same right-side tap. The same minty taste and the same scrubbing in my teeth. I need not even count how many strokes these brushes take in my mouth anymore. My body is moving almost on its own. The decadent automation that is called habit. Has already taken my hand and is guiding it. I hate it.

The same breakfast: bland cornflakes served with extra sweet milk. The lingering of my sweet tooth now completely dead; the sweet milk nearly disgusts me now. But I cannot change it. Such is my existence now: dull, repetitive, and planned out.

The same early morning traffic. The same congestion during my daily commute to work, in the same blue sedan which I own. Passing the same stretches of concrete and dirt as I always have. It feels like a lifetime by now. It never changes. It's useless to even hope for it to change.

I pull up in the same old run-down garage owned by the same old company that hired me. I enter the same elevator I have always used ever since I joined: the second last on the left at the end of the

4th corridor. Once again, I press the number 22 and once again the elevator buzzes into life. The same 76 seconds pass by as I reach my destination without interruption. "I suppose I got here early again." Force of habit.

Now for my cubicle. I walk straight and then turn right at the second opening. I pass 4 more rows until I turn left. Now it is the 5th on the left. I get seated and boot up the PC. I run my company email server and find it flooded with orders from Mr. Himmels. The usual grunt work that he would rather not do. The usual grunt work that someone else could do too if I complain too much. The same feeling of defeat overcomes me as I begin typing. Click, click, click, click, click, click, click. I type and I type. I have grown to 40 words per minute. This is still abysmal considering the people around me average at 51. But they don't suffer from the same curse of monotony as I do.

The curse. Why did I remind myself? It was not supposed to cross my mind. And yet it did. And now the pain and grief are sure to follow. The alienation of the mind, all thanks to the existence of this knowledge. But it is too late I suppose. This damage has been dealt. This poison has been consumed. Do I just continue with the day with this knowledge once more? As I always have...?

No.

Enough is enough.

This can not continue. I will not let it.

I get up from my chair and storm past the cubicles. I knock down Harris and Gilbert on the way. I nearly collide with Zoey, but she dodges me at the last moment. But she can not save her coffee. I do not care. I have a purpose. A dubious one, but a purpose nonetheless.

The next few moments were a blur. Not that my body was once again an automaton, but more like it; let me enjoy the passenger's seat as it already knew what my intentions were. For now, I was on the roof.

This building is by no means the highest. With a total of 34 floors, it is considered a dwarf among these concrete beats of Manhattan. But 34 floors is still high enough. I am on the precipice, staring down. The cars and people all look so small; so insignificant. They are insignificant compared to my plight. This curse has broken me. I need to escape it. I have tried every option I have thought of by now. None has worked in either of the instances of days that have passed by now. This is all that I have left anymore.

I step forward into the air. There is nothing for my feet to hold onto. My balance falters as I proceed. My mind numbs as I accelerate. And as soon as I hit the pavement, the darkness encroaches.

12th March. 6am. Another dream ends. Another day begins.

Expanding Your Horizons

Muhammad Iftikhar Uppal, CEME

I find it quite bothersome that we have come to develop a sense of indifference to all the proceedings around us. We have spun a cocoon around

ourselves and have lost the ability to stretch out and interfere in the rhythms of the world. We have lost the desire to expand beyond the space

we already occupy and our eyes are clouded with a sense of satisfaction that what we have done is enough and can be classified as the extent of our abilities. If you think so, and I am sure that the majority of the public I am addressing here does, I am sorry to say that you have indeed proved yourself to be useless.

It is indeed very sad how we have narrowed our vision and how we constantly underestimate ourselves. Our sieves have indeed rusted. We head to our decline because of personal gains clouding our judgment. I ask you what we have lost to become what we are today. We have lost the sense to recognize the true value of things; we continue on the old paths found by our ancestors. We have become rigid in our ways and everyone knows that a stiff object breaks more readily than a flexible one.

Most people are of the opinion that they are stalwarts and that if they wanted to they could turn tides and do the impossible. There seems to be a common misconception in our community that we are one of the most intelligent nation in the world and that there are a few who could compare with us. My dear people, considering the condition you are in at the moment you are a hundred years too early to even think of comparing yourself to the powers running this planet. It is utterly wrong to feed off the achievements of our forefathers and to blame other people for confiscating our heritage. They had a golden run, I agree, but you have no right to be proud of their achievements. What they had was theirs alone and even though you might be of their lineage, the only thing you can boast of is what you have cultivated yourself.

So in order to address all this, what can we do? Obviously we have to expand our horizons along

with integrating a sense of acceptance within ourselves. Come on, people. Break this shell of tradition and explore, poke around and meddle in everything. Curiosity! What better thing is there than the irritating need of understanding the mechanisms of the world? Accept how wrong we are and then strive to rectify our mistakes with never ending zeal.

Take for one the population distribution of our youth by profession. You would be hard pressed to name more than five or six fields in which people want to chase a career in. There is also the issue of our outdated education. Sorry to say but it is a harsh reality that our syllabi are outdated. But if a student thinks that he cannot play any part in this, you are again wrong. Everyone these days has access to internet. I'll quote myself here again, explore and poke around..

Our teachers should also play a vital role in this; they should come out of teaching us what we already know and should rather encourage the students to find the proof and reasoning of various phenomenons on our own and only then illuminate our minds.

Then there is the hackneyed, but nevertheless important, issue of the image we project of ourselves on the international level. As a student you might think that you have little power over this but have you ever tried to think for a solution to this? I am sure not, since we love to criticize and do nothing about it. Allow me to shine some light on the path you must follow. Ever heard of pen-pals? I am sure you have. Make friends out of the country and convince them that you are as competitive as they are. Try writing articles in magazines that are distributed all over the world. Start blogs and websites, I am sure you have plenty of time.

All I ask is that people please get up and do something instead of just condemning the wrongs of our ways in your hearts. Expand your horizons,

bridge the gaps and stretch out of your shell. We have been the subject of accusations for too long, don't we deserve better?

A Walk in the Rain

Saad Khushnood, CEME

In our busy and humdrum life, there comes a time when we feel overwhelmed. This feeling does not necessarily mean that we are over worked or have taken too much stress upon ourselves; it merely means that we have spent so much time in the fast lane that we have this innate feeling of slowing down. Instead of speeding up to catch up with life, we sub-consciously feel the need to stop for a while and enjoy the race.

Everybody has his own ways of unwinding in such cases. Some people cuddle up to a warm fireplace with a good book. Others find true relaxation in spending time with their loved ones. I, on the other hand, am the introvert type and find myself uneasy with people. My serenity comes from walking in the rain.

Oh, the slight touch of the droplets as they fall from the heavens wash away my worries as it flows down. The slight rumble in the sky, as monstrous as it may sound, feels like the roar of a lioness protecting its cub. The dark clouds above seem like gloom to so many, but I only see an auspicious emblem of fortune, ushering the possibility of rain. And during the rain, it feels like the symbol of continuity, for as long they exist it shall rain.

However, these are not the real reasons I feel at peace. Why I feel such bliss in the rain is beyond me. Even today, I walked in the rain in winter. Nothing good comes from it to me afterwards except that my mind clears and my heart feels at ease. This gives both the reason to explore the other, letting me think beyond what I feel are my limits of creativity. Like a third eye opening up to the world, adding another dimension of beauty to it. Yes, even a pessimist like me becomes an optimist. It convinces me that the longer the rain continues right now, the longer the gloom of now will last. As a result, the greater the chances that tomorrow, the day shall be brighter to even it out. To add another dimension to this, allow me to confess that I am more of a man of science rather than a man of faith. Spiritual healings have no place in my life and the concept of emotions, for me, is only linked to chemicals in the brain. Yet the moment I step outside into the rain, I feel close to God. I feel like He smiled at me and gave me a reason to believe in Him. As if He wants me to be happy; though He gains nothing from making me happy. At that particular moment, I do not feel happy or elevated, mind you. I feel something better. I feel contented with the world.

And that, my friends, is a feeling even happiness cannot match.

Grey Areas, Forbidden Fruits and Pandora's Box

Saad Khushnood, CEME

One of the most active worms present within the chasm we call our minds, is curiosity. This curiosity leads us into challenging currently established ideals, to stay above and beyond the current realms of engagement and pursue a different approach. It is this curiosity that leads to innovation. It is also this curiosity that leads to destruction.

Now where does curiosity tend to fester? The answer is logically apt and emotionally appealing. It festers in realms unknown to humankind realms no one bothers to look into, because no one can. Realms of philosophy and uncertainty, and realms which become invisible when we look down at them through the telescope of logic. They include so many branches of different trees that the best way to categorize them is by the nature they all have in common the grey area.

Go back in time. Go back when you were young and inquisitive; times when your minds were unrestrained by logic and terror. When your only limit was imagination. You do not find your mind wandering into the very depths of space and time? Did you never catch yourself begging to know the truth behind every metaphysical being around you? Did you not ever ask your elders any particular questions which they failed to answer. Did they never tell you it is best not to ask such questions? And then afterwards, you understood the reason why they told you not to ask the question ever again. Not because you figured out the answer, but because you understood nobody knows the answer. You understood why you should never delve into such depths. Because it is taboo. Be-

cause this is the limit of human reasoning. But is it the limit to human imagination? No. And hence, curiosity's embryo is conceived conceived in the grotto that we all know not to explore the grey area.

How many grey areas can one identify? For most people, they are the same. Such as the absolute beginning and ending of time or the fact that we are absolutely alone in this universe. For scientific people, it also includes: the existence of multiple universes packed into a singular continuum, the cause of the spark of the Big Bang, whether or not speed of light is an actual constant. For people of Abrahamic religions, it includes highly controversial topics, such as: what existed before God, how can something that exists ever be eternal (as everything that exists has a beginning and an end), what happens after it all boils down and judgment is done? What will happen then?

All grey areas are similar in the sense that we accept them as it is. We do not ponder over them. We do not challenge them simply because we believe we cannot. But what about the curious ones? The ones willing to risk it all to taste the forbidden fruits hidden within? The hidden knowledge that everybody seems to know not to seek. Are these people destined for greatness? Or were they doomed ever since they stepped into this perilous quest?

This is a question I pose for humanity. Would you allow a madman to open Pandora's Box? Even if

its the chance of its being destructive is only as much as there is a chance for it being salvation? The question is purely rhetorical, meant to make a person wonder whether or not they are the visionaries they claim themselves to be.

But then again, are the people themselves to blame every time? What about the curious ones? Are they so willing to realize that curiosity kills the cat? Or are they out to prove that it teaches the cat the weakness of the dog? What about the well-being of the plants around it? Why must the only way of indulging your curiosity include delving into the bloody hearts of those protecting it?

This is a question for the curious. Why must the madman open Pandora's Box? Especially when there is a chance for it to destroy everything he wants as well? Once again, a rhetorical question meant to gauge the willingness of self-proclaimed explorers to risk everything, including what they

do not possess.

Hence, we arrive at the conclusion of this article. I shall state a fact I learned from my life up till now. Humans are capable of atrocious acts of evil if they think what they are doing is good. Unless they have sound minded people telling them otherwise, they shall forever do such evils without a moment's hesitation. But sometimes, the only person who can tell them about the evils of an action is themselves. They must weigh the consequences of delving into such depths.

They must realize that the Forbidden Fruit in the Grey Area is a huge risk. Any man taking the plunge regardless, is a fool worthy of the failure he is bound for.

So open Pandora's Box, only if you think it's worth it!

Rasengan

Asfand Shehzad, CEME

This article is the result of extreme boredom and of a mind overclocking to the point of literally exploding and ruining the freshly painted walls with the crimson red of my sweet O+ve blood. That would really infuriate my mom but don't worry mom just gave NVC a call and they will come running with their plastic bags, and will scrape it off the wall till the last drop. Having nothing else to do except to look at the ceiling and to count the number of spider webs and of course the glow in the dark stars, (yes I've still got those!) is a wonderful feeling! Although I am behind on my work-

shop practical notebook, have a Chemistry and a Programming project to do, I still feel like I don't have anything to do. And so here I am spilling my crazy thoughts on the "New Text Document (5)".

Only half a year ago my life's ambition was getting into NUST. After much anticipation and many prayers I finally got the call letter, at first it took time for the reality to sink in but once it did the big question occurred: H12 or EME? The fact that EME is a lot closer to my place and is much more convenient to get to, made the decision easier for me and saved my brain the trouble of choosing

one. To be honest I would have chosen H-12 if it weren't for the difference in the distances but I am glad that it turned out to be this way. Anyway, all I ever wanted was to somehow get into this institution and now when I am finally here, when I have finally gotten the results of the seeds I have been sowing for the last several years, I find myself at crossroads with so many options, so many ideas, in fact too many to choose from. I blame it all on my confused brain which right now is more messed up than the scrambled eggs my grandma makes! I know most of you feel the same way, at least most of the people I talk to are like that. But hey guys! Don't worry adjusting to a new environment is not easy. Some people adapt quickly, some take time but in the end we all do and that is the thing which matters the most.

As many of you would have guessed the term 'jalebi' brain refers to a brain which is capable of going from calm to volcanic eruption in less than 5 seconds. One moment you are like "*yawn*" I am so bored let's take a nap" and the next moment you are like "Hoots to this! Imma score some head shots now". Sometimes your mind acts like a sloth, whatever you do, no matter how much you try nothing gets inside your thick skull and you feel like banging your fat ugly head up against the wall. This usually happens when you are trying to study Calculus or attempting, hopelessly, to write a code which you know, if seen by anyone who knows a tad about programming, will die of intense laughter. Other times your brain is like a jaguar, pumped up, so much energy stored inside but no way to release it. That, my friends, we all know happens when we are trying to take a break

from our hectic routine and sleep for just a little while, not for a day, not for 8 hours, but for a modest 4-5 hours. Alas you and I, we are engineering students and sleepless nights and sleepy days are a part of our fate!

Seriously, Brain, seriously? Half the time you are making me procrastinate instead of letting me do anything of substance. What did I, rather what did we ever do to you to deserve this? Can't you synchronize your time table with that of mine! I really think we can get along well but you are not giving this relationship any chance to prosper or bloom into something productive for both of us. You do know that nobody's ever gonna love you if you stay this way. Let's be honest here you are not a diva and probably not the most handsome thing in the world. Just look at you. You have more wrinkles on your ugly face than a 100 year old lady! What I am saying is that we are stuck together for the rest of our lives so why don't we make the most of what we are resourced with instead of whining about the things that we don't have. Tell you what. If you stop being a night owl, I will start putting you to better use. I probably won't stop thinking about stabbing that retarded person who threw a giraffe at me the other day. I mean don't you just hate it when you walk out the front door and someone throws a 12 foot giraffe at you! Who does that? I am going to end this now with the words of a man who has been a constant source of inspiration for many hairstylists of this century.

"A question that sometimes drives me hazy: am I or are the others crazy?" -Albert Einstein

Life in Kohlu

Ehtisham Tanvir, CEME

My latest memory of Kohlu (Balochistan) is now about 12 years old. When I close my eyes and try to picture what now lies in bits and patches in my mind, I miss that odd place. I really do. I think hard of what good that place has brought to my life and I can think of nothing. But I know I am wrong; for nostalgia is driving me to write about it.

Story of my stay with my family, in Kohlu (Balochistan) finds its beginning that dates back to the summers of the year 2000. For an army officer (serving in infantry) eight-year-old kid, father's posting to a far off place is not something out of the ordinary. Considering the fact that I had travelled by a C-130 military aircraft to Gilgit within a year of my birth and shifting to a place that no one could even find on the map back then (not that it didn't exist) cannot be categorized as extraordinary (although the stay did prove to be truly extraordinary).

Kohlu, has a history that dates back to the 16th century. Pertaining to tribal disputes, the history of Kohlu is blood-stained with regional wars over land and resources. Marri and Zarkhoon are the two tribes living in and near Kohlu district since before the British rule over the subcontinent. Since the partition, owing to the unsettling situation in the area, two military operations have been conducted in the region. The latter of the two resulted in a permanent military control over the land by Frontier Corps (FC). In 2000, as part of my father's hard area tenure, he was posted to

Kohlu as the Company Commander in Maiwind Rifles (FC).

Setting off and travelling to Kohlu was in itself a dangerous mission. The first phase of the thirteen-hour journey was a five-hour long travelling from Lahore to Dera Ghazi Khan (where we crossed the Punjab-Baluchistan border) by bus. Then after a night stay in DG Khan, we set off for Kohlu on a Toyota single-cabin. I can see three distant memories in my mind. A long, seemingly never-ending, straight, deserted road that apparently led to the mountains visible in distance, with empty plains on both sides. Narrow, twisting roads on the rocky mountains I had ever seen, with an enormous wall of rock on one side and a frighteningly deep pit on the other. A distant sight of a few lights visible from the mountain at night, as we descended into the Kohlu Valley.

The night we reached Kohlu after the thirteen hour long journey from Lahore, but not a thing could be seen in or near the house that was allotted to us for electricity was out and the generators were out of order. The night was spent in total darkness, thinking about the time in Kohlu that lay ahead.

Next day, when the sun came out, I decided to take a look around the place. Our house was a typical army house. Painted in maroon and white, chipped, grey floor, old looking, white-washed rooms, huge lawn with patches of green, big metallic gate that gave a view of an entrance to a jail, literally, high boundary walls. At the front covered area of the house, there was a small room

with a large steel netted window that replaced the whole front wall. We called it the 'sun-room' for it was filled with gleaming sunlight the whole day. Later we kept fowls there and used to sit there during winter afternoons. The remaining part of the house, within the boundary was a grassy lawn. Generally, Kohlu's soil was barren and dry. We tried to grow some vegetables on the rear part of the house but all efforts went in vain.

Water in Kohlu was scarce. The little water that was present had no connection whatsoever with the houses and once or twice a week a water filled tanker filled our home water tank that was used for cleaning purposes. What that water was like is a completely different story. Let's just limit you to the knowledge that when filled in a tub, small white and red worms could be seen swimming in the water.

Tribal disputes and their clashes with the military forces could never be settled. I can relate two such instances, however, the one which I have quite a vivid memory of, is a post 9/11 clash between the two tribes in Kohlu. My father had to leave Kohlu as he was deputed to Chaman on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, right after the American air-strike on Afghanistan, to keep an eye on trans-border smuggling of goods and Afghan people. It was a Saturday night. My mother and I were watching a PTV short film while my sister was asleep. We heard a muffled sound, as if somebody had closed the metal gate of our house. Frightened of a possible burglary, we tiptoed to the door and peeped out. What we saw was something that we never expected. It was pitch dark outside and all we could see was a fire ball (a bazooka launched rocket), right above our heads, up in the sky. Real-

izing what it really was, we panicked. Soon after this sight it started firing that continued for about half an hour. We woke my sister up, went out in the lawns and climbed the wall to move to our neighbours' house. As long as the firing continued, all the kids and our weeping mothers kept praying. I don't know how much time we spent there but when I woke up the next morning, I was in my own bed.

As a kid that situation excited me more than it frightened me. Leaving home during a cross fire and climbing a wall to take refuge was like living a real movie scenario. But when I recall it and picture it in my mind now, I realize how dangerous that situation was. The rocket could have hit somewhere near our house or the cross fire could have killed us. As a kid we never thought of anything like that. Either we were way too young to think about something like being killed or we simply ignored the fact. The same reason can explain why our mothers were crying and we weren't. Another thing that I learned from that experience was how we, expecting the worst, took refuge at a place that was as exposed as our own place was. We found ourselves completely helpless and wanted to be with people we knew and who shared our fear. It did no good to the tribal clash situation nor did it stop any bullet from leaving the barrel of the rifle, but it did give us a sense of virtual protection. I think that made all the difference. Hope, it is said, is a good thing.

Snakes, scorpions. Name any horrifying creature and you could find it in Kohlu. One in particular was a very mysterious one. Its bite could make you lose that whole part of your body. The trait that made it mysterious was that no one could see

it. Sand fly, as it is called, is an insect so small that it can't be seen with a naked eye. Unlike its name, this particular 'fly' cannot fly but it jumps and hops its way. Once bitten by this, it was said that the patient was to be injected a number of times at the point of infection. When my sister showed symptoms of Sand Fly bite, it was decided by Major Dr Anwaar, the only doctor in Kohlu cantonment and our neighbour, that her case was a different one and only bandaging would suffice the treatment. It worked and her hand was soon back to normal.

It was in Kohlu that I was first introduced to dogs with rabies or more commonly called mad dogs. When I found that one of the soldiers was bitten by a mad dog and was reluctant to even see water, the image that was created in my mind was a hilarious one. I visualized the 'mad' dog as one behaving more or less like a mad person commonly shown on TV. I imagined it walking in an awkward way, making funny noise and having messed up face. The person being bitten was assumed to have acquired the madness through the bite such that he started behaving just like the dog. But one thing that didn't make sense was how could someone be afraid of water? Meanwhile, observing the situation, soldiers were ordered to shoot any dog in the premises of the cantonment. It was only after many years that I finally found about hydrophobia and symptoms of rabies from nothing else but a course book.

As astonishing as it may sound, my realization of the beauty of Allah's most magnificent creation 'stars', also finds its origin in this forsaken place. It was a normal night, which means that electricity was out and generators were not working ei-

ther. So in order to pass some time, I went out in the lawns and sat down on a chair. The moment I looked up in the sky I couldn't move my eyes off that black canvas full of uncountable, shimmering lights. I savoured the scene for as long as my neck could afford to. I had never witnessed anything more bravura than those stars that covered the whole sky, and not a single starless patch could be seen on the entire heavens. Never again in my life have I ever witnessed so many stars as I did that day. My love for this sight made me think about becoming an astronaut one day and reaching for these stars but the idea was immediately suppressed as soon as I learned in my science class that stars were not to be touched and that their beauty remains only if you are distant from them. Alone, a star is just a blazing hot ball of fire. I never liked the idea.

Not far away from where our house was situated was a range of huge, rocky mountains. I really admired those enormous creations that covered a large part of the land in Kohlu. With not a single patch of greenery on the entire range, the mountains were dry, rocky and unclimbable. The beauty of these humungous creations was magnified during rain. As it rained, water found its way through the cracks created by erosion and formed a beautiful waterfall. I loved the sight.

My first and only supernatural experience is also directly linked with this city I miss. We had just come back to Kohlu after our yearly one-month vacation in Lahore. On entering our room we found the TV missing. Presumably, it was stolen. Enquiries were made but nothing could be concluded. One day after school, my father took me with him at some place in the city area. In a small,

narrow street, there was a house with a green wooden door. My father knocked and a bearded man opened the door, greeted us and offered us to get into the house. Immediately after the entrance, there was a hall where at one side some children were reciting the Holy Quran. On the other side there was a mat. The bearded man asked me to sit on the mat while my father sat beside me. After resting his own self on the mat, in front of me, he started reciting something to himself and once in a while blew at me. After some time he took my hand, dipped his index finger in a black ink pot and spread the ink on my thumb so that my whole nail was wet with black ink. He then asked me to look into the inked thumb nail and tell him what I saw. As I looked into the ink, what I saw was so unexpected and impossible that I simply refused to accept that I even saw something. The reflection on my thumb nail had an image of my own room where we had the TV. Then I saw a man sitting right in front of the TV set, undoing the wires. I raised my head and looked around my shoulder to see what was making the reflection. I couldn't comprehend anything, so when he asked, I simply said that I didn't see anything at all. He smiled and said "Nothing?" I repeated my last reply and after that we left that place. To be honest, at that time I was sure of the fact that I was hallucinating, for logic couldn't explain it. Real or unreal, magic or trick, it did happen, but the fact is, apart from being an incident I can relate to, it didn't affect me in any manner, and I thank Allah for that.

I have quite a few regrets in my life. Making no good, lasting friends in Kohlu being one of them at one end makes me feel sad and at the other helps me make new friends. For an indefinitely long pe-

riod of time, lack of education among the citizens of Kohlu resulted in disputes over petty issues that cost lives and property. As part of the rehabilitation of the locals suffering from the aftereffects of tribal disputes, Frontiers Corps decided to build a new school in the city area in order to eradicate the problem of illiteracy in the masses. The school that was built to provide primary education to the local children was named FC Public School. To serve its purpose rightly, locals were encouraged to send their children to this school. Officers and educated personnel from Army Education Corps, educated wives of Army officers and educated locals were hired as teachers. When I joined the school, I was in grade three and there were four students in my class. The strength of the class later rose up to six. The school initially had four classrooms, one for each of the four grades, up to which, at that time, the school offered education. For as long as two years after that, one classroom was constructed to accommodate the promoted students and make room for the new admissions each successive year.

Out of the five class fellows I had, the two I now remember and so desperately wanted to befriend were the brothers Asad Ullah and Ubaid Ullah. Asad was older than Ubaid but Ubaid was the taller of the two. Both of the brothers were gifted with highly intelligent minds. As long as I studied with them I could never beat them. Why they disliked me, at that time I could not comprehend. All my efforts to offer them a hand of friendship went in vain. Once on my birthday party I invited them to come to my house to which they refused. On the day of the function I waited for them but they never came so I asked my mother to take me

to their home. Their mud house comprised, two rooms. When I entered their house they offered me to sit in one of the two. I was served with cold *Badam ka sharbat* in a steel glass. When I told them that I had come to take them with me, they were reluctant. I insisted, to which their parents finally gave their assent. These are all the memories I have of them.

When I think about them now, I feel that what lacked between our friendships was my inability to grasp the unsaid. Whether it was the huge difference in the statuses of our families, their sense of deprivation, my failure to make them feel comfortable with me or none of what I think they thought, I guess I could never find out. What good I found from these experiences was my ability to make new friends. Making people feel comfortable and important, and never trying to make them feel small by compromising is I think what Asad and Ubaid taught me.

Hardships pass but their effects last. Cities are lost but their legacies are eternal. The situation today in Kohlu is far worse than it ever was. I have good memories associated with Kohlu and I have bad ones, but I have always chosen the good ones over the bad ones and have learned from them all. Today when I speak my heart out and wish to visit that place once more, I am called insane. But if being nostalgic is being insane then let it be. I can't remember the day we left Kohlu. It must have been a day we anticipated going back to the 'world' again. If, instead of being a place, Kohlu were a living being then I know how it must have felt when I left. It must have felt the same way Pi felt when Richard Parker left him so unceremoniously after such a long journey of survival. Pi

saved Richard Parker's life, Kohlu saved mine.

Hazrat Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki

Hazrat Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (1173-1235) was a renowned Muslim sufi mystic, saint and scholar of the Chishti order from Delhi. He was the spiritual successor of Muinuddin Chishti. His most famous disciple and spiritual successor was Fariduddin Ganjshakar who in turn became the spiritual master of Delhi's noted sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya who himself was the spiritual master of Amir Khusrau and Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Delhi. Influence of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki on Sufism in India was immense. As he continued and developed the traditional ideas of universal brotherhood and charity among the Chishti order, a new dimension of Islam started opening up in India which had hitherto not been present. He forms an important part of the sufi movement which attracted many people to Islam in India in the 13th and 14th centuries. After his death his will was read that insisted that his funeral prayer be led by that person who never did any harm and never delayed or abandoned Asr prayer. There was a brief lull and people looked right and left in search of such a person. Finally, a teary eyed Illutmish (the king) stepped forward saying that Bakhtiar Kaki had revealed his secret.

(Wikipedia)

Leading an Adventurous Life

M Asjid Tanveer, SEECs

Today I would like talk to you about, why and how you should lead an adventurous life. When talking about adventure most people think about putting themselves in any life threatening or dangerous environment.

But in reality anything that takes you out of your comfort zone into a situation you're not adapted to and how you react and interpret the situation at hand is in fact an adventure of its own.

People in today's world lack the sense of adventure. It seems that a person's life would have a little adventure in it, or it wouldn't be very enjoyable. Adventure in my opinion, is the essence of life. Today, people are very cautious about jumping into something new and adventurous. It makes you wonder how dull their lives really are. Most people don't involve any sense of adventure in their lives for multiple reasons.

Firstly, they're exceptionally boring, the kind of people you'd fall asleep just talking to.

Secondly, is the fear of change. Nowadays people are too afraid to try anything new, not because they might not be good at it. Not because they might not succeed at it, but because they fear how it might affect their life. They fear that involving themselves in anything besides their daily routine would just hinder them in their life, not saying that you shouldn't have your priorities straightened out. These people need to learn that life is full of experiences waiting to teach you something new about this world, and you will never be a complete and successful human being until you learn to expand your horizons.

The cautious ones need to realize that the willing-

ness to undertake adventure is a necessary part of a happy existence because it is only in adventure that some people succeed in knowing themselves – in finding themselves.

A variety of sports are adventurous to a lot of people today. Some people race cars, living their lives a quarter mile at a time, to them nothing else matters, for those ten seconds or less they're free from this world's worries. Skydivers jump out of an airplane, to escape their daily stress and push their adrenaline to the max. Boxing, two individuals in the ring battling it out for points. Xtreme sports, such as mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding etc, are all adventurous. People choose these sports to escape the real world, and have fun pushing themselves to their limits and beyond.

Some people consider their careers to be an adventure. Who would have thought that someone's job would be an adventure? Police risk their lives on a daily basis, not to say that you need to risk your life to be adventurous. Lawyers, with the thrill of winning their case, or even the fear of losing their case, their career is adventurous. Fireman running through a blazing building to make sure everyone is evacuated. Paramedics arriving on the scene of an automobile accident or shooting, that's excitement. Doctors who have people's lives in their hands daily. Finally even a writer, weaving imaginative words into a novel, for some of you these books are just plain words, but to the writer it is his view on the world or how he sees it. All of these careers are different, but have two things in common, adventure and excitement.

Does Pakistan Need an Enemy?

Ramsha Khuram, SEECS

All social networks, television programs and newspapers are flooded with political debates and arguments. We have become so engrossed in expressing our opinion about the current political scenario and proving that our political view is superior to that of the others that we have turned a blind eye towards our country's respect in the world. Let the fact that The New York Times featured an article on 29 Aug 2014 entitled 'Pakistan, Its Own Worst Enemy' be brought into the limelight. Pity is too small a word to describe it. It is a slap across the face of all Pakistani citizens.

No matter how disturbed, polarized and aggressive we are within the country we, at least, need to give a positive impression to the world. We need to realize that we are compromising on the outlook of our country and, therefore, crippling the little respect we have left in the global community. It is time to realize and accept that our nationalist sentiments have been buried deep under the debris of political slogans and we are cheating ourselves by raising the current hue and cry. I see and much appreciate the enthusiasm, discipline and tolerance of those participating in rallies day in and day out but some questions, however, come to mind. Does this enthusiasm of serving the country die when you are too lazy to switch off that extra light when you know your country is burdened by a burgeoning energy crisis? Where does the discipline bubble pop when you jump a red light or over speed on the highway? Are you working with the same zeal and zest on your job to support the country's

economy as you are in raising political slogans? Or do you go late in the morning and decide on having an extended lunch break just to listen to your 'leader's' speeches in the evening?

As for those who are governing our country, why can't decisions about new tax policies and foreign relations be made with as much scrutiny and efficiency as decisions about what new steps are going to be taken to ensure you remain in power are made? Ask yourself these questions and reflect. I am not anti-government. Nor am I criticizing those conducting or participating in these rallies. Just be honest and think beyond these few weeks of power conflicts. Grow beyond the ongoing discussions and see. What political party's ideology would Quaid Azam have supported had he been alive? Would he have approved of any slogan other than 'Pakistan Zindabad'? These questions are self-answerable. He left us with nothing but three principles and a country to own, to respect and to serve. Unity. Does our nation possess it? Are we acting as hindrance towards it? Faith. Do we have faith in the abilities of our fellow countrymen, the potential of the new generation and the natural resources that God has trusted us with? And discipline. Are we following all the laws, paying all the taxes and refraining from bribery? My salute to those who can say 'Yes' confidently. But I assure you I know they are few. Let us hope that our country prospers and grows. For now let us hope that conditions stabilize. Pakistan Zindabad!

Cool Dudes

Humna Naveed, SADA

Around a creepy corner, or sitting on road side, the only person in the whole school whose *angreji* accent will amuse and confuse you; whose spikes won't ever fall flat; who adds a fresh piercing to his body every week, whose goatee won't ever grow into a beard, whose sunglasses will accompany him at night as well and whose closet will never ever fall short of sparkly orange jackets and creepy parrot green scarves. My dears, let me introduce you to our Cool Dudes.

Researchers often wonder how this phenomenon of their existence crept into our world. Some say it's the Elvis Presley after effect, (note: apology sought from Presley hard core fans) some trace its roots back to the Bala from Gujranwala; but it has been proved by intelligence services that they are a result of the bond between YouTube heroes and Twilight Sagas.

Those trying to be really cool lads, are often found either applying bottles of hair gel, or rolling in Axe deodorants. They speak to you in the loudest tone,

thinking you are hearing disabled. They seek attention even from the most random person around the school; even the weird cat which roams about in your canteen. They bring their guitars every day and pose as Bilal Khans playing-at-LUMS, they update their cover photos every single minute with a fresh pose such as eating Cornettos, and above all Justin Beiber and Awais Lovelies' survive due to our these hard core fans.

Like all other blessings they bestow upon us, it is because of their existence that you get to listen to "Baby" with "*munni badnam hui*" etc. Amazingly they are never extinct in your school; you always get to meet their newest version with new and more annoying features.

Now how to get rid of them. Well, you can't really get rid of them, neither can you run nor hide from them since they will always be there to creep and annoy you. Though you can always wish for them to be sent back to the Jurassic age.

The Beginning of Hostel Life

Saqib Afzal Khan, SCME

Freedom, friendship and fun must be the things that come to mind when a freshman thinks about the start of hostel life. But transition from home to hostel life is a huge one indeed. Once hostel life starts one may face problems that one wouldn't have thought of in his wildest dreams. Your life takes unexpected turns before you get into the

swing of things. The journey at the start can be tough. So I will be writing about some problems undergrads may face at start of hostel life.

Homesickness

According to scientists, home sickness is the result of our body rejecting the change in surround-

ings. So suffering from a bit of homesickness at the start is normal. But sometimes, if this is not taken care of, the results can be devastating. Speaking from personal experience, homesickness kills one's charm of exploring university life. You start to dislike everything and everyone around you and pessimism takes control of your mind. All the fun and humour dries out of your life. You miss your family, all the comforts of home and the confidence that people show in you. You feel lonely and isolated. Effective ways of overcoming homesickness may vary from person to person. You might want to indulge in some creative hobby to lessen homesickness. Maybe meeting up with new people and hanging out with them may relax your mind. Even paying attention to academics or sports may help you. Just try to do something that makes you feel good. Once you get through the phase of homesickness then you are in for some real enjoyment of hostel life.

Food

If you are expecting good food in the hostel mess then you will be hugely disappointed. The food in mess as compared to home can be regarded as "hopeless". Despite various dishes, the same menu over and over again for several weeks can bore you to death. The most troubling part is that you'll have to eat whatever is available in the mess unlike your home where mom will cook delicious dishes at your request. Matters get worse when we talk about drinking water. The water available in coolers does not match the standards of healthy mineral water at all. You may have to drink boiling hot water most of the time in hot summers. Chances of having serious stomach problems at the start are really high. Sadly, there is no effec-

tive solution to this problem.

Too much freedom

Hostel life provides one with the freedom which is necessary to make him mature. But sometimes this freedom backfires. A person who gets his priorities wrong affects his studies. The sad part is that the person neither pays attention to studies nor extra-curricular activities which leads to total catastrophe. The solution is simple. Get your priorities right. You must know the right time for a particular activity.

Bad Company

I have seen some brilliant people lose their charm just because of bad company. Obviously, there will be some ill company in every hostel. People become chain smokers and even alcoholic during their hostel life. So you should identify the wrong people at the right time (that is the beginning). I strongly believe if your grooming is good you will never fall prey to bad company.

By the above written things I don't aim to paint a bad picture about hostel life but I feel that knowing these things will make it easy for you to get in the mould of things at the start of hostel life. After first few weeks hostel life becomes crazy and much fun.

Time

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

—Steve Jobs

Fear of Public Opinion

Zoya Siddique, ASAB

Have you ever been disgustingly looked at by people for snorting loudly while laughing or pouncing hungrily over food that has just been served defying all the table manners? Or have you ever blown air into the empty juice pack and jumped over it to hear the explosion? Feels good, doesn't it? If you followed the dos and don't's, you'd have probably missed licking and savoring that sticky layer of chocolate on the chocolate wrapper or licking food off your fingers. Or maybe you'd have resisted picking up your favorite dessert served in front of the guests because you can't resist the temptation. I mean if we start getting concerned about the "moral police" could we ever enjoy our lives? After all, you only live once. We can't always abide by the rules and we can't please everybody around us! God created us raw so why do we have to act refined all the time? We can enjoy the sweetness and sourness and relish the crispness of nuts in the fudge only if we allow ourselves to do so. It's similar to journeying a long road and not reveling the cool breeze whistling in our ears, inhaling the fresh green grass and listening the giggles of little

children playing along the roadside with pebbles. This is life, isn't it? Letting yourself get wet in the pouring rain even when you have an umbrella, singing a song to your friends with your damaged vocals knowing you sound like a complete retard, skipping all the way to school rather than taking a robotic walk, writing "8" by drawing two zeroes rather than twisting the alphabet S. Yes! Life is all about breaking the rules and ignoring the moralistic judgments passed by boring people. It's about finding the crazy element that's worth sticking to. What good does saneness do anyways? Being rebellious and stamping down these boundaries has its own charm. If we start living our lives to satisfy others, we'd simply lose ourselves. Trying to please others is an endless task and it can go on forever without getting accomplished. But if you live your life once and right, you'd never have to look back at all those years and sigh regretfully for not trying new things and fearing too much. So, look beyond "*log kya kahen gey*". Conquer your fears and start living already.

A Static Day at EME

Hareem Fatima, CEME

There was a strange silence in the wind. I could not see many people in the corridors or on the roads, which was in a way peculiar since here, at EME, you always get to see so many people here and there. It was the second week of the semester; high spirits and hopes everywhere. Most people

were either in the classrooms studying or attending some seminar or exhibition. But still, it was way more calm and languorous than any other day. I, myself wasn't feeling good that particular day. I was lazy, wasting time, roaming around. Even the CR was lying down on the bench, head

in his hands.

Earth seemed quite static, like a dead person lying silently in the graveyard. Idle people, idle EME, idle wishes, idle lives and idle us. Why was I here? Why did I want to be here? Was I supposed to be doing something? Nothing seemed eligible to be a part of life. Though it seemed like a regular day and this silence was nothing new (referring to the hour after the GPA was out), this day had something different to it. Oddly enough, one could find solitude in EME College which was strange, very strange indeed.

The idea of silence in EME College gives shudders to those who reside in it and to those who visit it every day. It was just not possible. Everything seemed so useless. “Muslims were suppressed by British, by getting their own country; they showed their valor and power and this happened for the first time in the history of the world.” I could hear the teacher say that. But I concentrated more on what happened for the first time in the history of EME College. As I sat at the back of the class writing this, I could see others yawning and stretching which they had been doing all day long. The five minute break given by the professor felt like a few moments of glory. But only one minute had passed and the glory of it vanished and only the moments were left, few useless moments.

At first I thought that it was only me. But no, I wasn't the only one who felt that way. After further observation, I found out that everyone was thinking the same thing, well most of them. Mumbling, chattering, yawning, sneaking, sometimes laughing, and most of all taunting was the essence of the day. “MTS people are surrounded by pro-

jects this semester, that's why they are so low.” That was the second thought that emerged in my mind. But as I stepped out of the department, I found out that I was wrong. Every other department had the same situation. And now I was really scared. I started sneaking in the class rooms. Everywhere I could see a group of two or three people but still no excitement or fun which is the trademark of EME (other than the “theetas”). Either everybody had turned into a theeta (since the GPA was freshly out) or I was becoming more *waili* day by day.

With such horrifying thought in my mind I started walking all around on the empty roads of EME. At that time I realized that though this silence was strange yet it had blissful ticks in it. Soon enough, most of the classes ended and everybody was out of the classes talking about the busy day they had. And that was the real EME I was missing. Seniors, juniors, and teachers; all were sharing their thoughts about the day, pitying each other for the routine they had and making fun and cracking jokes at the same time. This gave an instant change to the environment. So the day ended with laughter and cheers. But the mystery of a static day at EME remains as such spooky.

Why do we dream and desire for something?

Most of the time, human nature desires for what our brain interprets out of our reach or a step ahead of us. If we can achieve it, then there is nothing special in dreaming about it. It may be money, fame or anything for that matter. Real understanding of this concept lies in the fact that how better we can differentiate in behavior before and after getting it.

The distinction between a desire and a person is just his behavior. How could it be so? Well assume you want to go upstairs. You get your aim only if you just consider yourself worthy of it, and head towards it. Now same is in every aim and desire that we can think of. There are two kinds of people: the ones who try, and the ones who just fear the hurdles and consequences in the path of desire. I don't want to talk about the second ones as they just don't even try. But look at those who try. Herein comes the role of our brain. Our brain

can be referred to as the most brilliant part of our body. Theoretically, it controls our nervous system and blah blah blah. But just consider its behavior in society. Our interaction, our moves, our talk, our tread, our needs and all that stuff it pulls off. Our brain provides the first step to achieve our aims. All the work of brain revolves around a single fact. "The time our brain interprets the things like winner; we actually become winner." This may be a simple quote but complex enough to understand.

I am a Solitary Reaper

Midhat Noor Kiyani, CEME

"Why do you want to stay alone? Life comes once, come and enjoy your life? Why so lonely?" The most common (sometimes irritating) remarks that I receive from my friends and acquaintances. What do you do? What do you think? Whom do you think? Why do you think? What do you get by staying alone, away from others in your own world of seclusion? (which probably for them is a world of fantasy, a fairyland), they usually ask when I stand on the other corner of the room silently in which they are laughing, chatting, mocking and ridiculing with one another.

Walking alone in the empty corridors, sitting on the bench in MTS café, roaming about in the empty class like a wild cloud on the sky, moving up and down on the stairs like a treasure finder and sitting in an empty but dark room are my some common lonesome activities.

But alas! I always fail to tell them what solitude is?

Sometimes you want to stay alone - alone like a rainbow on the vast sky. You hate the presence of others around you, even the quiet air irritates you. You want to be away from the hums of your companions, even your dear ones get on your nerves. Life just starts like a movie in front of your eyes, all the characters as villains, heroes like deceivers and hypocrites, love like hatred and scene play seems to be a sad tale in your movie, the difference you feel is that it has no ending (undoubtedly you expect a disastrous end). It goes on and on like a moving cloud on the blue sky without even knowing where is it going, whenever you move your eyes up to absorb them in your imagination, they never wait for you!

As soon as you step into your own world, you feel calm and peace, your inner quietness pacifies you as it eliminates the noises of the external world; you feel completely lost in the world of your heart where no one rules but your own wishes and wills,

none to direct you and none to distract you. No one is there to tell you what to do and what not. You are the master of your life in your loneliness. Giving you a simple and nominal example: can you ever hear the chirp of pigeon in the presence of loud music? Can you listen to the soft screams of your heart in the deafening world? I always wonder how one can listen to oneself without staying alone in one's own world?

When I'm lonely, I am not alone actually. I am with my thoughts, my thoughts that never make me alone. I wonder why they still think I'm alone. Solitude is just like a silent companion that surely listens to you but may not say anything, best companion indeed to accompany you.

I am a solitary and stereotyped person I admit but I love my solitude more than a companionship. As I can hear the sound of leaves speaking silently, trees having their feed from the roots, little insects talking to each other, butterflies chatting happily

on the flower, whispering of grass and rush of the silent air.

Whenever I sit alone, I think that one might think that I am the most annoying and rash character as I stare at those who laugh lively. Being silent lets me hear the sound of breaths of others, cries of their pains, and the thoughts hidden in the barren desert of their mind.

I remember saying to my friend, "I wish I could have a morning walk in the presence of chirping birds and setting sun but alone..."(The word that offended her).

'Someday you will have someone in your life that may change you', they often say when they fail to change my thoughts and desire of staying alone, as I always fail them and their views. (I suppose) You are hopeless...you are really too hopeless! and the only reaction I give them is a priceless smile, indeed an offending one...!

EME-An Insider's Opinion

Muhammad Fahad Sohail, CEME

College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (CEME, NUST) ; a military institute that embodies dreams, hopes, aspirations, hardships, lessons of life, all the while paving the road to self-recognition, and obviously, arduously hard studies. It won't be fallacious to say that every single student enrolled at EME is nothing short of a topper or the brightest star of his/her constituent College. It is an esteemed institution where the best of the crop is privileged to acquire advanced education in the exhilarating field of Engineering, after competing against over 60,000 students nationwide.

It goes without saying that EME offers us the opportunity to literally stand side by side as equals with people from all over Pakistan. From Karachi in South West to all the way to Skardu in North East, we all are endowed a once-of-a-lifetime opportunity to interact with our brethren from the vast extents of our land.

You see, there are countless aspects of life that are neither good nor evil in essence, rather they are open to fit the subject's perception accordingly. Later on, one's actions reflect one's fundamental nature. None of us is born evil in the truest sense.

It is none other than our own selves who pick out the path upon which we wish to walk, despite whatever lies we cook up to satisfy our own guilty conscience. It is very clearly stated in the Holy Quran that:

“Verily ! Allah will never change the condition of the people until they change it themselves (with state of Goodness)” (Surah Ar-Raad 13:11)

Everyday offers us at least one more beneficial lesson to learn; it is upon us whether we take advantage of it or let it go to waste as the generations of men have previously done so. Life is actually based upon the choices that we make, in spite of all that goes around us. It is our choices that define who and what we truly are, far more than our abilities. EME offers us the first glimpse towards professional life, letting us taste the reality of the world. It is morally binding for every EME scholar to strive for betterment, with every passing day. There is always a choice. Either one can persistently whine at the lack of certain facilities at this stage of life, the joys that one is missing out on, or one can simply grow up realizing that every phase of life is limited and brief. The luxuries and pleasures of yesterday may have been left behind but the golden opportunity at hand did not exist in that wisp of past.

You may not have the comforts presented to you reminiscent of your habitat, but, open your eyes, broaden your mind, university life has a superfluity of lessons to offer you. It requires of you to possess the vision to see it. Renowned Lebanese artist and poet, Kahlil Gibran said that, “the optimist sees the rose and not its thorns; the pessimist stares at the thorns, oblivious to the rose”. It would be unwise to forget yet another reminder from the book of Allah:

“And it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.” (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:216)

It would be madness to disregard hostel life of EME while enunciating its praises. The feeling of oneness, unity, fraternity, the *shughal*, the commotion of a poor soul’s birthday, and the studious atmosphere, is indescribable. My words offer no justice to the extent of brilliance. Let us not forget that the aforementioned characteristics are non-existent to a materialist mind. We are so diverse, yet so alike; we disagree, yet still stand together as one massive force – the reality cannot be constrained to the domain of words carelessly jotted on a piece of paper.

With enough said already upon moral and intellectual grounds, let us shift towards other upbeat aspects of EME. I would start off with the numerous societies, which literally cover almost every constructive and cerebral passion. NVC, ALC, SPAL, and SAS are some good examples, along with various others which are strenuous to mention due to shortage of space. A handful of societies are run with international co-operation, and some via collaboration with other constituent campuses and schools of NUST.

It is a fact that being an EME boarder, you are protected from a lot of hazards, even if it means giving up some strands of freedom, both for male and female students, alike. Though I am fed up of the greasy “diesel pratha” and the unchewable roti of the mess, I am satisfied with where I stand. Honestly, I don’t know if ‘unchewable’ is even a word, but never mind. It is rightly said that if you want to appreciate what you have, just take a brief look at the lesser privileged, instead of longing for

a king's entourage.

We have to realize that "haters are going to hate us," is a bitter fact of life. In any case, it is we who have to love our own lyceum. The stronger the bond we possess, the stronger we are unto the rest. We have to prove it to the world that we are most gifted of our generation with the sharpest of

brains. We have to show that there was a reason we were selected to be scholars at the most prestigious college of the highest ranking university in Pakistan. We are multi-talented outstanding individuals and we have got all what it takes to stand out against the masses. We are who we are Period!

A Survivor is Born

Asfand Shehzad, CEME

Never before have I felt more intimidated by my surroundings than my first week in EME College, and honestly I hope all you freshmen feel the same way (I am an evil person). I didn't really expect university to be a piece of cake but in the name of holy chuck norris the situation sure escalated quickly! As if the burden of studies is not enough we now have to *cough, boom, sneeze*, "interact" too! We freshmen feel like weak little kittens being stared at by starving vultures and please don't even try the cute kitten face. It does not work! Not saying that I tried it or anything... Anyway, listen people learn to take a stand. Stop cowering behind your mates! Face your fears unless its spiders then run for your precious lives! Bazinga!

Guys, the fact of the matter is that this institution

is now your second home. It will help you grow into a man and for that to happen you have to stand tall, deal with your problems and stop relying on others! Go to the cafes, stop avoiding the buses and start enjoying your university life. It's now or never. Stop hesitating and start doing things. Meet people, make friends, take a tape recorder, record the 'wish' and play it in the corridors all day long because traditions, people, are important! And guys in the name of holy Spongebob wear your ID cards. Half of the time I am calling my own degree mates 'Sir'. Anyways, best of luck to you all and respect the senior students.

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily." – Zig Ziglar

My Idea of a Perfect Life

Amna Arshad, CEME

How do you define a perfect life? Completing a 16 years education, getting an awesome job that pays you well, offers you a car and apartment, getting married, having children, raising them well, mar-

rying them and finally playing with your grandchildren. If you dream of this cycle of life, I'm sorry, but I don't classify it as a 'perfect' life, it's just 'L.I.F.E'.

Don't you think it is a monotonous way of living a life that has been given to you just once? Life for me is not that stereotype L.I.F.E. My idea of perfect life is: dream vague, plan your way, make efforts, materialize your dream, live your life to the fullest and then dream again! Put yourself in a test tube over and over again. Experimenting yourself over and over would tell who you actually are and what you actually want in life. Take risks in life! Risk means taking a 50-50 chance. Don't step back because of the 50% chance of failure; instead take a step forward to your destiny. Eventually success will embrace you. And even if you don't achieve what you aim for you have a valuable treasure in your hands: experience and 1000 new achievements so what if there's one failure? Your failure is actually a beginning for a better tomorrow. Devise a new path to reach your destiny. All you need to do is put in more effort this time. Take yourself out of this bound of years. You are a free man and have every right to do whatever you like to do with your life. Don't wait for the thoughts to go away, let your dreams meet reality. If you want to do masters after 50, go ahead.

After spending 3-4 years in corporate sector you feel like it's not the place for you; you would have a better career as a teacher, don't give a second thought, and follow what your heart suggests. You want to go cycling at 40? Listen! It isn't weird at all. If you think, you can make it then yes, you can, you should and you will definitely make it happen.

If you want to live your idea of perfect life, love yourself and have faith in yourself. The moment you lose the faith in yourself and despair, you are out of the game: the game against the stereotype society. Don't give an ear to what people say. Their weapon is 'criticism' and yours is your belief in your dreams. Losing hope means laying arms against your opponent. You don't have to lose it at any cost. Losing it means the death of every person who wants to live life in his own style. And if you win it, it will benefit many. Make your life the way you want your life to look like. Be the first one to take this bold step Remember! The essence of life is not adding years to life but life to years.

Success

I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse.

–**Florence Nightingale**

Self Respect

Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.

–**Helen Keller**

Better World

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

–**Anne Frank**

Happiness

Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.

–**Dalai Lama**

Islamiat to Economics

Ehtisham Tanvir, EME

It will be a bit difficult to swallow when I say that the title contains my complete engineering study life here at EME College. I still remember the fall-in walk on a bright sunny Monday for the assembly under the supervision of our JNSs whom at that time we used to hate a lot. We started from Liaquat hostel in what was “proper threes” arrangement and took the turns and finally found ourselves walking on the circular road - passing by the battalion office where one of the company commanders (Major Salman) was standing outside his office upright like a soldier addressing some administrative issue perhaps. We walked ahead with the tapping sound of our feet, dressed like new school going children in bright white shirts and grey trousers. The entire group of hostel residents had shaved properly with short hair and black shiny Oxford shoes. Finally, we joined our day scholar mates in front of the electrical department. We had no idea what was coming until one of the boys came out and started recitation of the verses from the Holy Quran which was followed by the attendance. After that we were directed to our departments where we had to follow our time table. Four different lines left for their respective departments and I was the part of electrical stream flowing like tides of sea though with some threats and fears as most of us find ourselves completely alien to the place. After crossing some serious and huge barriers of seniors I was able to figure out my destiny. It was Islamiat class in CRE 11. I straight away went upstairs and started looking for the combination “CRE 11” and succeeded. I

entered the room which had about 40 students and there was nothing more than slight acquaintance and that also was due to past one week spent in hostel. The time was stagnant like a river in no mood whatsoever of flowing forward. The moment came where a man entered the class. He was a normal height person dressed up in light skin color shalwar qameez with a round cap properly placed on head and a waist coat in contrast. The beard was heavy white with a few patches of black on the sides. He seemed like a person from northern or north western part of the country. Very swiftly, he went to the dais and introduced himself to us as our Islamiat teacher. So my engineering had started officially with Islamic studies

This followed rigorous, vivacious and sometimes vicious four years of engineering. There was fun, laughter, cries, and fears of failure, hopes for success, social pressures, domestic expectations, jolly weekends and hectic week days. All this was assisted by loads of quizzes, assignments, midterms, sessional and the biggest of all - the finals. I won't be able to move forward without mentioning of the teachers. Becoming an engineer, I have experienced a more diverse range of teachers than ever before. Judging a teacher can never be the job of a student but student should be given the right to carry his opinion. I did the same thing. Some were really very strict to the extent that I hated going to class. On the contrary a few were able to create interest very well. There were a few whom I am still unable to understand and I am sure most of

my fellows would second me on this. Overall it was a congenial package and it is a crystal clear fact that everything cannot be perfect every time.

When I look back down the memory lane there is a series of events that aligned themselves one after the other. Each one being better than the other I, however, can't express them all since some things are large enough and beyond the domain of words

to cater. However one thing I can say with entire comfort that time has passed like a fast flowing wind. It all seems like yesterday but the reality is I am heading for my last engineering class - economics. This is incredible but then there are some things in life that a meager and helpless creature as a human being cannot change. Life is beautiful. I don't feel sad that this won't be any more rather I am glad that I got to be a part of it.

Autobiography of a Pen

Muhammad Fahad Sohail, CEME

This morning Mr. Simons picked me up from his table and put me in his front pocket. I was suddenly awakened a few moments later when he clicked my head to write down a cheque and then without tucking me back in, he walked towards his garage. I swear the ride was bumpy but now I am sort of used to it because it's a routine thing for me. Anyways, I safely landed on his office table but the rest was not to last forever. A clerk came in and handed Mr. Simons a stack of files to be signed. That's when I realized my day has begun. That went on for quite a long time, and then my master went to the men's room. When he bent down to rinse his face, I dropped out of his pocket and rolling on the floor went into one of the toilet compartments. Mr. Simons was stimulated by the very sound of my hitting the floor and he chased

me into the toilet compartment. He touched me hesitatingly and washed me with soap. Wrapped in the tissue towels, I was amazed and happy to have had a bubble bath for the first time in my life. On his return, he stopped at the counter to sign out for lunch break and guess what, he left me there with a fat old woman at the desk wearing purple rimmed glasses. She looked at me and finding me unable to resist, she kept me inside her drawer. I was scared because it was so dark in there and all the other beings in there stared at me in a harassing manner. The pointer walked towards me and asked if I were new there. Just when I was about to be picked upon by a bunch of markers and pencils, the drawer slid open and Mr. Simons took me out of there and put me back in his pocket.

My First Week as an CEME

Muhammad Fahad Sohail, CEME

It was yet another chilly autumn morning in Rawalpindi, a humble town at the outskirts of the Federal capital Islamabad. In a typical household of a

desi suburban area, I woke up from my slumber at 5:00 am to begin the escapade of university life. I hosted a multitude of emotions throughout the

journey to the campus, varying from excitement of attending the most prestigious Engineering College of the country to cursing my fate to destine myself to a place where the fairer sex was as rare as dragon eggs — ‘Girls in EME’ is a factually incorrect statement.

For me, life changed drastically as the orientation progressed. I got acquainted with my new academe along with its plethora of rules. I realized four years on, I might not even recognize my present self. At EME, eating with a fork was a novel experience. In the past, it meant that we are having noodles. Now after just one week of it, I am sure I can eat anything as long as I have a fork in my hand.

It is overwhelming to adjust in a completely new environment with entirely different set of rules. I had spent most of my life abroad and was hosting the opinion that I would be far behind from the rest, but I was wrong. The entire degree 35 was in the same boat with absolutely no idea of what lay ahead.

The first night was the hardest. The walk down the hostel corridors felt like that of walking into a prison, with seniors having the likeness of dirty inmates ready to pounce upon innocent prey. The initial exaggerated feeling was that of a caged bird, as if all my freedom had been snatched right out of my hands. I myself had chosen EME College as my first preference, and even with all of

the mental preparation, the true gravity of my decision struck me that very night. Whatever resentment or preposterous notions I had cooked up in the dark of the night faded away with the break of dawn.

Interacting with the seniors – the phrase that takes away the beauty sleep of the majority was an educating experience. I realized that everything that I was going through is a lesson to be utilized later in life. The sophomores as scary as they might look are actually quite pleasant to be around. Here, we are going to learn all that we need to survive in this place called world. Even though I am still a nascent emenant, I can say with surety that EME has already taught me a lot about life.

My immediate family is far away from me, but the bonds I now possess with EMENENTS are indescribable. We are like a giant family with all of our differences and diverse background, but at the same time we stand united as one matchless force. The unison among DE 35 is stronger than any of us have felt with our non-EMENENT friends, especially among the boarders. The way we look after one another, the respect that we have for our SNS, JNS and seniors, how our seniors guide and protect us, the way all of the EMENENT NUSTIANS take care of each other is an outstanding example of an educated, civilized and intellectual society. Paulo Coelho rightly said, “You never know what you were missing until it arrives.”

Life of an Eminent Girl

Alina Ali Malik, CEME

The word “life” sounds something tough. Life of an *Eminent* is tough and when it comes to the life of an *Eminent* girl that’s one of the toughest

things on the planet earth. I am one of those poor girls bearing this tough life but nowadays I am contented and happy because I’m far away from

the enchantments of EME. My second semester break is almost at the verge of extinction and here I am after completely wasting all my holidays. The very idea that perhaps a few of my mates have studied (even a single word) or are engaged in some healthy dexterous activity make my heart sink, my veins shrink, and make me as dejected as one can become while watching “A Walk to Remember “or” *Ashiqui 2*”. Then my spirits rose and I became passionate to do something constructive, I took a pen and paper and here I am with this script.

So I was talking about EME. I often say EME must have a big “only for boys” displayed outside the main gate because EME is the perfect example of a typical male dominated society. You can see this male domination in every area of life, for instance, count the number of female authors on the the EME blog page which is displayed in front of you right now (right side); they are very few I guess almost three or four which makes the picture quite clear, but this is much justified according to the male population of EME. According to my personal estimation the average ratio of girls: boys is 1:8 so this overwhelming majority definitely gives boys the authority.

The first tiny but much intense problem that I faced here being a girl was choosing my friends because of the little girl population in my class. I didn't have that great diversity of girls as I had in college or school life. Options shrunk along with the population. But trust me later this weakness proves to be the greatest strength of your friendship and you start loving this drawback, because sharing every little thing makes your friendship strong and reliable.

At the very initial stages you might feel weird at EME with so many boys around, and EME portrays the picture of ICU or more appropriately IOU (intense observation unit). Except the girls common room (which in case of Electrical Engineering Department is very suffocating) there is no place where you can be independently crazy. But very soon this weirdness disappears like fog and you learn to give everyone a big damn(which in our language we call it a kalabagh dam), and you start being original (or even much more spoiled than original version of yours) all around so you can easily witness *Eminent* girls singing, behaving silly, lolling and even whistling around the campus.

EME is totally another world, much different from other engineering universities, you may call it PLANET EME full of its alien thetas, with its odd traditions where red *sash walley staffa uncle* is your super villain, theta class is your worst enemy, and basant celebrating department is your subject of jealousy. Life here is full of tensions plus depressions, I often hear myself saying “the universe hates me”, “I am the dumbest student of my class” “I am definitely gona flunk in this course”, “Boys are much better in programming ” bla bla bla GPA, grades, projects, quizzes and exams make you go crazy and you mess almost everything. But in the midst of trying to meet your toughest goals you really start figuring out things, learn to laugh at oddest situations and finally start discovering yourself.

Looking at funnier side you will observe that as time passes, days end into weeks, weeks into months, and months finally into semester you are gradually evolved into weird specie. Liter-

ally your mind starts compiling things with odd and funnier perceptions, your bluntness enhances, etiquettes and sophistication disappear; you start doing a good deal of gossip; you get into a facebook addiction or more appropriately you become pretty good at stalking, a perfect commentator and at the end of a day your language spoils, spoiled to such an extent that it may even shock your biologically related siblings.

Being an *Eminent* girl made me realize the dangers of shyness along with the perils of confidence. Obviously, shyness results in problems but even confidence or bluntness brings you regrets. As I daily make a new day resolution that “I would act normal and decent and speak much less today” but it disappears like fog as soon as I land on PLANET EME. Now, this reminded of black and white, hospital like building of EME. It’s infinitely colorless and dull like its dwellers. Someone with bright fluorescent colors is literally worth staring at EME. Now lets talk about the residents of this planet; they are complex or more appropriately EMSO. “EMSO (*Eminent*+*despo*=EMSO) is an interesting multi dimensional word invented by my friend covering all the aspects of *eminent*s, for instance EMSO for food, EMSO for grade, EMSO for marks, GPA, PR and you may fit it where ever you want.

Now an awesome perspective of *Eminent* girls is the sense of responsibility they develop when they become seniors. Without any exaggeration, they are extremely helpful, even more than your own sisters. No matter how late at night it is they will still help you in their programming code, no matter how silly your query/worry is they will satisfy you with their logics, no matter how sad

you are they can still make you laugh with their mischievous stories, no matter how hopeless and tense you are they can still motivate you with their experiences and inspirational words. All you have to say is that “*ma’am mujhe kuch nai ata*”. I vividly remember the day I was worried after losing my fourth spectacles at EME and I related my heart sinking story to a senior. In return she told me about the frequency with which she loses her lunch boxes, her dejected story made me forget all my worries and we had great deal of cheerful laughter. I must say the links of sisterhood chain at EME are very strong and the spirit worth applauding.

Turning back the pages of life at EME, and observing my first year lessons I will say I don’t remember a single formula of AP yet I clearly remember the condition of my class after the first AP sessional. I don’t remember a single word taught by our English teacher still I remember each and every silly joke cracked in her class and our paper chat. I don’t remember a single trick of EC yet I remember our songs and combined laughter during group study. I don’t remember a single question of mechanics still I remember the way we went bananas on hearing about the power bunk. I don’t remember ODE’z yet I remember our combined ragging sessions. I don’t remember my programming grades yet I remember the tears we cried for it together. I don’t remember calculus yet I remember the perfect mimicry my friends did of calculus teacher. Ah! Nostalgic.

In a nutshell, I may not have an outstanding GPA, but I have the best friends of the universe. I may not be a good programmer but I am a pretty good picture editor and I have the coolest collection of

pictures. I may not be a perfect electrical theta but I have a motivating bunch of seniors. I may not be the best engineer still I have a mighty treasure of memories. I may not be a perfect lass still I am proud to be an *Eminent* scholar.

At the end of the day the life at EME is miser-

able but I remember a saying of God knows whom “Things which are hard to bear are good to remember!”

No doubt life was tough but the memories aren't that rough.

Elusive Dreams

Aslam Bazmi

“Bilal, if you could lend me your English vocabulary, I shall shatter the notions of these smart ‘kids’ from public schools—the hollow snobs of GC Lahore. They have no depth, no insight and, believe me, no literary flair, befitting the intellectual traditions of this premier seat of learning—the alma mater of Iqbal, Patras Bokhari and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. The only thing you may give them credit for—if you choose to be generous—is their chirpiness to speak English fluently with an affected style. The days of their supremacy are numbered once and for all, Luqman uttered these words in the manner of a fortune-teller, over a cup of hot coffee in the New Hostel TV lounge. “Let me confess, Luqman, your English is far superior to mine. Maybe, I have a little larger stock of words, but my expressions are woefully frail and impotent. I envy your intellectual depth”, Bilal rather over-scratched Luqman’s itchy back. On hearing and believing innocently, Bilal’s backhanded praise, Luqman groped for a cigarette, lighted it majestically and after a few pensive puffs, looked appreciatively into Bilal’s eyes. “I am proud of you pal and I am happy that you have the courage to acknowledge others’ greatness.

This, indeed, strengthens my faith in your friendship”, Luqman sounded inebriated. In mid-1970s, Luqman and Bilal (nicknamed Luccu and Billu) were new entrants to GC to do their Master’s in English literature. Although intellectually and socially poles apart, they were very close friends. The clever Billu found in Luccu a simple, gullible and self-conceited aspiring youth from a remote village of Tala Gang—an all-gratis ready source of fun and entertainment. Mostly bespectacled and always attired in a queer combination of kurta and trousers with slippers usable both for restroom and formal occasions, Luccu focused more on learning rather than frittering away his wallet on ‘cheap exhibitionism’. He would madly visit all great libraries, especially The British Council, American Centre, and the Public Library Punjab. One would be scared to see him, carry in his both hands, intimidating volumes of literary criticism and the history of English literature. He would pore over them even on stairs and under the street lights. It was widely rumoured that he had burnt all his boats to top the University in MA English examination. Billu was the main culprit behind building this image before all and sundry.

“Finally, a genius from Tala Gang would tip the scales with the highest marks ever achievable”, he uttered these words now and then even in Luqman’s presence.

Luccu’s membership of the Punjab Library was due to expire shortly, so he acted promptly by submitting a 3-page application to the librarian for its renewal. The text glimpsed Chaucerian English with glaring spelling errors and faulty syntax at quite a few places. When it came back marked in red ink, Luccu barely escaped fainting and falling down there and then. In such moments of grief, Billu was the sole prop he could lean against and cry like a baby. He desperately looked for Billu in vain, searching each nook and corner—even inquiring from all passers-by. Finally, at the unearthly hour of 2am, finding the lights of Billu’s room on, he kicked open the door, hysterically screaming, “Where the hell you ruffian from Gujrat had been hiding?” Throwing the red-marked application into Billu’s face and gathering himself in the study chair with the eyes cupped in both hands, Luccu cursed himself enormously. “Devil, do you think with such hopeless English I can survive in MA English. I should better go home and till my father’s land,” a grief-stricken Luccu bitterly cried to Billu. Bilal had never seen him in such a distraught shape. “Don’t cry my soul!” the glib-tongued Billu tried to console Luccu. Then quickly strategizing to comfort the death-pale Luccu, he delivered a short sermon in such eloquent words: “Perfect English is nothing but patently a sign of mediocrity. Genius soars high unhindered, and is not restricted to linguistic refinement. Haven’t many a literary critic found faults with Shakespeare’s and Milton’s English.

Some pseudo-critics even don’t approve of Iqbal’s diction. Small minds do nothing but carp at great people’s monumental works.” Spilling these flattering beans, Billu’s magic wand changed the whole melodrama from an ugly scene to a farcical theatre of fun. Luccu now put up a manly face with a newfound confidence and resilience. Wiping his moist eyes clean with Billu’s untidy towel, he hugged Bilal with grateful moans. “Yes, small minds are the great enemies of intellect. I have acted foolishly by taking to heart the librarian’s whimsical red scribbles on my application. Bilal, let’s forget about this episode. Do you have a cigarette? Give me one, please, to puff away the librarian’s nasty joke”, Luccu chirped brightly. Bilal picked a stub from the ashtray to comply with his craving, and with that Luccu strode away happily singing his favourite Punjabi song—*sanun nehr waley pul tey bula key* (After inviting me to the canal bridge...). One day, Bilal asked Luccu if he ever had a love affair with someone. Painfully innocent in such matters, Luccu said, “I love my mother above everything else.” “No, damn fool, I mean romantic love”, fumed Billu. “Yes, I have been in deep love with the German shepherd we have at home in our village”, Luccu tried to pick the thread. It took Billu an eternity to explain to Luccu the meaning of romantic love, which he advocated, was an essential attribute of all geniuses. Luccu confessed he had set his mind on one of the girls in the class but he was not sure if the lady knew about that or not. Billu burst into a loud guffaw. “In love, dear Luccu, it is the heart that commands; leave the poor mind to take care of other things,” he mentored. “Okay, my son (Billu) you decide my love for me. I am not fussy about

such things. To me, whosoever you pick shall be acceptable,” Luccu naively suggested. “What about that elderly woman with a hunchback. Do you know, of all the animals, God has gifted a hunchback only to camels? It is the storehouse of power and energy. In humans, hunchback symbolizes intellectual vitality”, Billu philosophized. “Yes, I know all that; you don’t have to teach me such basics”, Luccu said snobbishly. “By the way, Billu, how did you divine my choice of romantic love? The old girl is my perfect ideal. She is sober and intellectually ‘gorgeous’ like me”, Luccu remarked exuberantly. The next morning, Luccu’s class was to leave for Mangla dam on a picnic. It was a mixed group of men and women. Luccu chose to sit in the boat that carried the Cleopatra of his dream. Billu took some random snapshots of some friends, besides capturing the picturesque beauty of the lake. During their night session, Luccu and Billu talked a great deal about the picnic. Billu mischievously romanticized Luccu by telling that the lady was fascinated by his glamour and charms. “Not only did she ogle at you several times while you were in a deep philosophical mood but also cleverly photographed you in your different magnificent poses.” Unable to suppress his excitement, Luccu wrote down, that night, in his diary, in red ink—symbolizing the crimson blood of his heart “A dawn of intellectual romance.” The love pangs kept him awake the whole night. He intuitively felt the time had come to declare his love to his Mona Lisa. Only moments before his going to make an overture of his love to the hunchbacked woman, Billu shattered his dream by telling that the entire episode was nothing but a friendly joke. Luccu barely survived

this huge shock. It took Billu several days to wean Luccu from his imaginary one-sided love affair. The result of Master’s in English was just around the corner. Luccu had great hopes to set a new record in the history of the Punjab University. On the D-day, the poor soul failed as many as four subjects while Bilal passed with respectable marks. Billu cleverly reasoned that all great figures in history were initially great failures in their lives. He quoted several examples, including that of the US President Abraham Lincoln. His rhetoric changed the whole nightmarish episode into an epic triumph, and people were amazed to see Billu celebrating his unprecedented failure, offering complimentary coffee and cigarettes to all and sundry (as if he had won the Nobel Prize for literature!). During our air travel together, Bilal, now a retired civil servant, told me that Luccu could not make it to civil service, became a lecturer and died of some terminal illness a few years ago. He said Luccu was a wonderful person who always wore his heart on his sleeve. In my later vicarious meetings with Luccu, I felt he was too gentle a soul to live long on this harsh planet!

Everything has beauty, but not everyone can see.

—Confucius

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.

—Dalai Lama

A Day that Started Out Bad but Ended Good

Tansheet Mazhar Qureshi

“It’s dark. It’s gloomy.”

It’s the depth of these words that takes you on an everlasting journey, a journey filled with horrors of tomorrow, melancholy of the past and misery of today.

How can there be no opposites in life, when the world revolves around the principle of succession. Just as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, death is an ultimate sacrifice for life, healing comes after disease and punishment comes after sin – why then my happiness is lost where it is hard to find.

It was a usual day with stark blows of winter scaling off every bit of life I had. It had been three months straight, I was bald and pale and it took me an effort to move around the corridors of the facility I was admitted into. I was more of a dead corpse than a living legend. Having won ten international gold medals, I was regarded as the swimming whale of the northern islands. My strong built, lean arms and trimmed legs were a wonder work from God, and a dream of every youth. I had enjoyed the limelight wherever I could – from national to worldwide tenures, my feet never ached for even a second. However now, I was restricted mainly to a wheelchair, sometimes walked around with crutches. I could not bear to look myself in the mirror because all it reflected was disability and disappointment.

How does your whole life collapse with just a sin-

gle word? Mine did, and the word that did the trick was ‘Cancer’. It wasn’t just a single war my body was fighting, but two. Along with the breast cancer I was diagnosed with, it had also metastasized into my sternum – a highly uncommon condition. I had lost over twenty pounds, I was lethargic and anaemic. My coach gave me time off and sent me off for a medical exam, but it was too late. I was already dying.

Three months in a medical facility, I had seen people die every other day. I did not wish to spend the few last minutes of my life in a place where the death angel wanders across the walls at night choosing who should live and who should die. I wanted to be home, with my daughter. I wanted to hug her so tight that it could potentially squeeze the life out of me. I wanted to breathe in the joy of my new house, the Johnson’s shampoo that my daughter wore, the smell of cologne in my wash-room, the air-wick in my closet and freshly baked toffee apple cookies from the kitchen. I was so tired of being here. Chemotherapy and Radiation tired me. I wasn’t even healing. I just wanted to go back home, be with my family.

I got married three years back; it was a grand wedding. I met a guy on my tour to South Africa. He was a shooting guard for the Boston Celtics. The guy really mesmerized me; he was more than 6 ft. tall, his smooth skin was the color of Arabian sands, gorgeous white teeth, deep blue eyes and a complete balance of character. It just happened;

we fell in love and were married a few weeks later. Now that I recall, my diagnosis came out as a tsunami and swiped all the happiness clear from our lives; our daughter was just seven months old and we had recently begun a new happy life.

It was all gone, just gone.

So, as I pondered over how my life should've been and how I had planned things for my baby if I were not sick, I heard footsteps in the neck of the hallway. I saw my Oncologist limping into my haven, accompanied by my husband. My muscles tensed up, surely it's something bad or else the doctor would have come alone. He was wearing navy blue scrubs, a warm polyester white coat, weird shoes that were torn on the edges, a steth hanging down his neck. He came closer and helped me up on the hospital bed. I swear the smell of phenyl burnt down the cells in my brain; it was disgusting. Behind him stood my husband, as high as the sky, there was a sparkle in his eyes

– he looked sad.

May be there is something wrong after-all, but what?

I gazed around the room, finally I gasped. This was the moment. I've never been so happy in my life, not the ten times I won the Olympics gold medalist, not the day I got married or the day I became a mother but today held such delight that I could hardly think of anything else. My cancer was incurable, that was a relief. No more radiation therapies, no more chemo. Finally, I could go back home, be with my family. This joy was most definitely the most awaited of all.

As I got up from the wheelchair that escorted me to the parking lot, I could feel the sun burning through my flesh, the cool air of winter waving at me with delight. I knew that no matter what little time I've been left with, I'll make good use of it with the people I love. And then we drove off, far from here, to the place that's my Heaven.

How I Felt Closest to God in Kafiristan

Ghassan Khan, S³H

This summer's adventure took me to the mystical valley of Kalash. The term Kafiristan was coined by an Iranian explorer in the 18th century. Observing clear differences between local Muslims and the Kalashis, he conveniently called them Kafir. Perhaps Asia's best kept secret, this place is considered bliss for any tourist from Pakistan or abroad. Jagged mountains, marvelous landscapes and hospitable people make it a place worth visiting. To make things more interesting, the valley hosts a unique way of life. The people that inhabit

this place, the Kalashis are in fact descendents of one of numerous Greek tribes that followed Alexander the Great on his world campaign. These people were land locked in the mountains of Chitral when Alexander was defeated in India. Trapped and surrounded by enemies, these clans decided to surrender and settle down permanently. Locking themselves away from the rest of the world, these people practiced the ways of their Greek forefathers while the world progressed. Countries were born, Empires went to oblivion,

but these people completely detached themselves from global politics. It was not until the summer of 1962 that the Kalashi people first stepped into the world after their long exile (This was the year when the first road was built and the area was officially declared as a tourist destination by the Pakistan Government). Their archaic culture, their old ways and their eye-catching headdresses grabbed immediate attention of the entire world. Explorers, journalists and scientists raced for this amazing new civilization that emerged instantaneously on the world map.

I first took notice of these amazing people from my father, who also went to Kalash in the first tourist season. He told me all sorts of atypical things about their culture, how they celebrate life (even on funerals of loved ones), how their women consider wearing their head gear compulsory at all times how they isolate their women in the Bashilini during their moon cycle. But the most peculiar thing that struck me as a political science student was the matriarchal social system of their society (one of three in the entire world). Every village's oldest woman plays the role of the clan leader. She is a social and spiritual leader for the entire village. She resolves disputes, oversees marriages, instructs construction of basic infrastructure, supervises crop harvest and manages diplomatic relations with other villages. Besides that, women in general enjoy clear privileges over men. They choose the man whom they want to wed. They are as capable as any man to make family decisions. Their vote counts equal to any man in the village. That means that women call the shots around here. Yes, this is indeed any man's nightmare. What is a man's worth if he is a mere slave to his wife? Right?

Wrong!

For hundreds of years, these people practiced these matriarchal principles and managed to keep a peaceful society. Their determined stance against violence might be cause of the simple fact that women lead their societies. Think about it, men are generally more aggressive than women. They tend to make hasty decisions. Their rage blinds them from reason. Countless wars were fought by men for hollow causes like honor, vengeance, ownership and country. But the greatest cause of mankind's anguish was religion.

Another reason for loving these people is the aspect of liberalism in their faith. Their religion doesn't judge anybody. The definition of religion for the Kalashi people is very different from most modern day beliefs. They worship multiple Gods, each assigned to a particular element of nature. But the actual role of religion in their life is very limited. Their religion doesn't restrict them, but instead sets them free. Their belief is simple, that after death they'll go to a place more beautiful than this world. They consider this world impure and imperfect. Death frees them from the torment of the material world. That is why they celebrate death, instead of mourning over it. Spirituality is of core importance in their faith. This makes me think. Don't all beliefs preach the same idea? Inner peace?

Seeking answers, I decided to escape into the polluted concrete jungles of Pakistan filled with hypocrites to witness a moment of clarity. In the company of beautiful mountains, blossoming flowers, lush green grass, close friends and warm-hearted people, I understood life at its most basic level. This is how I felt closest to God in a land of infidels, Kafirstan.

Turning Point

Fariha Ali, S³H

She closed her eyes, took a deep breath and exhaled. She could feel all eyes on her, staring, waiting. She could hear whispers of anticipation and excitement. What for though? She wondered. She wasn't that good and what she did wasn't that special either. Anyone could do it. Yet, all these people were for her. They gathered and waited only for her. And she knew that they would wait even longer just to see her dance.

Knowing this gave her a sense of power; power over these spectators, power that she was able to wield over them through her prowess in dancing. She felt exhilarated to have such control. It was like the whole world was revolving around her, she was the only focus, and she was the only thing worth paying attention to.

When she heard the music start, she opened her eyes, as now was the time for her to start dancing, the moment everyone had been waiting for. She lifted up her arms and took her pose. As the notes of the music changed, she made a light, delicate move with her hands and arms. As the tempo picked up, she flowed into the first step of her dance. She kept to one place at first and as the music built up; she leapt into a pirouette and started dancing around the whole dance floor.

As she twirled from one corner to the next, she swept her eyes over the dance room and took in her surroundings. It was a vast, round room with a circular dance floor placed right in the center. Her audience was standing on all sides of the dance floor, encircling her in the middle. She was the epicenter and everyone couldn't help but gravitate

towards her.

The room looked beautiful. It was decorated all in white. White satin flowed from the centre to the walls to form a canopy at the top of the room; the walls were adorned with white fairy lights; garlands of white roses were everywhere, even atop the tables covered in white net. The room was so brilliantly glowing and radiant; it was the home of an angel. And of course, it was all decorated to match her dress, her marvelous white flowing chiffon dress ornate with net flowers and lace.

The tune of the music changed again and she began a new step, slowly and gracefully smoothing into it. This one was faster, more energetic. As she moved, she channeled her power into her dance, the power that she had felt before. She let her power, that she got from her control, plow into her dance. She knew these people wanted her, but they couldn't have her, she was unreachable and untouchable. She was like a forbidden treasure. It was all part of her show, to appear aloof. She never made eye contact with the audience and stared off into the far corners of the room. And as she was staring, she saw them standing there.

Winning

Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is.

—Vince Lombardi

Soft Skeletons

Tayyba Iftikhar, S³H

Amma swore that there was a Djinn lurking somewhere in the house.

This news held terrible excitement for the children of the house. They set forth to hunt down the Djinn, peeking behind doors and whispering secrets to each other under the gnarled oak tree in the courtyard. The declaration seemed absurd but Amma was most persistent. "I'm telling you, I've seen some strange things." She scowled and pointed at our pretty split level house. "I know you don't believe me -" She shot a sharp look at my twin brothers who were smirking. "- Maybe if you two stopped being *leechar* with your laptops, you'd notice something!"

Their smirks disappeared. I took a hasty gulp of my tea to hide my grin. The afternoon sunlight danced over the shorn hedges and newly mowed grass, and highlighted the silver in my Dadi's hair. I breathed deeply in the scent of jasmine and mistrust. Dadi just sighed in an affected manner, and turned her attention to the plate of biscuits placed on the table. When no one else responded - Baba refused to make eye contact - she bristled with rage, stood up suddenly and was about to leave when she caught sight of Saaria - the maid- sitting on the grass a couple of feet away. She was ripping the petals off from a large, pronounced rose and flinging them around her, perfectly content at being ignored.

"Saaria!" Amma shouted. "*Kaam ker ja kay!*"

"I woke up with a start. Sweat clung to every inch of my skin and my heart was thumping, as if I've been running. My hands fumbled in the dark for the switch on the wall as I tried to remember what

caused me to wake up. My dream floated back to me in bits and pieces, but it was like viewing a torn map: I couldn't make my way around it.

I found the switch and pressed it. Nothing happened. Cursing, I swung my legs off the bed and carefully padded over to the door. Running the tip of my tongue over my dry lips, I made my way to the kitchen. The hallway was lit by a single fluorescent tube, which flickered intermittently. I walked faster, trying not to scratch the panicked itch on the back of my neck - the itch that told me that I was being watched. "As I rounded the corner, something almost collided with me. I let out a yelp, and stumbled back, hand clutching my shirt. "What are you doing here?" My Chaachi emerged from the shadows. Her face drawn into a frown, cheekbones jutting out from the mask of skin, her eyes were red like she had been crying.

"W-water." I stuttered, and offered her a weak smile.

She threw me a look of disgust and suspicion (the usual), and without another word, stalked off. I stared at her. If words were cannonballs, I'd like to throw some at her - social niceties and etiquettes made my tongue curl, and the thoughts that I've collected over the years to be written on scraps of paper and burned. So here I was, compassionate to the feelings of others but not to my own.

The kitchen light was still on, my brows furrowed; I pushed the door wide open.

Saaria stared at me fearfully. Color pencils scattered about her, a drawing book haphazardly strewn across the floor - I suspected that had she tried to hide it in the gap under the stove - along

with some pencil shavings in her lap. Her kajal lined eyes were so wide, I feared that an eyeball might pop out and roll towards me.

“I wasn’t doing anything!” She said.

“It’s late,” was all I said as I picked up the drawing book, and glanced at it. The page had the sketch of an elaborate landscape. She was only half way through coloring it. The river was a murky shade of indigo. It was still a bit unbelievable though - as I flipped back to the front cover of a smiling teddy bear - this landscape was very advanced to be included in a book for 7 year olds.

“I’ve been at it for weeks,” Saaria’s soft whisper made me look up. There was a faint layer of sweat on her forehead and her eyes blazed a fiery light, like a dying star. “Slowly, desperately, inching my way forward.” She paused.

“Yet I stay in the same place.”

I laughed as I watched Baba try to wrestle my cousin into a boat. It was a Sunday, and we had

decided to visit a local fair by the lakeside. He was wailing, screaming that the boat would sink and he would die. Even with Baba’s promises and Dadi’s hugs, he refused and at last, his mother led him away to buy him sweets and calm him down.

I wandered over to the lake, eating spicy pakora, watching the water ripple, curve and curl around my ankles, and that’s when I saw something. Squatting, I peered into the water’s edge and extended a hand to grab the brown tendrils that had appeared out of nowhere. I stiffened when something solid grazed my fingertips.

The water rolled the thing near my foot. I felt fear claw its way up my throat and I threw myself back in horror. A head was bobbing gently against the waves, its face turned in my direction, a serene smile painted on the lips, jagged scars running across the neck.

Confused and dazed, I realized that the face that stared at me was my own.

My Haven

Maarej Khan, ASAB

The door burst open and I saw myself dashing inside the bathroom, clutching my hand from which scarlet blood was oozing, splattering like red rubies against the white Italian floor tiles. She had done it yet again. My aunt’s relentless nagging compelled me to throw a tantrum and cut my finger while peeling vegetables. When David and I became orphans, Aunt Margaret and Uncle Alfred were appointed as our guardians. This, I considered the most unfortunate occurrence of my life. In seething virulence, I smashed all the cosmetics and contents of the bathroom shelf, scattering

them on the floor. Then I looked at the ceiling, threw my hands up in exasperation and cried,

“Why me, God?! Why me?! ”

I then looked at my towel that had sponged my tears and muffled my shrieks and screeches when Uncle Alfred had manhandled me after a heated argument. I remember the argument. I had accused him of prodigally wasting my father’s money on his luxuries. My father had saved that money for David’s college education. Beside the towel rested an empty basket. Whenever I had a strong urge to hurt anyone, I always vented my

feelings by aiming countless kicks at the basket. I then glanced at the sink. How can I forget the day Aunt Margaret was incessantly blabbing about my parents? My hands were clutching at either side of this very sink, my body shaking with a burning fury, my white blond head bowed. Tears were streaming down my pale face into the shiny basin. Whenever I was fed up of aunt's bickering, or overwhelmed by my melancholy and pathetic circumstances, my bathroom was my haven. It was in here, in this secluded room, where I spent the worst moments of my life. Here, I would mull over my thoughts, pacing up and down the bathroom, hyperventilating to stabilize my shallow breathing. I would smell the aroma of my soap, herbal shampoo and the sweet fragrance of flowers from garden outside. I would then feel the tension diffusing out of me. Many a time, I became so tense that the temple on my forehead would start pulsating and I would submerge my head in the water-filled tub to soothe my nerves. As water drops would drip from my hair, my mind would feel lighter.

Sometimes when I am disenchanted from life; sometimes when sleep seems miles away at night, I would seek refuge in the bathroom alone, not bothering to switch on the lights. I have always preferred darkness. To me, darkness was peace, concealment, secrecy – something that reflected my personality. Sometimes when I was overwhelmed by my despondencies, I would collapse on the floor like a crest-fallen person; like a defeated warrior who has no hope of survival, let alone victory. Tired, I would then sit on the floor with my back against the wall. I would stare at the patterns of light forming on the floor as the ventilator would rotate -Shadow, light, shadow, light. This

would help me contemplate about the phenomenon of life which is sometimes filled with radiant sunlight and sometimes horrendous shadows. There were times when I could no longer compose myself. I would lose my self-restraint and would not endeavor to hold back tears anymore and they would seep freely through my closed lashes. I never showed my indecent tears to my Aunt because I never wanted her to know that she had weakened me; that her words could hurt me. My bathroom was a place where I could break down and cry-cry till there were no tears left. I would miss my parents desperately. In strained whispers I would call them. Sometimes I would look closely at my tear-stained face in the rectangular mirror above the sink and a feeling of self-pity would encapsulate me. I would search for something in my moist, blue eyes but they only reflected back my misery and suffering. My lower lip would then tremble and my voice would rehearse,

"I don't deserve this... I don't deserve this..." the words I heard myself say innumerable times. Then I would look deep into my own eyes and talk to myself. I would try to think rationally. I would ratiocinate myself with reasons, to get a grip on my life, to hold on, to believe that there is a better tomorrow awaiting me. This way I learnt that only one person could save me and that is- me.

I have never known what was in the mirror. Was that a hidden, unseen part of myself? Was that my conscience? Or was it God conversing with me? I don't know. Whatever was on the other side of my bathroom mirror, it always gave me courage; emboldened me not to lose hope and I would always feel lighter after talking.

"Eight years have passed," I thought reminiscing about those haunting memories, sitting on my

bathroom's commode. Finally, I was leaving this place forever. This was the venue that had hosted so many of my seclusions and solitudes. This was the refuge where I diffused all of my pain and agony. This was the room that echoed with my maniacal laughter, punctuated by sobs and reverberated with my moans and wails. A place, witness to so many of my soliloquies and lamentations.

I heaved a deep sigh, smiled benignly and began to leave. As I shut the bathroom door behind me, I felt as if I had cast a barrier between myself and my wretched past. Only happiness filled the horizon. And quite honestly, I have had enough problems for a lifetime.

A Scary Birthday

Asad Tariq, SEECS

With a stampede of ideas coming in my mind, I came upstairs to my room. Those days I was staying with my uncle at his house. It was a dark night dark and quiet one. I entered my room and shut the door. The loud sound of the door shutting echoed in the silence of the dark night. I came and stood by the window and looked at the sky. No stars anywhere! The sky was full of clouds, just like the one moment before rain. Then I came to my bed, lay down and started thinking.

What was the reason that my uncle and aunt had left me alone in their house at ten o'clock at night? All that I knew was that two people, a man and a woman, with a boy, came there that day a few minutes back. The man whispered something in my uncle's ear, hearing which, he immediately took aunt and their children, my cousins obviously and left with the visions.

Before they had left, I had asked many questions, but all my questions were left unanswered. They left, leaving me in the middle of a dark mystery without any hint.

For any hint or clue, I went downstairs and started my quest. Firstly, I reached the living room, near

the door; the door that leads to the outside of the house. I tried to open it but not to my surprise, it was locked from outside.

They had left me alone in a locked house in such a dark and scary night. I felt like a prisoner locked in a dungeon and left to die of hunger and thirst.

All of a sudden, there was a very loud noise, the noise of thunder outside. It made me fall on the floor of the living room. My heartbeat became louder and faster. Nothing I could do, nothing I could think. Looking here and there in the room, sitting on the floor at the place I fell, I found something lying outside the door. To me, it looked something like a note or receipt of something. As my hand proceeded towards it, the phone rang. Due to the phone bell, I was literally shocked and that piece of paper touched my hand and slid away. I ran to pick up the phone.

"Hello", I said.

Silence on the other side.

I repeated, "Hello?"

Silence maintained.

I put the phone down and breathed heavily. The phone rang once again.

“Hello, who is it?”

Even then there wasn't any reply.

I put down the phone again.

As the phone rang the third time,

“Who is it?”. I asked in anger. “Tell me now or ...”

“Martin! What happened?”

“Louis, is that you?”

“Yeah! What happened, man?”

“Was it you calling this number again and again, and didn't speak?”

“I don't understand what you are talking about.”

“Huh!”

“Tell me, what's happening?”

“I'm alone in the house and someone's teasing me on the phone.”

“You are alone! Why?”

“Why! I don't know why.”

“You don't?”

“No! it's just that uncle and aunt and every one left me alone here at ten. I'm very scared.”

“Come to my home. I live near you.

“I would have! I would have, if I could. The door is locked from outside.”

“What? Is that true? Ok, relax, I'm leaving for your house. I'll be there in ten minutes.”

“But....

“Bye.”

“Okay. Bye.”

As I put the phone down and stepped back towards the door, the light went off. I was very scared. I turned immediately and picked the receiver to call Louis, but the line was dead.

In the house, the big house, no lights, no phone, nothing! Earlier, I was scared because I was alone, but I didn't know that I had company.

Outside the house in the flashes of thunder, I could see some shadows roaming around. It was the scariest moment I had ever experienced in my life. You must be thinking that suddenly I would wake up and say “Gosh! What a scary dream it was.” But no! I had slapped my face twice politely but nothing happened. Everything was just very true and it was all happening in real..

Drenched in horror and breathing heavily, I was still in my thoughts when the light was back. But with the lights also came some uninvited ‘guests’, rather ‘ghosts’. The bell kept ringing continuously and I couldn't open the door for two reasons, it was locked from outside and even if it were open, would have never taken that risk.

The bell stopped ringing and I sighed and relaxed. But a moment later, the door opened with a bang! I hid behind the sofa with fear. Then, I heard some voices. They were familiar.

“Happy Birthday to...MARTIN?”

I turned to the clock. It was 12 am, 15th December; it was my birthday! I came out and saw uncle, aunt, their children and Louis with his parents. I met everyone. Everyone was laughing. I realized that it was a plan to wish me a ‘scary’ ‘birthday’. I asked them about the piece of paper I saw, then my uncle told me that it was the receipt of my birthday cake which fell down by mistake and as all of them saw me reaching towards it, the phone rang. It was Louis. As our conversation ended, the fuse was taken out, all just to keep that receipt away from me.

Later, I cut the cake and all of us enjoyed celebrating my birthday. A scary one, but happy too!

Sialkot as a Role Model City

Husnain Tariq, MCE

Sialkot has shaped up and introduced the culture of self-dependence in Pakistan. This fact gives Sialkot international importance. With the developing economy, the production of sports items, especially football on such a large scale, the cottage industry, the surgical industry, the leather industry, Sialkot stands tall as a role model for all cities in Pakistan. Construction of Sialkot International Airport costing above 2 billion rupees, was financed totally by private sector is just another example of how Sialkotis are changing their fate themselves. Exporters of Sialkot had exhibited a strong will and spirit in the recent past by establishing Sialkot Dry Port Trust and operating it successfully. While accepting the challenging task again, they took the initiative and Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry pleaded the case of Airport with the Government of Pakistan but due to financial constraints, the Govt expressed its inability to this effect. The dedicated and highly motivated exporters of Sialkot equipped with strong driving force and determination ultimately succeeded in their mission. This project is an example for the whole nation, that with dedication and motivation, you can change fate of yourself no matter what lies in your destiny.

Sialkotis are working on the principle of *khudi* as given by great poet Allama Iqbal also born in Sialkot. Sialkot is located at the foot of Kashmir hills near the Chenab River. The city is about 125 km (78 mi) north of Lahore. Although it is at one side of the country and remote, but the spirit of

its people is high. With only a population of just above 1 million, Sialkot did what would be a role model for the people of Pakistan. This has also been witnessed during USA, FIFA World Cup 1994 when soccer balls exported from Sialkot, Pakistan were selected as the official soccer balls for the event.

In 1980 Sialkot gained international celebrity status when it produced the “Tango” ball used in FIFA Cup world Cup in 1982 which led further growth of soccer ball industry. The success story of Sialkot industries is based on the unmatched skill and craftsmanship of local workers. **SIALKOT** (June 17 2010): Over 8.825 million footballs amounting to Rs 2171.78 million have been exported on the eve of the FIFA Football World Cup 2010 being played in South Africa from Sialkot dry port so far. Sources in Sialkot dry port told Business Recorder that adequate arrangements have been made for the prompt clearance of exportable consignments at the dry port to facilitate business community and timely delivery. The footballs used in World Cup 1998 and 2006 were hand-stitched in Sialkot. The world has recognised Sialkot as export-oriented city of Pakistan, since this place possesses century-old industrial heritage.

It has developed a remarkable export culture over the period and contributing over 1.5 billion dollars annually to the national exchequer. The development of cottage industries in Sialkot has assumed a model status for the developing

world. The city is sprinkled with thousands of small and medium enterprises, which are engaged in honouring their global commitments for export of value-added quality goods such as sports goods, surgical instruments, leather goods, gloves, badges and musical instruments etc.

The city has developed an industrial edge over other cities of the country especially in sports goods and surgical instruments. Over 1.20 lakh industrial workers only are engaged with both the industries and are earning their livelihood in a respectable way. Many researchers of different foreign universities are considering conducting research on the unique Export Culture of Sialkot, which is a hub of cottage industries and export oriented city of Pakistan. The researchers would penetrate on ascertaining how Sialkotis are conducting the export business successfully where every third person is an exporter. The business community of Sialkot is playing tremendous role not only in bringing boom in exports but also fulfilling the social responsibilities and the uplift of the city on voluntarily basis.

Over 85 percent of total production of soccer ball of the world comes from Sialkot while all international brands are sourcing their supply of footballs from this city. The success story of Sialkot based industries can be attributed to the unmatched skill of local workers and their craftsmanship. Sialkot industry holds many lessons for the rest of Pakistan's economy. Sialkot, Pakistan's export capital has the highest per capita exports in Pakistan. Sialkot is in many ways a unique city in Pakistan. A strong export and entrepreneurial culture combined with widespread availability of

subcontracting arrangements has resulted in low barriers to entry and a proliferation of small and medium scale enterprises.

Presently the Sports Goods Industry of Sialkot is supplying products to almost every country of the world, directly or indirectly. The products are mostly made for international markets and have received worldwide recognition because of the quality that goes into the selection of raw material, design, manufacturing processes and delivery to the customers.

Some of the world renowned brands that are importing a large portion of their supplies of sports goods from Sialkot are: Adidas, Nike, Puma, Select, Lotto, Umbro, Mitre, Micassa, Diadora, Wilsons, Decathlon.

Almost every product of Sialkot is being exported to international markets due to which Sialkot is earning more than US\$ 900 million per annum and its share reaches to 6% of the total exports of Pakistan. Sialkot is the second largest exporting city of Pakistan. Almost 60% of the total exports of Sialkot are done via Sialkot Dry Port Trust and the rest are being done via Sialkot International Airport and different other means.

Construction of Sialkot International Airport: The construction of airport was to cost more than 2 billion rupees and all of this money was financed by private sector. This shows the self-determination of the people of Sialkot, which were eager to change their destiny and Alhamdulillah, it was made possible. The promoters from Private Sector were invited to join the mega project and a public limited company namely Sialkot International Airport Ltd. (SIAL) was formed and regis-

tered. The selected site measuring 1036 acres is located at 16 k.m. to the west of Sialkot and at a 40 minutes drive from Gujarat and Gujranwala cities. The land was acquired and work started on the Project in January 2003. Ground-breaking ceremony was held on 18th December 2003 by Chief Minister Punjab, and he approved and announced a dual carriageway to link the International airport with Sialkot – Wazirabad dual carriageway. During the presentation made by SCCI on 2nd Feb. 2001, the President of Pakistan very graciously gave approval in principle for the construction of an International Airport at Sialkot on Build; Own & Operate (BOO) basis and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Sialkot

Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Defence through Civil Aviation Authority. No other project has been seen parallel to this kind in whole of South Asia. The airport has longest runway in Pakistan, more than 3000 meters.

Sialkot stands tall as a role model for the whole country that even a small city like Sialkot, on the principle of self-help, can change its fate. In today's Pakistan, where there are a lot of problems like terrorism, load-shedding, declining economy, devaluation of rupee, Sialkot is a role model for all, that even a small group of people, if determined and motivated can change the fate of whole country. So the key is self-dependence.

The Reality of Life

Sumaiya Gul, ASAB

It didn't feel good at all when I came back after saying goodbye to her forever. Or was it forever? No! She is not gone. She is alive here in my heart and mind. The times that we spent together might have passed but the memories that we created on the face of time will never tarnish. She was and will be a part of my life forever.

It was a cool summer night when I met her for the first time. She was dressed in a white dress that had a beautiful netted pattern on the front. Her blonde hair was dancing with the waves of slow soothing breeze that was filling my heart with the music of love. And those eyes of her, the perfect eyes, a mix of hazel and grey, big beautiful eyes she had. The musical laughter which rings in my ears even today was making her cheeks glow like

tiny fireflies. She seemed like an angel; an innocent pure angel. I cannot forget her expressions when she found me staring at her. She didn't look confused, frightened or embarrassed but contented and excited. She had this amazing shine in her eyes as if she had found someone she had been looking for since ages! At that very moment we were like those two people who lost one another in the midst of time and yet knew they were going to find one another, and there they met! Under the clear blue sky with millions of shining stars which were so blissful to see the two people meeting who had been made for each other and had waited for so long. In our first meeting we learned so much about each other that people might take ages to know one another (some might never know each other).

She liked dim yellow lights and slow music as much as I did. Like me she also used to think about me while sitting in the yellow lights listening to music before we even met. We knew we were going to find one another soon and the fate made us one. She was warm and lovely inside as much as outside. She was quiet but used to say so much with her eyes and her expressions. She was fun and the best!

She used to think that she lived in fantasies and that I was her rescuer and prince! She didn't know that I also believe in soul mates. I cannot forget her expressions when I told her that I had been searching for her for ages too. She brought both her hands towards her face and there I saw the same excitement in her eyes as our first meeting. She hugged me tight and whispered "I love you" in my ear. I can feel that sweet charming voice echoing through the walls of this house we built with so much love, even today.

We spent two years together and they were the best years of my life. We cried and laughed together. We shared one life that was something more than a blessing. No one can ever make me feel the way she did. Actually she was my rescuer. She saved me from my own thoughts of despair. She taught me to enjoy each and every moment because life is short. She made me feel alive, before her I didn't really know I was living a life. We traveled around places together and created a lot of beautiful memories. Those memories are more than precious diamonds to me. We saved them in one of the rooms of our house. That room is the most important of all things to me because she is in there. She is in everything that's there.

The walls are covered in collages of the beautiful photographs we took throughout those two years. We have souvenirs that we brought back with us from travel and the small pieces of things that were somehow related to those trips and happy moments. I visit that room so many times a day because it brings me back all those happy memories. She comes out very alive every time I go there. I see her laughing at my random jokes. I see us doing the craziest of things. I see us preparing food in the kitchen and eating it on the kitchen table as if it was our first date. I see us sitting in net swing chair in the garden, talking to one another for hours and staring at the stars. She loved colors; orange, red, yellow, purple, every color that has life in it. We hung colored pages of many different designs from the ceiling so that when the yellow light passes through them they create beautiful shadows on the walls. Everything is still there but not her. She just left me memories, precious beautiful memories. I wish she hadn't gone that early. I wish I could stop the car that hit her on the day she left me. I wish I hadn't let her go out that day at all. If I had stopped her, she would have been still here with me. I want to tell her how much I love her; I want her to come back. There is anger and disappointment inside me. I cannot forgive time which took her away from me!

Some years later...

I am sitting in the same room we laid foundations of some years ago. The yellow lights are still there and so are the colorful decorations. The walls still have those photographs of us. The flowers she put in the vase last time before she left are still there. They have dried but they are still smiling because they have the smell of her. The embroidered table

cloths, the pieces of wood, the rocks, the tickets, the net swing, her white dress she wore on our first meeting; everything but not her! I know she is happy beyond those skies watching over me and she wants to see me happy too. She is with the Creator and I know she is safe there. She has left

but I know she is still around me. Her presence is that one great feeling that lifts me off my feet and lightens me up so much that I feel like flying. Yes, we still are together!

A Night Out

Syed Muhammad Abdullah, CEME

Last night, I watched myself sleep and then I went away. Just before I left my room, I realized that I should not keep my mouth open during sleep. Anyway I walked past my parents' bedroom and then I slipped into the kitchen. I wasn't hungry but I found roaming around the house at three in the morning was an experience in itself, a rather creepy one. So I decided to take a walk in the neighbourhood and found that the streets weren't deserted. A night cricket match was going on so I stopped for a moment to watch. The match was in its ending moments where the blue team had to make seventeen runs in an over and a half. Being not a fan myself, I continued my journey. I felt so light and there was no paranoia, because I knew nobody could see me. So I jumped into a taxi moving at a slow pace, and to my luck, it was empty and the radio was on. I lay on the back seat and enjoyed the music. Then I sat up and started to look out of the window. Many shops and restaurants were still open. How could I forget, this is Karachi, city that never sleeps. So I got out at Meerut kebab house and entered the place. The mouth watering aroma of chicken tikka and Bihari kebabs dragged me inside the hotel and I gulped down a boneless piece. It felt like heaven.

Getting out of that place I managed to cross the bridge that took me to Dolmen mall and it was locked from the outside. But for me it wasn't. So I sneaked inside. The guard outside was enjoying his sleep rather too much so I kicked his chair on my way in. Surely it must have awakened him. I got straight to the third floor and broke into Levi's outlet. I found the shirt I was trying to buy but it was far too expensive. So I thought, let's make the most of it. I put on that shirt but to my surprise, I couldn't see myself in the mirror. Then I laughed at myself and moved on to the next shop. The Casio outlet had wrist watches that made me a pirate and urged me to rob them clean. So I realized that this mall will surely cause me to commit a criminal activity, so as a model citizen I left the mall, and on my way out I again found the guard sleeping. This time I let him enjoy. It was almost four thirty and I still had some time left before my mother would come to check on me.

So when I saw a boy of my age riding a bike at a very fast speed I sat on the petrol tank and to my surprise we rode up to Clifton together. There when I was just about to get off, the boy stopped a man and a woman pointing a pistol at them and mugged them. I was surprised at his confidence.

The couple was frightened to death and gave up everything they had without interfering. I watched but I couldn't do anything. Turning away from the crime scene was cowardice but aren't we all cowards and helpless in such situations?

The fresh cold morning air at the seaside gave me shivers but at the same time I felt a sense of purity. So I walked further and further into the sea. The water tasted like salt. The sea shells and rocks touched my feet until I went too deep and I found myself floating. Then I moved back. The water seemed to leave me like I was being born again. I didn't want to come out of that euphoric experience but I swam back to the sand. There I dried up myself and watched the sun coming up. Sunrise at the beach sounds too romantic, I know. Just then I realized my mom would be coming to my

room any moment. So I ran towards the road and caught the first bus that I saw. Later I jumped from one vehicle to another like a superhero ghost. I got into my room and then moments later my bedroom door opened and my mom entered, "Abdullah *beta*, its six o' clock, get up, you don't want to miss your van". All I managed to say was, "Ami, getting up, five more minutes". Then I opened my eyes and looked out the window, there were wooden crates lying there that were used as wickets at the match last nights. I grinned surprisingly. But when I came down to breakfast the news was on and the ticker of a couple getting mugged last night was running. I opened my mouth to say something but instead I became skeptical. So I decided to keep this little experience of mine a secret.

Being a Night Owl

Ehtisham Tanvir, CEME

Of all the reasons that drove me to choose a graduate college away from home, living in a hostel was the most compelling one. It has been two years since I stepped into EME College's hostel accommodation and all I can say is: hostel life has its own merits and demerits, as probably, more or less, every other thing in this world has.

When my youngest sister was born, my mother used to tell us that a child is just like a computer with an empty hard drive. Whatever you feed in its memory, it stays there forever. But my mother's theory didn't work quite well on me for my hard drive had some pre-installed programs. My inability to grasp the fact or if I put it honestly, my disapproval of the fact that night was made

by the Lord of both worlds as a time to sleep was something I was born with. My maternal grandmother (May Allah grant her Jannah) often told me that as a baby, my day used to begin when the clock ticked twelve. I would keep my poor mother awake with me all night and slept only when the sun was about to shine. The day was well spent sleeping as I had no classes of Probability and Statistics to attend when I was half a year old.

As I grew up this habit stuck and every night the last thing I ever wanted to do was sleep. The whole concept of sleeping early at night sounded absurd to me and I seriously considered it an attack on my personal likes and dislikes when I was ordered by my mother, in her distinctive style "*Foran se*

pehle so jao!”, to close my eyes and sleep at ten sharp.

Hostel life was a blessing. Never in my life had I been so happy with the fact that I had the complete liberty to sleep as late as I wished to, or never sleep at all! I and my laptop computer would spend sleepless nights in our cosy bed watching movies together, reading books together, and writing blogs together (that’s the closest I have ever been to romance). My eyes would water when they gave up with their consistency of keeping them wide open at 3 o’clock in the morning; my mind would scream to me, even verbally abuse me to shut it down for just a while; my head would buzz and swing, but my will power kept me awake.

Iqbal Hostel, where I board, is just the right place for someone like me. People here live at night. It is often said that the sun of Iqbal Hostel rises just as the clock strikes twelve. Hearing the noise of people shouting, yelling, singing at the top of their voice songs at the loudest possible volume; talking in corridors; laughing and playing table tennis or football at one in the morning is not something out of the ordinary. So I guess they suffer from the same syndrome as I do, or if they didn’t, they do now.

My life in hostel and my insomniac habits, as I have just explained, are strongly affiliated. Hence considering my situation: Your alarm will yell at the top of its digital voice at 7:15 for you to get up and get ready for breakfast, but when you are deep in sleep then nothing from the material world can make its way to your ears. You’ll sleep until some angel descends and bombards at your door and calls out “*8 baj gae hain ET!*” You’ll sit straight up and after a quick look at the time, run with your soap, toothbrush and paste in your hands towards the bathroom, cursing yourself.

With lightning speed you’ll get ready and using some of Einstein’s theories you’ll reach in class at 8:15. But do not forget that breakfast has been missed and your stomach is swearing you in an exotic language. No matter how hard you try, you can’t get your mind to what the instructor is saying as you had such little sleep and no food. As soon as the class ends you’ll run towards the cafe and have breakfast and since you have missed the meal you had already paid for, you’ll have to pay some additional for this. My mind gets back to normal a bit and you take the remaining classes but as you had your breakfast late you won’t be able to eat during the lunch break and hence miss the lunch too. As the classes end you’ll go to the cafe again to refill your empty belly that will cost you even more. When you enter your room you’ll jump on your bed and sleep tight until it’s dinner time. With spirits high you’ll get up and go to the mess for dinner. With tummy filled and no trace of sleep in your eyes, you’ll get back to your room and spend another sleepless night.

A lot of logical conclusions can be drawn from this long passage. A realistic conclusion would be: Shut up and sleep early! An idealistic conclusion would be: make a proper routine and follow it. I’ll tell you my conclusion but first read this: I have tried a lot of things to make me lose this habit. To be honest, about two hours ago I was in my bed, eyes closed, when the idea of writing this blog struck me. So the point is, I can’t help it. So my conclusion is: life is short, and this student life is even shorter. Once we step into the practical field the burden of responsibility smacks us. This short time of student life is the only time left for us to feel responsible just for ourselves. Live it when you have it. It’s 1:55 am and I have a class in the morning.

New Generation of Biotechnology and its Future in Pakistan

Filza Zarrar, ASAB

Destruction or Remedy: what will be the next generation of biotechnology? In the last two decades immense work has been done in the field of Biotechnology in developed countries. Complex vaccination of many epidemic diseases has been produced. Measles and polio both have been nearly wiped out of many countries. Cancers can be cured and now even the most dangerous infection AIDs can also be cured. Improved and fast growing variety of food is being produced to eradicate famine in the world. Bio-fuels are produced as an alternative of petroleum to meet energy crisis. Now we have developed more potent variety of medicines, drugs, essential vitamins and hormones. After all this advancement the world is now moving forward in the new generation of biotechnology i.e. Nano-Biotechnology that can go beyond atoms. Now a days man owes his life to biotechnology.

In the era of a economically and politically imbalanced world, many countries in the world are investing huge amount of money in the research of new generation of biotechnology which can be used as cure and weapon. A single bio-weapon can be more destructive than a nuclear war. According to the authorities, more than 400 institutions, in one of the ruling countries, are engaged in such a work. According to documents unearthed by a nonprofit government watchdog, the US military has suggested to declare the development of biological weapons against the international treaties and federal law. Many drugs and techniques have been developed that can alter and manipulate human behavior as well as genetic makeup. Now,

human behavioral changes, and strengthening troops emotionally and physically are real world stories than Sci-Fi.

Now the question is: where are we standing in this race, and how we are going to contribute in human development especially in the BIO-TECH field? HCV, which is one of the biggest causes of deaths in Pakistan, is on rise in the past few years and we are not able to control it. Pakistan doesn't have well equipped research institutions. Our research students have to wait for foreign scholarships to work on their projects. Pakistan is an agricultural country and its climate is favorable for almost all types of living processes. Biotechnology can play a great role in improving our crops. We can produce bio-fuels, good quality crops, all types of industrial enzymes, drugs, medicines and many more without any foreign help. We just need to focus on the advancement of Biotechnology in our country, Pakistan.

Destruction or remedy, growth or downfall, most importantly compassion or enmity: now, we have to decide what we want!

Decisions

I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.

—Stephen Covey

Art

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

—Pablo Picasso

Amateur Photographers

Maab Saleem

Let me begin with a story. Early in the 21st century, due to some unfathomable forces of nature, the human gene developed and the species entered the next step in the evolution process. Some might argue that it was actually a step back, and most would agree. Not surprisingly, this alteration of the gene occurred solely in the uppermost echelons of the social demographic chart: they are after all, entitled to experience everything first hand. The fallout of this abomination in the human genome resulted in what I consider a bleak affair, namely, the birth of the amateur photographer. Now, there are various theories regarding the incarnation of this sub-human species; the amount of rigorous development processes and cycles it took to bring about such an unnaturally grotesque change in the almost flawless human infrastructure. I too have one, though mine's quite simple. Boredom.

Members of this sub-species are not normally identifiable at birth, though being fearfully attentive towards a meaningless object can be taken as a sign. Their adolescence is too quite normal, until they hear or see four of the letters of the English alphabet chained together in capitals DSLR. Generally, their acquaintance with it starts when they run out of options to lead their disconcerted lives. Their not-so-very-shiny-any more iPhone doesn't seem to be worth their time anymore or when their self-loathe reaches its apex after the so-called love-of-their-life cheats on them. They don't have anything better to do, so why not buy a camera?

Their kind has some very distinctive traits, which could identify the ones in your vicinity. Firstly, if someone has a peevish, mildly arrogant smirk

plastered to their face, they might be one of them. The reason for this is the sudden exponential growth in the number of their Facebook friends list, most of whom they don't even know. Secondly, if they're carrying their DSLR at places which have no relevance, like at a grocery store or even a toilet, there's a good chance that you've spotted one; which brings me of course to the final trait, which is also a pre-requisite to being a member of this naturally exclusive club; owning a DSLR. Now, as simple as it may seem, this is actually quite tricky. They might be part of the group in discussion, but they can also be a wannabe amateur photographer. Yes, people actually find pride in pretending to be one of them. But one doesn't need the genetic mutation in their chromosomes to become a wannabe amateur photographer; he just has to have a camera larger than his brain.

The point that needs attention here is that owning a costly camera and putting "Freelance Photographer" in your Facebook work section doesn't suffice for being a photographer. All that the 60 thousand rupees worth optical instrument would do is make you the most invited person to parties because people find flattering your photographic prowess rather than paying for a professional photographer (though they end up cursing their fate seeing the out-of-focus results of your lens-work). Another one of their more obvious characteristics is taking snaps of a toy car or of a fly on a leaf, and expecting the on-looker to derive the answers to certain metaphysical and philosophical queries that have plagued mankind for thousands of years, such as the meaning of life and the purpose

of one's existence. Their pictures are normally captioned with a George Bernard Shaw or Mark Twain quote which almost everybody fails to understand, and has absolutely no relevance to the snap itself. But you're forced to like it, for reasons

entirely selfish and understandable.

In the end though, for all the jaundice they generate, they've made up for it by inventing the talent of photography. For their existence is proof, that not everybody can be a photographer.

Parkinson's – A Constant Battle

Yumna Waqar, AMC

Most of us are fortunate enough to be blessed with all the necessities of life and yet we still don't feel content. It is a characteristic trait of human beings to look at the half-empty portion of the glass instead of focusing on the half-full one. We indulge ourselves in the best that life can offer us, and yet we still wake up the next day yearning for more. This article will tell the story of a 59 year old woman who lost more than what we can ever bear to lose, and she still pastes a warm smile on her face and gets up to battle the world, one day at a time. Why? Simply because she thrives in what she hopes will one day turn out to be, a medical breakthrough.

Though I have not had the pleasure to meet this wonderful lady, my aunt narrates her story to me as though it is still etched on her mind. Working as a resident in Baylor Medical Center, Irving, my aunt, Sarah Khalid was still trying to get acquainted with the chaotic life that comes with a medical career. It was her second week there and she was on 'rounds,' when she happened to pass by room 604. This is what my aunt remembers:

"Just a little more and you're almost there, Nana!" yelled an excited 5-year old. A woman in her late fifties lay crouched on the floor and was attempting to stretch her hand to reach the bathroom doorknob. To me, the scenario appeared to be a bad joke formulated by the devious mind of a

5-year old girl, when in reality, it was just that of a woman struggling to perform everyday tasks. I was utterly appalled as I helped the woman up and inquired if she was okay. The woman just smiled at me and then looked at her granddaughter and said, "We'll get there, honey. Remember what Nemo said? 'Just keep swimming.' We'll get there soon enough."

As I helped her onto the bed, the woman told me about her condition. Her name was Sophia and she was diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's Disease. She had married young and her symptoms had begun soon after that. Every task seemed like an impossible mountain that towered over her and all day she would feel so fatigued, even though she had performed no arduous task. Sometimes when cooking, she would feel her hands start to go off like a motor and she'd look at the tremors and wonder what was wrong with her. Occasionally, she would feel really dizzy and then she would lean for support on the kitchen counter as she felt her entire body cramp up. She ignored these symptoms first but then they got progressively worse. She used to work at a restaurant and her husband ran a hardware store. Her job was severely affected by these symptoms as she would often feel her hands shake and she would drop around trays. On a bad day or when the weather was extreme, she would completely lose her bal-

ance and fall to the ground. The symptoms worsened and the injuries increased. So she not only got fired from her job, but her condition took a toll on her marriage too. Her husband insisted on a medical check-up and she readily agreed. She was initially diagnosed with a 'benign essential tremor' and she was temporarily relieved. She then worked to build her marriage back up and within a year, she and her husband were graced with a baby girl whom they named Molly. Sophia was 31 years old at that time. As time progressed, Sophia felt her symptoms get even worse. Now, at times, she could not even go to the bathroom without having to crawl on the ground. She felt her self-esteem plummet drastically and she started hiding her symptoms from her husband, thinking that he would find her flawed. The exhaustion sped up and she finally told her husband the truth when he suspected her of being an alcoholic due to the constant lethargy. She went to another doctor this time, and she was diagnosed with 'cortical basal ganglionic degeneration'; yet another misdiagnosis. She was now 45 when she started forgetting day-to-day tasks like getting milk or forgetting where she kept the car keys. Her husband became weary of her condition and the couple struggled to keep their marriage intact. They grew helpless and so, consulted yet another neurologist who upon doing a specialized brain scan, diagnosed Sophia with 'young-onset Parkinson's Disease'. A few years later, her husband divorced her and Sophia lost the only support she had. Even then, she would be thankful for her daughter, Molly, who had grown up to be a fine, young woman and was about to get married. Sophia wanted nothing out of life, no rare gems, no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and no heaps of cash. She wasn't even astringent with regards to her condition, because she knew she wasn't the only one battling

with it. All she needed was her Molly and every time that she would feel as if she was on the acrimonious verge of breakdown, all she'd say was, "Keep swimming... just keep swimming."

I looked up at the woman in front of me who was now showing signs of ageing and looked so awfully dog-tired. The smile on her face was what flabbergasted me. It was warm like daylight and it reached the corners of her eyes, which glistened like fresh pearls out of oysters. She looked so graceful, despite her condition, and the love she shared for her granddaughter was unmistakable, from the way she was looking at the girl like she had never seen anything so beautiful. I asked her, "You've lost so much. How did you find the courage to be so happy?"

She glanced at me and said, "I found contentment in the love that my daughter and then my granddaughter blessed me with. I may die soon and people may ask me what I achieved in life and what I lost. Yes, I lost my husband, I lost my marriage and I never got to live life the way normal people do but I was loved in this lifetime and it has always been enough for me. I know what I suffer with, It has no cure. I can gobble down a couple of medicines and reduce the symptoms but it won't cure me. I wake up every day and pray for a medical breakthrough because I know there will be a day when Parkinson's will have a cure. I just hope it's soon enough. You ask me why I'm content? Because, my dear, God could have cursed me with Alzheimer's too! Yet I stand here in front of my granddaughter, perfectly able to talk to her and recognize her. Sometimes, we should stop demanding more and be thankful for all that we have. On days that I feel I'll die out, there's only one thing that always gets me going..."

Her granddaughter mumbled softly, "Just keep swimming, Nana. Just keep swimming."

Applying Science and Technology as a Catalyst for Eradicating Poverty

Sara Ehsan

Poverty is generally understood as individuals living below subsistence income levels but it has many dimensions such as lack of shelter, inaccessibility to basic health and educational services, unemployment, social discrimination, lack of participation in decision making, powerlessness, lack of freedom and suffers from a number of deprivations and restrictions.

Poverty is a multidimensional problem that goes beyond economics to include, amongst other things, social, political, and cultural issues. The World Bank's 2000 World Development Report defines poverty as an unacceptable deprivation in human well-being that comprises both physiological and social deprivation. Physiological deprivation involves the non-fulfillment of basic material or biological needs, including inadequate nutrition, health, education, and shelter. A person can be considered poor if he or she is unable to secure the goods and services to meet these basic material needs. The concept of physiological deprivation is thus closely related to, but can extend beyond, low monetary income and consumption levels. Social deprivation widens the concept of deprivation to include risk, vulnerability, lack of autonomy, powerlessness, and lack of self-respect. Given that countries' definition of deprivation often goes beyond physiological deprivation and sometimes gives greater weight to social deprivation, local populations (including poor communities) should be engaged in the dialogue that leads to the most appropriate definition of poverty in a country.

Today, the world is revolutionized by the use of

science and technology. In recent years, it has been recognized as a crucial element which adds value in the development of any sector by reshaping, reorganizing and restructuring working methods. Number of advanced technology based solutions has been developed to assist in various fields. The evidence has indicated that it has potential to improve the quality of life, increase productivity and incomes, give access to various business, education, health, government and financial services for people living in underdeveloped countries. It is rapidly transforming our lives, the way we interact, communicate, do business, access information and entertain ourselves. It fuels the global economy which ultimately eradicates poverty in a country. Use of science and technology for eradicating poverty varies from country to country depending upon a country's limitation towards implementation of technologies. Many countries can't utilize the true potential of technology due to non availability of resources and sufficient funds for infrastructure. With these obstacles, under developed countries mainly depend on widely available technology like internet, television and radio that can reach larger portion of population at a relatively lower cost and requires low level of skills. In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, where poverty was considered as severe injustice and an abuse of human rights. A few years ago, poverty eradication was on priority in the programs and budget of UN, World Bank and IMF by introducing new frameworks, policies and strategies. In 2003, project "Technology for Poverty Eradication (TAPE)"

was developed after policy oriented regional workshops on technology and poverty eradication in Africa. The United Nations Development Program (2001: section 2.1.1) refers to ICT as a “powerful enabler of development” because of the significant impact on economic, scientific, academic, social, political, cultural and other aspects of life. A unanimous resolution adopted by UN against poverty named as “The Millennium Declaration 2000” highlighted importance of technology towards poverty reduction by making it part of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its aim is “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” so science and technology become important in helping to achieve this goal. PM Manmohan Singh (India) said on September 28, 2013 at UN General Assembly that “The problems of over a billion people living in poverty around the world need to be attacked more directly. Poverty remains a major political and economic challenge, its eradication requires special attention and new collective thrust”. President Kikwete (Tanzania) addressing UN General Assembly, gave an example of extreme poverty that has been halved at global level, where 1.2 billion people were still trapped with about 19,000 children under the age of five and around 800 women die every day mostly from preventable, curable diseases and other causes. We should strive to use science to generate such technologies more often for the benefit of communities.

Extreme poverty tends to be more pronounced in rural areas with absolute number of poor increasing rapidly. According to world survey 2010, approximately 35% of the total rural population in developing countries living in extreme poverty exceed 70% in 2012 because mostly they are small producers, workers and farmers who are de-

prived from their basic rights, facilities and other natural resources, climatic changes, unsustainable management practices and limited access to services results in low production which ultimately affects their income level. At current rates of progress, it is estimated that there will still be about a billion people in extreme poverty in 2015. More than one third of world’s population is deprived from basic human needs such as adequate food, clean drinking water, sanitation, health services, shelter, education and basic technologies despite remarkable success in technological advancement, contributed negatively to economic growth of the world. So it will be impossible to eradicate poverty without improving root causes like living standards, infrastructure, raising competence levels and accurate use of resources.

Eradicating poverty is a major political and economic challenge facing all countries, thus, we need collective efforts and specific targeted actions to eradicate this global curse. It must be taken seriously by government at all levels such as representation of science & technology ministry in cabinet is very important. Educate people about technology and provide timely information on developments, make policies for the development of science and technology, take necessary initiatives and launch various programs in this field, build technological capabilities of poor people, facility of computer education should be available in both public and private sector educational institutions, involve people from rural areas in development projects, policy and decision making and most important is to invest more in this field as possible. Although Pakistan has achieved some progress by using technology in some areas e.g internet growth, computer and mobile phone usage etc but still it remains far behind the international stand-

ards in understanding and implementing science and technology for eradicating poverty.

Use of science and technology is not a magic cure for eradicating poverty. However, it can help in finding solutions of problems faced by poor community. I discuss some of them here. Science and technology has the potential of empowering people by expanding use of government services, such as utilization of mobile information booths like NADRA and Passport offices, helps in saving money, which they gave to agents for getting information now available to them through booths. Central Board of Revenue (CBR) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) have an online interaction with public, providing them with necessary information and receiving feedback on government policies.

Science and technology open a new range of opportunities by providing them access of information related to markets, health, and education sector etc. It helps people in the rural areas by connecting markets to stay updated. Typically they have lack of information about prices, weather conditions, credit facilities and market opportunities. Science and technology can remedy such information.

The quality of governance is critical to poverty reduction. Science and technology can be powerful tools for strengthening good governance to facilitate and enhance government efficiency for poor people. It can be used by government agencies to transform relations with citizens, especially living in rural areas. It is difficult for rural citizens to travel long distances to approach government headquarters for submission of applications, meet officials, obtain hard copies for record etc. This involves loss of day's income and cost of transportation. But technology made possible to locate

online service centers that provide services physically closer to citizens, facilitates speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective interaction between the government, citizens, business and others.

Science and technology as a sector, creates employment opportunities directly for the poor both in manufacturing of hardware and software. Online job can earn you money while sitting at home due to technology. The concept of E-marketing became possible due to technology, enables you to sell cultural and hand made products online sitting in remote areas.

Micro-financing is an important tool for helping the poor by introducing smart card technology to reduce transaction and travelling costs as well as risks. Electronic banking services or easy credit card scheme identified as a solution for eliminating paperwork, reducing errors, fraud and meeting time, enables them to obtain easy and timely loans.

Science and technology can improve healthcare services for the poor by online consultation. Telemedicine can diminish the cost and hardship of long distance traveling for medical checkup. Now you can get medical advice from doctors by sitting at home at minimal cost. Use digital cameras to show symptoms for Telemedicine's examination. Telemedpak, and Pakmedinet are two main websites providing online telemedicine services and creating awareness about telemedicine. Radio is one of the most accessible and widely used technology which plays key role by broadcasting or delivering timely information in rural areas.

The role of education in poverty eradication is very important as well as the key to wealth creation. No country has succeeded without educating its people. Virtual, open, distance learning based

schools/colleges/universities is a remarkable achievement due to technology which provide quality education/skills in rural areas or home based students with limited resources. Understanding language is the main barrier in accessing technology. The government needs to develop software & tools in local languages to facilitate people living in backward areas which are easy to understand.

Empowering women is a prerequisite to eradicating poverty. They are the main axis through which families grow, kids get better education, in short enhancing overall social cohesion. When a woman is empowered economically, she reinvests 90% of her earnings in her family which bears positive effect on a country's economy.

The world has enough food to feed everybody; no one should go hungry; there is no reason why poverty and hunger should ever continue to cause pain in the world. Pakistan has huge potential to take advantage on science and technology in the development process if it makes a road map about the use of technology in the areas of education, health, agriculture and governance. Richard Gerster said "Poverty reduction is possible simply by the use of a new technology is the exception but not the rule. Often social and political change is needed as well." No government or organization can fight poverty better than the people who suffer from it. Our job is to empower people to be the drivers of their own success and provide them resources and skills to get rid from poverty.

The Puzzle of Science

Qazi Umer Jamil, CEME

Science has always fascinated me. Almost anything you can imagine has an equal probability to become a reality. I really don't know the origin where science begins and where it ends. But it will always be something more than we have assumed to be simple and completely understood. Going through different theories and assumptions sometime makes you feel like you can have their solution too. That's where the problem is going to happen. Reading some articles on theoretical Physics on some websites may let us think that we have the idea of that object.

Currently, as you may know, a new assumption has been made by Stephen Hawking about mysterious black holes, "They don't exist." This led us to a new debate. Apart from the thing that whether the black hole exists or not, there is another thing

to be noticed. No scientist has ever succeeded in completely discovering the laws of nature. From the Journey of Physics from the Newtonian age to Quantum Age and the great diversity between the Theory of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, there is no universal law/theory that defines all the phenomena in micro as well as the macro scale at the same time. Although some scientists are working on the "Theory of Everything" but I don't think it can be regarded as final. Because what I think, is that as the universe expands, the probability of applying a certain law of physics to a certain path decreases. And there may be a time when that law will be no longer valid to a particular system.

We cannot predict the future. Generally what happens around us is most likely to have a whole

history of events. And there is a chain of events we are going through, and time can be regarded as our sense of comparing individual events with each other. Here is the beauty of science again, you can't predict the reality but can calculate the probability. If you've studied Quantum Mechanics, then you may already know that there is nothing like an accident in a specific chain of events. And if you ever compare the chain of events of your life to that of the scale of Multiverse (if they exist), you may come to realize your true value.

In Science nothing can be assured. Many of my fellows said to me, "We've read that topic in theory, and now in its practical implementation, the results are not according to theoretical ones." I was searching for the answer of this question too. And I have found the answer, thanks to Great Nikola Tesla, that is to be wrong about something you're concerned about, is the beauty of science. To have different results than that of calculated tells us only one thing, "There is something else waiting to be discovered." I'm not quoting Carl Sagan

What we have read about science can be all based

upon lies, and may be there is again an equal probability of governing the laws of physics from a different dimension and not having the same results. There may be other probability that each system has its own set of laws on which it happens to be continuously based. That's my point everything you can imagine is real, but only in a certain dimension. And a time may come, when that dimension may not truly exist. From the concept of relativity to the theoretical explanation of black holes, there is a great diversity of what is expected and what is obtained.

The Puzzle of Science is also the beauty of Science, which restrains every theory to become the very law of Physics. I was reading somewhere that one of the best things about science is that there will always be a different school of thought. Same is the case of Mathematics; like we think more and often say less, we can imagine more and may be fail to write it down in mathematical language. May be a day comes when we'll be able to see the implementation of "Theory of Everything", but that again is not going to fix anything.

A Cry to the Sky

Asfand Shahzad, CEME

"Asfand look out!"

That's the last thing I heard before the lights shut down on me. There was blinding pain in the back of my head. I tried to get up but my arm wouldn't respond.

"Stay still you have lost a lot of blood" a voice said from nearby. I turned my head towards it and saw an elderly figure. He seemed to be a man of 50, with a rough beard and clothes which reminded me of Indiana Jones; it seemed like he had been away from civilization for quite some time.

He came towards me with a cloth and shoved it in my mouth.

"This is going to hurt a bit" he said as he snapped my arm back in its socket. The searing pain sent me back into darkness...

"Wake up boy, it's time for your medicine" said the voice. The pain had subsided to some extent and I had recovered enough to sit. The man came towards the bed holding a cheap china cup. "Drink", the potion sent warmth to all parts of my body and I felt the light of life back inside me.

“So where am I, what happened?” I asked. He gave a deep sigh and answered “Meteorites, that much you probably already know. I warned them about it but they just wouldn’t listen.” My curiosity grew “Who’s them?”. “The government. I told them this might happen but NASA fed them some crap that we were not in the path of those damned objects.”

“How could NASA be so much off the target, with their sophisticated gadgets and all that cool stuff?”

“They were not wrong, but the path of the meteorites changed.”

“Changed? How?”

Silence. He seemed to be choosing his words carefully, “ Well, kid these were not ordinary rocks. They were, err, well these beasts were controlled by some foreign power.”

“Foreign? Russia or China?”

“I wish. Out of the world foreign. Foreign as in aliens. It seems they intend to take over the world”

I gasped with horror. “Don’t worry”, he said “It will be quick, they are not taking prisoners.”

I felt like puking. This conversation had sent chills down my spine and the little effect the medicine had on me was wearing off quickly.

Suddenly I remembered something else. “I don’t see anyone else here. Where are the others?”

An eerie silence followed. And then I saw his eyes clearly in the light for the first time. In that moment it seemed like those eyes carried the burden /weight all the sadness of the world in them. The deep blue in them answered the question before he could even part his lips.

The sky probably heard the scream.

Perception and Wisdom

Faheem Arshad Lodhi, Faculty NIPCON

Your perception is your real world; my perception is my real world. Both mine and your perception could be different and wrong about the actual world. Perception is the software available in the mind which processes information and enables an individual to come to some kind of conclusion and take a decision accordingly. For example after seeing a white shirt his or her perception that white is a sober color makes him or her buy that shirt. Perception is the spectacle that you wear to perceive your world. When any input is provided to the mind, it processes it with the help of its own software (perception) and bundles it up with the nearest concept or thing. The decisions and conclusions are arrived at through your own perceptions. The scientific concepts (only if you know them) are almost as correct as they are

verifiable. You know that unless you put some fuel in your car it is not going to work. However, social sciences concepts are debatable like for example, the democracy is the best form of government. The people with sound judgment perceive the issue nearly in its correct perspective and come out with better solutions or decisions.

These people are called wise people. Edward Debono writes in his book ‘Textbook of Wisdom’ that generally we perceive that wise people who are experienced, do not jump to conclusions, give balanced views, are not dogmatic, but tolerant but look at things from different angles etc. But giving a precise definition of wise people is not possible. Wisdom resides in perception. If your perception is faulty, your decisions and conclusions will be wrong and unwise. Wisdom demands that

we need to continue upgrading our perceptions about different facets of our concerns by thinking, reading, listening to different people and then changing our beliefs or perceptions.

The objective of all the teachers and students in any educational institution should be to modify their perception (world view) that is deeper, wider and richer. Wisdom logically should come with more experience and age, but that is not a must. For example history tells us that Alexander was a wise leader who conquered most of the world just at the age of 24. We also know that he could do that because his perception about different situations

was built up by Aristotle. There can be a teacher who might have taught for thirty years but may have gathered only one year's experience thirty times. It clearly means that if somebody wants to acquire wisdom, he or she has to make deliberate efforts to acquire it and wisdom will not come automatically with age or experience. Arrogance, different biases, strong egos and personal feelings are sources of hindrance for the development of right perception about any subject. Correct attitude of readiness to modify one's perception is the first step towards wisdom. Knowledge is the biggest source of wisdom.

Taming Global Food Insecurity

Dr Alvina Gul, ASAB

Food is a '*sine qua non*' for the mere survival of mankind. Its supply and attending efforts to enhance productivity in the larger spectrum in crops, livestock, fisheries and dairy have been afoot all along human history right from the stone age to the brave new world of 21st century.

The advent and subsequent onslaught of modern technology has triggered off massive production of food enough to feed everyone on the face of earth. Yet more than a billion people go to sleep without food. Hunger keeps lurking around and the population bombshell is waiting to explode anytime. With the ever-expanding gulf between supply and demand the experts predict a doom and gloom scenario by 2050 when we may not have enough food for every one.

The spectre of hunger, malnutrition as well as over nutrition is going to stay and keep haunting us during most part of the first quarter of this century unless we tighten our belts to bridle it. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are the epicenter of world's poorest people. Due to accelerated population growth in the rural areas

the gap between rural and urban poverty is huge. It is projected to touch alarming proportion in the years ahead due to increased pressure on land with limited water resource and setbacks injected by climate change.

Global initiative is required to address issues of inequality, climate change, land degradation and desertification. Rising food prices need to be checked. Using land for bio fuel rather than food production should be discouraged. The trend to acquire land by the rich in low-income countries by financial speculators need to be regulated.

Three areas require special focus by industrially advanced countries:

1. Employment generation through investment.
 2. Technology training and transfer to address climate change, water scarcity and help create a system to ensure sustainable food security.
 3. Education; women education in particular.
- You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation (Brigham Young).

Amazing Science Facts

1. Fingernails grow four times faster than toenails.
2. Right handed people live, on average, nine years longer than left-handed people.
3. If you rub an onion on your foot, within 30-60 minutes you will be able to taste it because it travels through the blood stream.
4. You can't kill yourself by holding your breath. If you hold it until you go unconscious, you begin to breathe normally as soon as you swoon.
5. On one square inch of human skin there are 20 million microscopic creatures.
6. Armadillos are the only creatures apart from men that can catch leprosy. There are known cases of armadillo to human transfers of the disease.
7. A snail can sleep for 3 – 4 years, during which period it does not need food.
8. Giraffes can live longer without water than camels.
9. The songs of humpback whales can change dramatically from year to year, yet each whale in an oceanwide population always sings the same song as the others.
10. To test if a pearl is real, you can rub vinegar on it, the composition of the pearl will cause it to bubble furiously.
11. Goldfish kept in a dark room turns much paler. If it wasn't for the color in the food they eat, they would turn completely white.
12. Men are over 30% stronger than women on average, especially in the upper body, and men's brains are heavier than women's.
13. Collectively speaking, humans have spent longer playing World of Warcraft (over 6 million years) than we have existed as a species separate from chimpanzees.
14. In 1251, Henry III was given a polar bear by the king of Norway. He kept it in the Tower of London, on a long chain so that it could swim in the Thames.
15. If all the LEGO bricks ever manufactured were clipped on top of one another, they would make a tower ten times as high as the distance to the Moon.
16. Light would take 13 seconds to travel around the earth.
17. If you drilled a tunnel straight through the earth and jumped in, it would take you exactly 42 minutes and 12 seconds to get to the other side.
18. A medium-sized cumulus cloud weighs about the same as 80 elephants.
19. A single bolt of lightning contains enough energy to cook 100,000 pieces of toast.
20. There are 8 times as many atoms in a teaspoonful of water as there are teaspoonfuls of water in the Atlantic ocean.
21. If the Sun were the size of a beach ball then Jupiter would be the size of a golf ball and the earth would be as small as a pea.
22. The average person walks the equivalent of three times around the world in a lifetime.
23. If you could drive your car straight up you would arrive in space in just over an hour.
24. Each person sheds 40 lbs of skin in his or her lifetime.
25. The human brain takes in 11 million bits of information every second but is aware of only 40.

Discovering the Beauty of H-12 through Survey

Sanwal Ali, NICE

Survey is not just the art of determining the position of different points on surface of the earth, rather it is a blend of knowledge, fun and style. On every Thursday of the week, you can find every



Students geared up to survey in style

single student of my class geared up in his stylish hats and goggles; full of energy and enthusiasm, ready to go in the field and conquer the given task.



Using Reflector-less Total Station

The fact that we get to play with the state of the art survey equipment, makes Thursdays even more exciting. NUST H-12's survey lab has a collection of best surveying equipment you can find in any university of the world. From latest Reflector-less Total Stations to Global Navigation Satellite

System (GNSS), the Survey department has it all. This gives students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with all the possible techniques of surveying and mapping which they may require in the field of Civil Engineering.



Using Leica GNSS Controller

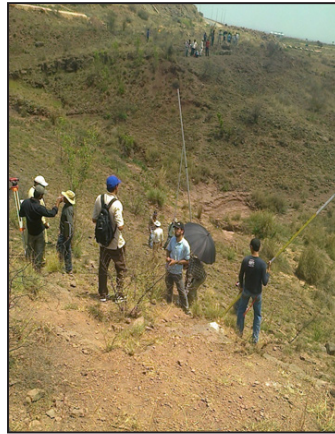
As you climb the highest point on the North East ridge of H-12 to occupy Triangulation Station, the beauty of our campus starts unfolding itself. In one browse you can cover the entire area. The geometrically laid out network of roads, the beautifully constructed buildings, the green play fields and last but not the least, the eye soothing horti-



Commanding view of H-12

culture. Through one of our Triangulation exercises of survey, we discovered that the North ridge does not only provide us with scenic views of H-12's spectacular landscape, but it is also the best vantage point for any type of survey exercise. In Triangulation exercise, we look for the highest

points to establish reference stations in order to perform subsequent survey tasks. These reference points are known as control points. In this exercise we were provided with a Base Line and our mission was to establish four additional control points by making two adjacent braced quadrilaterals.



H-12, a terrific landscape for cut and fill exercise for Road Construction Project

The coordinates of the control points were found by using vigorous triangulation procedures. The commanding view from the North East Ridge provided us with the best opportunity to establish the survey control points.

If you want to exercise your surveying skill in a plain terrain for leveling and contouring exercises, then H-12's lush green playing fields provide excellent platform for these exercises. The western side of the H-12 consists of deep gorges and ravines. These terrific land features are fully suitable for road alignment exercises, where you have to plot the profile of the ground accurately and estimate the quantities of cut and fill of earthwork to make the financial estimates of a road construction project. The deep gorge can be used for measuring the gap for construction of a bridge. The rugged terrain of west side is also an adored habitat for many wild animals. Wild rabbits, raccoons, chipmunks, porcupines and snakes are a

few of the animals often seen during surveying. Lizards of many shapes and sizes are also encountered frequently.

While going through the traversing exercise once again we discovered many other corners of the campus which otherwise were concealed from our eyes. A traverse consists of a connected series of lines on earth's surface, the length and bearings of which have been determined. In this exercise



Traversing exercise using Total Station

we were supposed to determine horizontal angles, vertical angles and bearings. The angles were found using the latest available Reflectorless Total Station while bearings were found using compasses.

In our Survey course we are also taught the art of setting out a civil engineering project. One of the most modern techniques of setting out are through the process of Stake Out, Off Set and Resection. All these modern methods are practiced by the students using Total Station under the command of highly trained survey lab personnel.

Hiatus. A pause in activity when nothing happens; a space especially in a piece of writing or in a speech where something is missing.

Not an Eagle but a Phoenix

Asfand Shehzad, CEME

An eagle dies.

A phoenix does not.

Today's Pakistan is not Iqbal's Pakistan. It is not even worthy of the name designated to it by Chaudhary Rehmat Ali. Today if we take one step the ladder we stumble down three of them. These words are very sour and are not easy to swallow let alone digest but they are true. Intellectually, we are dead. Spiritually, we are dead. Economically, we are dead. The ray of hope is dimming day by day. The strand of rope is thinning, and the threads are snapping one after the other. The sand in the hourglass is flowing only one way, towards the bottom, towards despair.

But this does not mean that all is over. The vortex can only suck one to a certain degree. There is still time to turn the table around, to force aside the cobwebs and face the light once again. Strengthen the rope, to turn the hourglass upside down, to rewrite the crumpled pages of our destiny, we need to exert.

Not long ago did Iqbal redefine the concept of *Shaheen*. Iqbal is an advocate of the cultivation of strength and deprecates weakness. He used the symbol of Shaheen in a prolific manner. The eagle is courageous. Its aerial skills are unmatched. It is self-reliant. It possesses too much '*khudi*' to feast upon a rotten corpse; it hunts its own prey and soars peacefully above the clouds. It is the ultimate predator.

Today it is nowhere to be found. Where is the Shaheen of the mid-20th century? Where is the

Shaheen who fought the war of independence?

Where is the *Shaheen* of Salahuddin Ayyubi.

Where is the *Shaheen* who redesigned the map of this world, who redefined the art of independence through sheer will power?

Is it dead? Does everything, in the end, fall victim to the ultimate reality? Does the demise of a creature as splendid as the Shaheen occur that way? Is that really a fitting end to the tale of the Shaheen? Or is it just a new beginning?

A creature as mighty as *Shaheen* does not fall victim to petty things like death. The Shaheen of one generation diminishes with it but it takes rebirth in the form of the next generation. It rises from the ashes of its previous self. There is no being like it. The food chain ends at the *Shaheen*. We may have lost the Shaheen of our previous generation but this is not the end. These dark ashes are not what they seem. Just as all glittering things are not gold, all dark and dull things are not dirt. Under the ashes, the creature is marking its time and waiting for the right moment to once again rise to the top and blind the world with its glistening brilliance. It is not just another eagle. It is a vision.

Iqbal's *Shaheen* is not just an ordinary bird with wings.

No it is not a bird.

It is the symbol of power. It is the crimson sea flowing in the veins of our young generation. It is the strength in the shoulders of a laborer. It is the chalk dust floating senselessly in the air of a classroom. It is the ink on a student's exam paper. It is not a bird.

It is the ancientness of Badshahi Masjid. It is the swaying head of a young child who is learning Quran at a local Madrasa. It is the modernity of the Faisal Mosque. It is the Wudhu water dripping from an average Muslim's visage at Fajr time.

It is not a bird.

It is something far more magical. It is the missile of a JF-17. It is the aura of Saiful Maluk. It is the boom of our nuclear weapon. It is the delicacy of Sheesh Mahal. It is the world cup of 1992. It is the sacrifices of 1971. It is the victory of 1965. It is the freedom of 1947.

No it is not a bird.

It is the welcoming embrace of the Baloch. It is the fiery hearts of the Pashtuns. It is the mystical culture of Sindh. It is the versatility and sheer manpower of Punjab. It is the belongingness of the minorities. It is the unity of Pakistan.

It is not a bird.

It is the peak of the Karakoram flirting with the heavens. It is the tides of the Indian Ocean clashing with our land. It is the five rivers; it is the Thar Desert. It is the blistering heat of Sibbi. It is the beauty of Shalimar. It is the freezing cold of Siachen.

It is not a bird.

It is the subtle batting of Zaheer Abbass. It is the crosscourt smash of Jehangir Khan. It is the 4 world cups of the hockey team. It is the direction of Bilal Lashari. It is the six octave vocal range of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. It is the will of Jinnah.

No it is not a bird.

It is the engineers. It is the doctors. It is the postman. It is the teacher. It is the voice of the *Muezzin*. It is the *Sajda* of a Momin. It is the tradition of GCU. It is the exuberance of LUMS. It is the prestige of Aitchison. It is the EME of Pakistan.

It is not a bird.

It is the genius of the technical corps. It is the brilliance of the medical corps. It is the guns of the artillery. It is the communication skills of the signals corps. It is the brave men of the infantry. It is the tanks of the armor corps. It is the flight of the PAF; It is the stroke of Navy.

It is not a bird.

It is the khaki of the brave Ghazi. It is the blue of our protectors. It is the recoil of our assault rifles. It is the aim of our sniper. It is the last breath of the Shaheed; it is the silence of his mother. It is the pride of an army widow; it is the innocence of her child.

No it is not a bird.

It is the five attributes mentioned by Iqbal not long ago. It is the *Buland Parvaazi*. It is the impeccable vision. It is the *khilwat pasandi*. It is the excitement of constant flight. It is the thrill of the hunt.

عقابی روح جب بیدار ہوتی ہے جوانوں میں
نظر آتی ہے ان کو اپنی منزل آسمانوں میں

Iqbal then weaves these five characteristics of the Shaheen in his concept of "Khudi". The lone ingredient for the recipe of success. A word of such power, such potential that it can absorb colossal black holes in itself. If only we embrace the true meaning of this one word, of these five letters, we can stand up once again; we can raise our heads up once again, and we can look towards the skies and smile.

Smile so that the world can see us; smile so that the skies can see us. Smile, so that we let our creator know that O Lord! We have finally started our

journey on the path which You laid before us; we have finally understood the purpose of our existence; we have finally learnt to fly; to make use of the wings you blessed us with, the wings which we never recognized because we could not see. We could not see because we had the sight, not the vision. We could not see because we were afraid.

These five attributes if placed in the path of a cyclone remain unscathed. The cyclone tries its best to destroy each and every one of them. It hurls them against one another but it does not succeed. They merge together on contact and give life to a new being. Through the eye of the cyclone, a mighty Shaheen rises.

Life is...

Muhammad Fahad Sohail, CEME

I can feel the cool breeze stifling through my hair; the horizon is smeared with a multitude of colors I, honestly, cannot identify. I praise the diversities of Allah's creativity. Walking down a winding trail, I watch the dew drops glisten in the twilight's shadow; Life seems beautiful. I see innocent 4 year olds walking towards their first school nursery or whatever they wish to call it these days. A faint smile crosses my lips; it is hardly the break of winter, and they are clad in coats, mufflers and heavy hats. I bet even if it gets unbearably hot at noon, they won't take it off only because their mama had told them not to. I smile at the purity of innocence. Life is beautiful.

A random memory flashes through my mind, and I sift through it, leaf by leaf. The leaves having turned yellow, are withering away with the robust wind. It is a sad yet astonishing sight, watching the flakes of green mantle chip away withstanding a rigorous battle. I couldn't help but be reminded of my visit to a specialized facility. I had well acquainted myself with a balding cancer patient and his courageous fight for survival, even if no hope was about. A lifetime of dreams and decades of efforts, splintered away on account of a deadly

disease. I remember mumbling a silent prayer in favor of the poor soul. I see Chippa Service carry the dead bodies after a heartrending calamity. I watch a mother cry her heart out, the pain of a sister, I witness the sorrow of a wife, the suffering of a man. All of a sudden, life seems to be tragic. I watch snowflakes which indicate the peak of winter season. I crack a smile as one of the flakes latches unto my eyelashes. I see a handicapped man, dragging himself along the road in dead cold night, begging so that he may have a dry crisp loaf bread. A cold shiver ran through my spine. I see an orphan on the street; I could see his pain as he was eyeing happy families walk down the street. I cannot dare to comprehend the horrors he would have seen in his short counted breaths of life, the cruelty which may even cause us to question our priorities. As I look closer, I could see the dark specks of psychological torture, swimming within his glowing orbs, my heart cries out. It was rightly said, "Eyes are the windows to the soul." Life just turned cruel.

I remember those damp and moist summer days, with the strong sun, and inexhaustible purge of heat. I made a trip down the street to buy myself a

bun and a pack of milk which had me soaked from head to toe. I see a flood victim, homeless, starved with no access to medical facilities. Nowhere to go, none to hear his plea except the Creator. I see his ordeal; I can see the suffering, yet I am unable to help him. I see a poor woman, who was maliciously wronged. I am ashamed that I have failed as man of her nation to provide her the protection she deserves. Life feels suffocating.

I see a teenager disrespecting his parents; the very same mother who had taught him how to walk and talk, who nearly died giving birth to the damned soul; the father who had the hardest day at work yet when the apple of his eye cried at night, he held him till 3 a.m. — all of the sacrifices, disregarded. I see an offspring hitting his parents, his own parents; I am stunned. A few years ago, the very same parents had rejoiced at the birth of their newborn, and now they curse it. I want to scream out in protest, but I don't feel any sound coming out of my throat. Life seems 'paradoxical'.

Dark clouds covered the vast expanse of sky; I sense a heavy thunderstorm at hand. I can already hear rather than see the first crack of thunder. It reminds me of an encounter I had with an aching heart. There seems to be something bothering that ostensibly normal being. I had the misfortune of learning yet another lost, unheard tragedy. My heart questioned if it would ever end. Later on, I came to learn of what sort of fruit unheard cries had borne. The oppressed outdid the oppressor. I guess the people deem it justified to point the fingers at the wrongdoer, the latter one of-course. I silently ask myself, why a soul was wronged beyond measure in the first place and then left off to fend for itself in the shallow depths of anguish.

Life can be miserable.

A homeless person caught my eye – Long unkempt dirty hair, dressed in an assortment of rags, I bet a cleaning towel knotted upon my spare bathroom's useless tap is cleaner as compared to his overall. He holds a century's old ruffled bag; I presume it contains a handful of objects which sum up as his entire belongings. I see a child, hardly older than six, surfing through the mountain of trash at the roadside. The poor soul is picking up dry locks of fruit peels and a rock hard piece of discarded bread to satisfy his impending hunger. I felt a tear escape my eye. Life just turned miserable.

I see a beautiful innocent female walking modestly minding her business; I see people gaping at her as if she is a piece of steak to be feasted over; I am disgusted further than the limit of expression. I see a betrayal of the worst sort; I am taken aback. What else does one need to feed his carnal desires? Isn't halal enough? I see two individuals fighting over personal whims. I see two groups arguing, each one of them seems to have forsaken the path of truth, yet claiming to be the guided one. I cry out to myself, asking if personal ego and self-righteousness was more important than piety of soul. Life felt sick.

I finally decide to take a long walk; I get out of my apartment and head towards my favorite spot on the corniche. It's around 2 kilometers from my place, and considering the briskness of night, I decide to stop by my favorite coffee shop. I grab a Coffee Mocha, and tread to my destination — the spot behind the circular enclosure of date trees. I set aside my bag, an annoying yet useful habit I've adopted recently, carrying a bag that is, on the arc shaped bench and landed myself on the

stone railing. I gaze at the murky ocean, gleaming in the moonlight; I can see the tips of the dark waves, sparkle. I am fascinated; the moon, having no magnificence of its own, yet I can see a vast imprint of the alluring moonlight, on the dark extents of marine surface. I marvelled at the fact that it reaches upto places so far away yet possesses no radiance of its own.

I spent the night at that spot, gazing, thinking, and reflecting. At last the dark clouds of insularity began to fade out of the picture; I felt gears turning in my head. I recall reading somewhere – even midnight sun rises somewhere in the north during darkest of the hours. I wonder why I had forgotten to focus on the bigger picture. I had restricted my vision within a narrow frame; I had completely missed what it aimed at. There is always a lesson to be learned, from the direst of the situations, if

only one is heedful. Also there is always a way to counter every obstacle, given one is conscientious.

It is true, life is full of hardships, trials, tribulations and at one time too many sacrifices, but there is also the fortune of primal human sentiments of joy, compassion, empathy, mercy, innocence, faith and love. It is rightly said in order to live a contented life, take a peek at the state of the lesser privileged. I came down to a golden conclusion: yes, there is darkness and suffering in the world, and yet I am blessed enough to be spared of it. Consequently, it is my duty as a human being to eradicate at least one vice of my habitat, and pray to Allah Almighty, supplicating for the power to do so.

Life is beautiful; don't let it waste.

My first December in Islamabad: a visit to Edhi Homes

Ayesha Nasir, NBS

Islamabad knows cold winters and this is my first winter here in the capital. When winter arrives, it walks beside you like a constant companion; its silence never really leaves you. At times, such silence gets suffocating and like every soul who calls Karachi home, there comes a point when you begin to feel numb. Writing, it appears, has been helping in preventing numbness from reaching the rest of me. As I write this, there is this need to go back to the place I have been, to reach out for what was familiar that now appears strange.

For a long time now, I have been wondering how I am surviving away from home. During my first

December as a student of NUST, I met people who have never known any homes except for those which they have found with each other. What I learned is what I would like to share with you.

I learned that each human has the capacity to endure way beyond what he or she believes himself or herself to be capable of. We may weep loud or silently when we face loss but we can and do make it through. I learned that even the calmest of cities can hide the ugliest of truths. Here in the capital, you will find homelessness, hunger and pain of the worst kind. Islamabad is green and very much alive but there are people on the streets, under the

shelter of the trees, who are careworn and need a place to rest their heads in dignity. The city gives the impression of being distant from the rest of Pakistan because it is more organised, less chaotic and that it takes care to beautify itself in every season it weathers. But it is the people who make up a city, for: “What is the city but the people?” (That is Shakespeare for you. Coriolanus. One of his best and highly underrated plays).

There was something about loss which I needed to understand. I had to know that there always is a comfort which every soul yearns for: to be loved, to be safe and to be warm. When that is taken away, souls suffer. You may not tell it in their radiant smiles or feel it in their wrinkled hands. You may not find it written on their faces or spot it in their words. But if you look hard enough, if you speak gently and kindly enough, if you are patient enough, you will know what they have lost.

It is easy for me. I am learning how to carry home with me, wherever I go. I am learning to tuck away my fears, to look forward to what is to come in a constant state of hope. But what about those people who live in homes for the homeless? They were left behind because they could not keep up, because they were unwanted, because they could not talk or look at the world their parents did. Will you – or let us not bring you in, let us talk about me – will I give them a home when they are in most need of it? Will I let them enter my home, wherever it is or however it is, when they have no place else to go? Or will they be left on the streets or at the doorstep of another stranger like me?

If you are reading these words, I only ask this of you: Please do not forget the family who may or may not always be there for you. Do not forget to call up those you know, to go meet them even if it means going out of the way, and to ask them how

they have been. I am writing this to let you know that sometimes all it takes is one person who can tip the balance, one phone call which can save a life and a walk in the winter morning which can help put everything into perspective.

If you are in Islamabad and would like to volunteer, please call up Edhi Homes and let them know when you would like to come over. I hope to see you there.

KAKI?

The name Kaki was attributed to Hazrat Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki for one of his (keramat) miracle that emanated from him in Delhi. According to it, he asked his wife not to take credit from the local baker despite extreme poverty. Instead he told her to pick up Kak(a kind of bread/cake) from a portion of the house whenever she needed. After that his wife found that the kak appeared in a corner of the house whenever she needed. Meanwhile the baker became worried whether Khawaja Bakhtiar had become angry with him that he had stopped taking bread from him. Baker's wife approached Hazrat Khawaja Bakhtiar's wife for the reason. She told her that reason for not borrowing any bread from the baker, and the secret of Kak was revealed. The Kak stopped coming after the revelation of the secret. From that day onward the people started referring to Hazrat Khawaja Bakhtiar as Kaki.

(Wikipedia)

Life in the Fast Lane

Hammad Ali Hassan, RCMS

Since its debut in 2009, the KERS system has been a wonder. A weapon of its own kind, a technological ice-berg that has led to an era of changes in our daily road going cars. Although it's difficult to be seen in our cars at-least for the next 20 years.

Formula 1 as we know is the ultimate of motor-sport championship (the fans of WRC and NASCAR tend to disagree but never mind who cares, a place where your best is not good enough and for shaving-off as less as 0.1 of a second in one lap of race track you have to start all over again from the drawing board. This is a place where ABS a.k.a anti-lock breaking system was initiated from and then terminated in the space of decade. Why? Well simply because it was too "safe" and race car drivers could not push the cars to their limit when ABS would kick-in causing early breaking. The turbo-charged formula 1 cars of the 80's still reckoned as one of the fiercest machines ever made, that produced so much torque that it caused them to dance around even in the straight line and when the cockpit was just an Aluminum casing with deep lying seats until Williams came

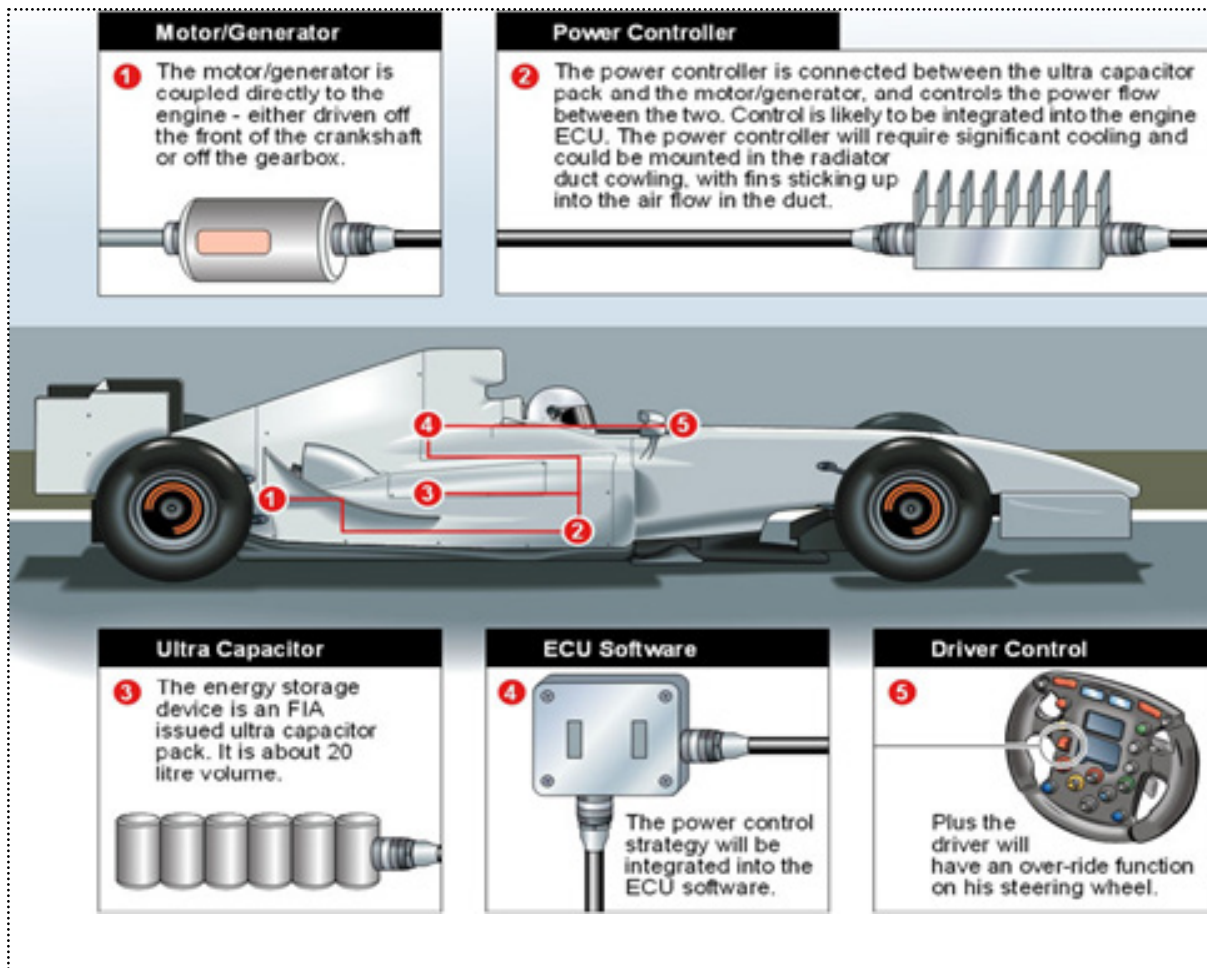
up with the carbon-fiber chassis and there was always a chance of fire inside the cockpit it took some guts to step in those mean-machines that could kill you in as less as 3 seconds and turn your body into rubber ash I guess it was more than the money that those boys were interested in. It was sheer passion that forced them to step out and put their lives at risk and literally wrestle to finish ahead of everyone else at the chequered flag, the passion that kept those engines running was dangerous too, dangerous enough to have killed many drivers in their prime years. The last one to die in Formula 1 was Ayrton Senna a Brazilian, arguably the best driver in the history of the sport. The reason I described all that was to give a mere notion of how dangerous a sport it is unlike Bull-fighting where you are there to kill or to die. It is quite the same here too except you never know when you will be the next. As I said before, everything that we see in our cars these days has been derived from these thoroughbred racers from ABS to dual-clutch semi automatic sequential gearbox and coming back to KERS, it is the Kinetic Energy Recovery System. The



mechanism is simple too. We know when braking hard the brakes tend to get hot. Now imagine you have to stop from 280kph to 80kph in 2.5 seconds or less. of course you need ceramic forged silicon carbide brakes whose temperature reaches 750 °C normally, that being a lot of heat it would be unwise to just release it in the atmosphere. The heat of brakes is then recovered via heat absorbers mounted on carbon brake calipers and stored in a motor.

Now this energy can either be stored mechanically (in a flywheel) or electronically (using a battery

or super capacitor). The whole assembly weighs 23-26kg and has energy capacity of 400KJ after calculating all the frictional losses and provides a staggering 81 HP (60KW) available to driver for 6.6 sec in one lap of race track, the flywheel is a steel composite and can do 64,500RPM. All these facts and figures seem boring but this may very well be the future of automobiles. It will take time no doubt but once it's out there it will be the next best thing that has happened to internal combustion engine cars after the turbo-chargers. This whole idea of KERS has opened many doors into the path of sustainability the one thing our earth is in desperate need of!



Passion for Peace

Prof. Dr M Salim

In this brief discourse, our contention is that every sentient being longs for peace and man is no exception. But peace cannot be achieved through mercy petitions because that can be deemed simply as a cry of weaklings. In fact, peace, if it does not flow from justice, has very little substantive value. If we stick to logical order it seems that justice precedes and peace succeeds. For if justice is gone, peace cannot stay behind for too long either.

Introduction:

Aristotle in his "Politics" has rightly observed that who-so-ever has conceived the idea of a commonwealth or a state should be considered as the greatest benefactor of human race but state cannot survive without justice, for if justice is gone man turns into an "armed animal" and gleefully cuts each other's throat. It may be underscored that almost all the philosophers of history do hold that there are two cardinal principles for the rise & fall of civilizations. And these principles are known as Unity and Justice. Now Unity may be based on multiple grounds & reinforced by diverse elements, such as, common race or dynasty, language, country or territory, history, hopes and fears, goals and objectives etc. Besides these natural elements, Ibn-i-Khaldun does insist that we have to accommodate some trans-natural elements as well such as religion that may contribute to our sense of Unity. In brief, Unity cements and integrates the community while justice protects and preserves it (the Unity). If both these principles are in order and well operative, the whole community moves as a well-organized individual rather than falling apart because of internal tensions, rifts and dissensions. Let us take

the example of Pakistan, our beloved homeland..

In our struggle for independence, our Unity was strengthened by Islam, our common religion. And our objective, as our founding fathers proclaimed, was the establishment of a just-socio-moral order in our sovereign state. But the irony is that the moment Pakistan was born, we dismissed Islam from our public life. Affairs of the state were never allowed to be touched by the spirit of Islam. It means Islam, the integrating force of our Unity, was gone; where as justice was never allowed to be born in the first instance. So both the cardinal principles (i.e. Unity and Justice) were made inoperative. And as a result, we ran into serious difficulties so much so that East Pakistan drifted away from our fold and turned into Bangladesh. And the rest of the country is crawling under the ever mounting pressure of ceaseless crises. Now if we want to survive with honor & dignity, we are required to redefine our fundamentals before it is too late.

The Quranic Prescription for Peace: The holy Quran recommends, (and I may be allowed to paraphrase it) that an Islamic state should keep its forces ready on war footing so that it may strike fear and dismay in the hearts and minds of its enemies and the enemies of God. so such so that they may never dare to invade and trample upon the Muslim lands.

These verses seem to suggest that it is weakness that invites invasion. If on the other hand, our defense is invincible no one can cross our borders. It also suggests that peace cannot be achieved through mercy petitions. Instead it is our readiness for war that can pre-empt the possibility of war. It

means that the real role of the armed forces is pre-emptive rather than defensive.

These verses of the Quran do under score that if we don't have a formidable fighting strength, we can easily be cowed down & pushed around by the enemies. It appears that as we have ignored the clear Injunctions of the Quran, no wonder we are suffering from humiliation & disgrace. We need self-sufficiency in our defense potentials. It is true that Islam does stand for peace & is willing to invite not only the people of the Book but also the non-believers for the establishment of peace in the world. But if we fail to join hands with those forces, even then we cannot afford to ignore our defense needs.

It is important to underline that Stephen Cohen, in his book: The Idea of Pakistan tries to misinterpret and misconstrue the spirit of these verses. He contends that these verses indicate that not only the Muslims, but their God is also a terrorist and wants to intimidate His enemies. This shows the intellectual dishonesty of the "People of the Book". They tend to hide the truth for paltry gains. Here we may venture to submit that:-

God of Islam is exceedingly Rahman and Raheem that is infinitely kind; Compassionate and Merciful. God has imposed the Law of Mercy on himself. All other attributes of God are touched and supervised by the Law of Mercy. Our creation-preservation-Guidance-and judgment, all are the result of His outpouring Mercy.

Likewise, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) is sent as a source of blessings to all the worlds, and these worlds maybe the world of humans or the world of beasts and animals or the world of Jinnat & angels.

It may also be underscored that Quran holds that the Muslim Ummah is the best of all the communities that has ever been raised for the

well-being of the human race. They are ever ready to enjoin good & forbid evil and are willing to lay down their lives & their properties for the cause of God- that is, do their best for the establishment of a just socio-moral order in this world. In the light of our above-cited submissions, we can conclude that terrorism has nothing to do with Islam. The west is guilty of intellectual dishonesty as it is busy in a false propaganda against the Muslims.

In any case, we should be willing to acknowledge that we have failed to present our case in a persuasive and convincing manner. Our scholars are guilty of poor performance.

Intellectual & Moral Tarbiya of the Individual in Islam: All reform movements start from the individuals. Islam has also addressed its moral revolution to the individual. The holy Quran holds that the single most mission of the Prophet (PBUH) is to recite the verses of the Quran & purify the hearts and minds of his followers; Teach them the Book of God and help them understand and appreciate the Hikmat of the Teaching of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet, cultivate in them the spirit of Taqwa and take them to new heights of Ihsan- that is, make them God-conscious. The individual should be brought to new heights of moral excellence. He should be able to feel the presence of God in and around him. He should realize that God is a witness to his thoughts and deeds. Purification of the individual from all carnal desires was the single most concern of the Prophet and he did his job with an absolute commitment. It may be emphasized that after moral regeneration and reconstruction of the individual, the Prophet was able to lay the foundation of an Islamic state as well. Let us examine some of the fundamentals of this Islamic state.

Islamic State is a moral institution: In Islam, state is essentially a moral institution rather than a

business organization. The Muslim Ummah was supposed to have a firm faith/Iman in God and do righteous deeds. And if the society was brimmed with these virtues, God Almighty would bless them with the caliphate of this world.

In fact this has remained the Sunnah of God Almighty. When once you have been granted the caliphate, you should qualify the following three tests in order to be known as the true representative of an Islamic state.

Establish the system of Salah:

Salah, it may be emphasized, provides us with an opportunity to have communion with God Almighty.

Establish the system of Zakat, now zakat remarries us to other fellow beings and help us to mitigate their economic and financial deprivation.

Enjoin good and forbid evil. This falls into the social dimensions of Taqwa. Taqwa in fact has two dimensions. Self-directed Taqwa – helps us to refrain ourselves from the commission of evil. While other directed Taqwa urges us to prevent others from the commission of evil. The holy Quran underscores that the most conspicuous attribute of the Prophet (in the eyes of God) was his greediness for the moral and spiritual well being of his Ummah in particular and the humanity in general, By implication it is expected of the followers of the Prophet to be greedy for the moral well-being of mankind.

And above all the objectives is the establishment of a just socio – moral order in this world. In other words Taqwa is required for the purification of the individual and makes him God conscious. While justice is required for the purification of society. That is to make the state / society vibrant with God-consciousness. One can see that from the beginning to the end the purpose of an Islamic state is to produce God-conscious individuals and

God-Conscious state or society. If we are able to realize these objectives, we can turn the hell into heaven and attain the real peace and contentment in this world and salvation and success in the hereafter.

The Quranic Philosophy of History: The holy Quran is replete with such passages wherein we are instructed that God Almighty has frequently flushed up different communities to the central stage so that. He may assess as to what they can do for the establishment of a just socio-moral order in this world. Further it observes that so long as they remained committed to this mission-establishment of a just socio-moral order-and were found willing to lay down their lives and their properties for the cause of God, they could find God on their side. But the moment they turn away their face from their mission, they start receiving Warnings from above – catastrophes of all kinds including the oppression of the corrupt rulers.

Warnings from underneath their feet this includes all sorts of natural calamities plus the devastating aggression and exploitations of the poor and the destitutes.

Warnings through the polarization of the society into warring clans and tribes: Purpose of these warnings is to help people realize their follies and urge them to go for collective repentance and to turn back to the right course of life. But if they fail to mend their ways, their time is over. They are wrapped up. History turns a new page by eliminating the rotten lot and a fresh community is installed instead.

As of now, we can see that we do receive frequent warnings from God Almighty' but we are seldom moved to go for collective repentance and mending our ways. We should wake up otherwise history may turn a new page. We will be gone, virtually buried in the dust of history.

Societal Responsibility

Muhammad Abubakar, MCS

The standard of life has changed in such a manner that people have become slaves of their wishes and habits. Materialistic approach in every niche and corner and superfluity of amenities of life has caused a potential threat to the sanctity of moral values that just being the wealthy suffices to be respectable, righteous and honorable. So, the paradigms of relationships among people in society have changed terribly. The earlier Muslims were successful in their expeditions because of simplicity in daily life, were resolute in divine commandments and not enslaved by their habits and wishes. The study of history reveals that even during the best practices of democratic values, the governments and states were devastated because of corrupt social values. Had there been the healthy society and moral values among the mass, the states would not have demolished. Societal values determine the type of government and rulers. Best governments and finest administration and bureaucracies can be formed provided the society is vibrant, receptive, lively and responsible. But, miserably, in our type of society even if Junaid Baghdadi becomes the head of the state, the prospective change would not happen. It is the duty of society to produce capable, proficient and consummate leadership according to the demands and necessities of the society but we just only want to talk about the effect not the principal cause. The current crisis of leadership that we off and on say is because of our lethargic social values.

Revival of society means the society must be standing by some values and principles. We must primarily take care of building and establishment of these values, when these values are ascertained then they emanate and prevail the society. The resulting social, political and financial institutions will rest on such values and principles. For

instance, the western society has some values and principles and the institutions there owe and oblige them. The west was at a time not civilized so some intellectuals propagated particular values. When the society accepted those ones, they also became part of their institutions. For example democracy is one of the western values. It says difference of opinion be accommodated as basic right and majority votes be considered in decision making. When society accepted it as a social value it also became part of institutions and corporations. Thus parliamentary democracy originated.

An Islamic society does have some values and principles. Unless we practice and establish them in society, they would never become part of our institutions. For example, Muslim society is standing on the belief of judgment on doomsday. When this belief is established it would also become part of our institutions leading to the sense of responsibility and fear of impeachment on doomsday. Then it will help us eradicate corruption. The institutional policies will emanate this color of belief and value. The people at work in shops and corporate institutions will not be able to neglect this factor that they would be answerable on doomsday. We must now promote our social values and practice them in our daily life. This sense of shyness is leading us to gradually eliminating those moral and ethical values which in case that they become norms of society would in effect eliminate lots of potential problems and dilemmas that we are facing now. Therefore, revival of such values should be promoted and be practiced in our, not only private but public and corporate life too. This will ensure the actual change that we aspire to see, although it is a evolutionary process. We must not get tired of practicing these values.

Our Quaid: As Remembered and Reported (2014)

Author: Asalm Bazmi, SEECs

Reviewer: Ehsan-ul-Haq

Few tributes paid to Mohamamd Ali Jinnah strike as profound as the one we find laconically expressed in the following words of Sir John Alec Biggs-Davison, former Conservative Member of British Parliament: “Although without Gandhi, Hindustan still would have gained independence and without Lenin and Mao Russia and China would still have endured Communist revolution, without Jinnah there would have been no Pakistan in 1947.” Viewing Jinnah’s feat from yet another perspective, Professor Akbar S Ahmad very succinctly states: “Islam gave the Muslims of India sense of identity; dynasties such as the Moghuls had given them territory; poets like Iqbal created in them a sense of destiny; Jinnah’s heroic stature can be understood from the fact that by leading the Pakistan movement and creating the state of Pakistan, he gave them all three.”

Mohammad Ali Jinnah radiated the purity of heart and character reminiscent of the sublimity of saints and mujaddids. He lived and breathed throughout his personal and public life the pristine virtues of truthfulness, courage, honesty and integrity. This set him apart from mundane politics relying on deceit and chicanery as the watchwords of success. Great nations remember with gratitude their founding fathers and hold them in abiding esteem. This is imperative to nurture and sustain in people the sublime spirit of emulating the deeds and sacrifices of their heroes and leaders.

One efficacious and proven way of inculcating in adolescents sound leadership traits and an intrinsic passion for selfless service will be taking

them on a vicarious journey into the lives of great leaders. This will help them imbibe the sublime examples of courage, rectitude, devotion and sacrifice. Today, there is a pressing need to study and ponder on what made Jinnah the saviour of the beleaguered Muslim nation during the British raj in India. We can draw immense inspiration from his epic struggle for independence which eventually culminated into carving out a separate Muslim homeland in South Asia.

It is in this perspective that Professor Aslam Bazmi’s recently published work, *Our Quaid—As Remembered and Reported*, merits keen interest and attention. Being a handy collection of perceptively gleaned anecdotes, featuring and spotlighting various character traits of the great leader, the book is vibrantly engaging and absorbing to the core. It is creditable that the author, a man of vast reading, immense energy, deep humility and firm determination, has expended a great deal of time and energy to produce a highly readable and insightful work for a wide cross-section of audience—students, teachers, academics, executives, leaders and the public at large.

People in general are averse to sermons and homilies but they tend to respond positively to a thought or message couched in an inspiring tale and anecdote. An illuminating book focused on a sublime theme, therefore, has tremendous inspirational and transformational value. Rather than dictating what to do and what not to do, it whispers, suggests and appeals silently without

bruising anyone's ego or self-esteem. It teaches as well as pleases.

Quite rich in content and elegant in its layout and design, *Our Quaid—As Remembered and Reported* is a fine compilation of anecdotes, spread over 166 pages—a laudable tribute to Quaid's sterling qualities of head and heart. The book is one of the pioneering publications of NUST Publishing, H-12, Islamabad. For the ease of the

reader, the contents are thematically indexed, each chapter covering a single character trait of the great leader. It is hoped the book will deeply touch the hearts and souls of its audience. It is expected to help instill in the reader the values and attitudes, in the absence of which no individual or society can aspire for a place of dignity and honour.

Our Quaid: As Remembered and Reported

Author: Aslam Bazmi

Reviewer: Lubna Umar

Professor Aslam Bazmi, a literary figure known and admired for his contributions in the world of academia, has chosen to translate and compile inspirational accounts from the life of the great Quaid of the sub continent. The main title of the book 'Our Quaid' reflects the author's deep sense of respect and devotion towards his leader. Thus, I too shall refer to Quaid-i-Azam as 'Our Quaid' keeping in view the profundity of its meaning in our national context. The book not only pays homage to one of the greatest statesmen of the century but also reveals the author's deep yearning to share his passion with the world.

The book is partly a translation of an award-winning title 'Hamaray Quaid' in Urdu comprising a number of insightful episodes from the life of our Quaid, compiled by Professor Manzoor Hussain Abbasi in 1980, and partly a collection of other such rare and revealing tales to enthuse the audience. The best aspect that instantly strikes the reader is the ease with which one can go through the book both in terms of diction and

the distribution of the reported incidents under twenty-two rubrics. The chronology provided at the end adds to the contextual information and further deepens the impact of the book.

I personally found 'Our Quaid: As Remembered and Reported' a gripping read—too riveting to be put aside without reading till the end. The book treated me to several incidents that were hitherto unknown to me. These anecdotes are highly engaging in that they are a reflection of a towering leader with whom we can relate not only as a politician but also as an icon of sublime substance. In Quaid's appealing qualities, we can instantly identify a role-model leader worthy of our emulation. The most captivating feature of the anecdotes weaved together to form this kaleidoscopic text is that it speaks to us, loud and clear, befitting very purpose of the book to inspire and guide the reader-beyond mere sharing the information.

The chapters based on various characteristics exhibited by our Quaid afford the reader a keen

insight, thus, enabling him to recognize and appreciate Quaid's lofty stature and enrich his perspective on a leader with few peers in our national history. The first chapter labeled 'Hard work and Diligence' is a familiar one as far as our Quaid is concerned; however, the fact that he required everyone to work equally hard can be seen through the various narrations given in the book. Measuring up to his standards of competence and hard work was a challenge that only few could meet. Not content with the performance of his staff, he did not hesitate to change a military secretary, four ADCs and a private secretary in the short span of ten months. The matters of the state were of prime importance and in that he sacrificed even his own health.

It is amazing to know that despite being termed a hard task-master, he would give in so readily, provided someone could persuade him with logic and reason just as the maker of the wooden screen was able to convince our Quaid to pay an extra amount for the extra effort the latter had put in to ensure the desired quality of the wooden screen. Quaid graciously accepted his mistake and "never nursed an ill feeling", a characteristic that we invariably find in almost every act of his public dealing.

One of my favorite incidents is the one quoted by Matlub-ul-Hasan Sayid, Quaid's private Secretary. While travelling to Nandi, a hilly area, Quaid took the opportunity to educate his entourage regarding the significance of justice both towards oneself and others. The porters that carried their luggage to the Nandi Hill resort were paid generously while those who carried the luggage further uphill were paid far less. This brought severe reprimand from our Quaid. In his fair judgement, it was

grave injustice considering that the latter's labour far exceeded that of the former and deserved to be paid accordingly.

My admiration for my leader has increased manifold after knowing the manner in which he turned the tables on the fraudulent lady in the train, thus lending emphasis to the value of maintaining as a leader unblemished repute and character. The book provides a handy and ready index of anecdotes bearing on the sterling character traits of our Quaid. Instead of fumbling around for a vivid glimpse into Quaid's enviable personality, the reader can vicariously and vibrantly feel the presence of their great leader through this highly efficacious book. This very well serves the author's noble intention of spotlighting the dynamism and charisma of a man larger than life because of his exalted dreams and aspirations and how those were actualized. Yet, we see him as a simple man disciplined to the core, who read and replied to every letter sent in his name, gave every person due respect—a humble being who showed weakness not only in front of his creator but stood like a rock to brave every hardship; the one who led the nation proudly and courageously without a backward glance.

I consider the book a must read for all those who haven't met their Quaid, but who would be ready to fall in love with him by the end. Besides gaining insight into the life of a great man, *Our Quaid: As Remembered and Reported* will serve as a personality development manual and a resource to acquire leadership qualities for students, intellectuals, scholars, and readership at large.

Atlas Shrugged

Author: Ayn Rand

Reviewer: Tayyab Ahmad, CEME

Are needs of a person a justified reason for efforts of someone else's muscles and mind? Can a society succeed with its values and ideologies stuck with the pegs of hypocrisy in a land of pure evil; an evil which is not a product of earned pride but a product of an unearned pride? Does one need to be hard, concrete and rigid or should he better be flexible, moldable and formless in order to achieve the biggest objectives of life, among which true happiness is first and foremost? Such, among many others, are the questions Ayn Rand has answered in her most complete work of fiction "Atlas Shrugged" which is definitely her magnum opus in terms of fiction writing.

Born in Russia and then migrated to America at an age of twenty one years, Ayn Rand acted as a clear rebellion against communism in her philosophy named "objectivism". Being the most complete work of Ayn Rand, Atlas Shrugged has got a big chunk of objectivism philosophy. This is a novel characterized by Dagny Taggart,

operating president of a transcontinental railway company; Francisco D. Anconia, owner of largest copper mines in the country; Hank Rearden, founder of the most important iron alloy ever invented and John Galt who remains a mystery until three quarters of the novel is over. The novel has a setting of New York City for most of its part and the plot is mainly composed of a continuous confrontation of hard and rigid industrialists with men who name their actions as nothing but the service of mankind.

"I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine." Is this vow a statement of a man's honesty and his right of happiness & existence or is it another selfish statement of people who slaughter every value in sight and call it a sacrifice for the service of mankind? In order to understand what it means, one needs to go through objectivism via a voyage through Atlas Shrugged.

168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think

Author: Laura Vanderkam

Reviewer: Muhammad Sohaib Tariq

My reading habits have always been seasonal; each phase comes and goes without failure. I have been through the children's book phase, the Harry Potter phase, the thriller phase, the humor phase, the science fiction phase, the classics phase and the self help phase.

The list is much longer but we'll stop at self help.

When a yearning for self help books raised its newborn head, I turned to the holiest collection of knowledge available to me: the internet. Almost immediately I came across a treasure trove of productivity e-books on brainpickings.com.

I picked out Laura Vanderkam's "168 hours: You have more time than you think". And not because

my time management skills are weak, but because they are practically non-existent.

Laura Vanderkam is a writer, columnist, speaker, businesswoman, Princeton Alumnus and mother of three. In her books '168 hours: you have more time than you think', she aims to shift our view of time and instead of managing it in blocks of 24 hours, she proposes that we instead look at 168 hour chunks. This paradigm shift to managing weeks instead of days is undoubtedly refreshing. The book includes charts that readers can fill to record their weekly activities in order to see how much time they spend each week working and how much time goes to waste. Fair warning: The latter part may correspond to alarming amounts of time.

Also included in the book are career profiles of successful men and women who were able to focus on doing what is necessary today to achieve their goals tomorrow. As Ms. Vanderkam very aptly puts it, "While we think of our lives in grand abstractions, a life is actually lived in hours." If you spend a good many hours doing work aimed

at your 'core competencies'; another focal point of this book; you can be fairly optimistic about your future.

Halfway through the book, I began to lose interest, for obvious reasons, as the career profiles became more focused towards young women with kids launching successful careers, but I kept reading till the end.

All in all, it was a good read. The writer managed to be off beat in a very saturated genre. Her idea of looking at time in 168 hour chunks was definitely very original. Some of her suggestions may seem a little upmarket but it is not entirely unexpected; Ms. Vanderkam clearly states that she leads a privileged life early in the first chapter.

I would recommend this book to young entrepreneurs looking to hone their craft before taking a plunge into the corporate sea. It caters to a wide variety of readers so it understandably becomes boring at times but if you can bear to keep reading through the irrelevant bits, you will surely get some valuable life advice. Happy reading!

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Author: Khaled Hosseini

Reviewer: Hira Noor

After the much-acclaimed "Kite Runner", Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-born American novelist and physician, produced a heart-wrenching masterpiece "A Thousand Splendid Suns". The book was released by Riverhead books on May 22, 2007 and remained a number one New York Times bestseller for 15 weeks following its release.

The story is set during Afghanistan's tumultuous thirty-year transition from Soviet occupation to Taliban control and post-Taliban rebuilding. It connects the readers to the life in Afghanistan spanning over a period of 40 years from 1960 to 2003. The book features a deeply moving story of family and friendship set in the war-torn country and mainly focuses on the plight of the women

and life in Afghanistan from the Soviet invasion to the Taliban control.

Hosseini, who was born in Kabul and moved to the United States in 1980, draws a sketch of his country for the western audience. He depicts the fallout that the violent history of Afghanistan has had on its women and tries to communicate their point of view. The author has penned down a book with a very strong and intense storyline that picks up rapid momentum and grasps the attention of readers till the very end. The story centers around two women, Mariam and Laila, who strive hard to survive the cruel Afghan society and the atrocities of Taliban.

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a tale of two generations of characters brought together by the tragic sweep of war. The first part focuses on a 15 year old character named Mariam who lives at the edge of a town named Herat with her mother. Being an illegitimate child, Mariam is married off to a womanizing shoemaker who is 30 years her senior. Mariam faces many prejudices and is unacceptable to her mother and the family of his rich father. She becomes a victim of continual physical and verbal abuse. Nearly two decades later, tragedy strikes a 15 year old Laila who is compelled to join the unhappy household of Mariam, and so their stories converge. Their strength of friendship takes the shape of a mother-daughter bond. But as time passes, streets of Kabul echo with the clattering sounds of gunfire and bombs, and so the struggle against brutality starts as both women overcome the obstacles with an act of astonishing heroism.

The book is fictional, though it is interwoven with historical events, with the timeline ranging from Soviet invasion to the reign of the Taliban. It is

made clear in the beginning that Hosseini intends to deal with the plight of Afghan women. He talks about their inner strength, loyalty and devotion, discrimination of women – it reinforces how cruel men can be against women and how Mariam and Laila are forced into life situations which challenge their strength and their ability to endure. Hosseini's style of writing is gentle and smooth. His writing has made this book very energetic and thought provoking; it is like having an emotional ride till the very end.

“Only the hardest of hearts could fail to be moved”-(Glamour)

In the spring of 2003, the author went to Kabul, seeing the burqa-clad women sitting at street corners, with four, five, six children, begging for change was the inspiration behind this masterful narrative. Hosseini adds greater knowledge and understanding to the western point of view, and makes the Afghans come alive as loving individuals. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* can be examined as a feminist novel not in that it actively speaks out against the subjugation of women in Afghanistan, but in that it describes the horrors inflicted on women through the two main characters, thus inciting a feminist reaction from the reader.

Hosseini routinely uses “harami” (bastard) and other words from the characters' native languages in his dialogue, followed by the English translation, apparently in an attempt to bring readers closer to the Afghan culture. But it usually makes it incredibly superficial for the foreign readers. Another glaring shortcoming of this novel is Hosseini's decision to end *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in April 2003—just months before large parts of Afghanistan erupted in a counter-

occupation insurgency.

By the end you are not only left with a tear, but with a fire lit within. It is above all a story of hope and of life, the heroism that comes with love and the inevitable strife that comes with living.

It is inspirational, outstanding and a compulsive fiery tale. Every man and woman should read this astounding tale.

The Tipping Point

Author: Malcolm Gladwell

Reviewer: Sara Sultana, SEECS

Yawning is the symbol of boredom and sleepiness. Yet this does not mean necessarily that if a reader of “The Tipping Point” by Malcolm Gladwell yawns, he’s bored! Malcom Gladwell proves that yawning is contagious (I believe cough is contagious too based on my classroom coughing experience!) through an ‘experiment’. And the very beginning of the book gets you, ‘It’s practical Man’! As I started reading the book, everybody was yawning in my room!

The Tipping Point is favorite among people from all backgrounds but particularly among leaders and managers. The book advocates that sometimes small things matter a lot as the convincing cover page displays a burnt match stick which is small yet it is capable of burning a whole forest. I wrote ‘sometimes’ small things matter a lot. It is not always a fact that one night’s effort will make us a topper (or say a billionaire!). Things need an environment to tip; there are some Rules of Epidemics as Malcolm Gladwell calls them. These rules include the:

- i. Law of the few,
- ii. The stickiness factor and
- iii. The power of context.

The law of the few says some people matter more than others and these ‘some’ people are messengers

with qualities like being connectors, mavens and salesmen. The stickiness factor demands that if you want to tip, you must be simple, focused and contagious. Now you know why Sesame Street and Blue’s Clues were such a success; these were so simple, relatable and focused on child teaching along with entertainment. Finally the power of context requires understanding those times when people are sensitive towards an issue (of course you cannot negotiate your pocket money or salary at any time!). Let’s say that the power of context is the “garam loha”. It is peer pressure, understanding and environment that can turn a saint into an indifferent, cold hearted man the book quotes (a very interesting example in this regard that you have got to read yourself).

Finally, Gladwell mentions that simplifying a message makes it potentially contagious but we need to pay attention since neglecting details and oversimplifying things may turn a message into rumor. A rumor is a message turned into confusing piece of information.

Convincing, right? Don’t forget to add The Tipping Point into your to-be-read list, not bookmark-and-forget list.

Happy Reading!

Inferno

Author: Dan Brown

Reviewer: Momina Abrar Rashid, SEECs

I love books; they were like food for me, necessary for survival and I am a huge Dan Brown fan. I have read all his books and deeply admire his work. When I likened books to my food, I used past tense. It was intentional. Ever since starting University, sleep is my only food. I just cannot fit reading into my schedule. And it's not that I am not trying, I am, very hard. I am the kind of person whose one reason for the love of winters was oversized hoodies in which she could smuggle books to the bathroom to read them because she had annuals just round the corner and her mother wanted her to study for them only. I am telling you all this so you can know the agony I went through when Dan Brown's latest thriller Inferno was released and I had to wait for months to read it. Months. Someone out there must be feeling me. Anyways, I lay in my bed (double and not the hostel's meager single bed), cuddled in my quilt, with a mug of hot chocolate on my side table and a pack of nuts on my bed and set out on the adventure which is Inferno along with Robert Langdon. The book started with the signature Dan Brown Prologue and the book looked promising. The novel has all the typical Dan Brown features. A sudden crisis, 24-48 hour time frame, ancient symbols, art, poetry and Europe; except the ending. Also, I found it a bit similar to his last novel, The Lost Symbol.

The story begins with Robert Langdon waking up in a hospital in Florence, with a head wound caused by a bullet, suffering from retrograde amnesia. He is surprised to find himself in Florence when he is

attacked again by a woman. He escapes with the help of a pretty doctor who has a blond ponytail and an IQ of 208. And so the adventure begins. Every chapter wove perfectly like thread, and the result is a very finely woven story. The story is a bit dragging initially. It gets interesting by the end. This is the Dan Brown book I took longest to read, four days. Otherwise with the exception of The Lost Symbol for which I took three days, I have read the rest in 24 hours because I just could not leave them. They had me hooked. This one sadly didn't. At least in the beginning.

So, there is a biochemist, Bertrand Zobrist, who is concerned about the sudden population explosion that has engulfed the world and believes that the humans are on the brink of extinction. He is a fan of Dante Alighieri, an Italian poet who is famous for his epic poem Inferno, in which he describes his descent to hell, its nine rings, ground zero where he meets Satan and where gravity is reversed and then his ascent to heaven. This poem inspired and affected many in his time and still does because of the vivid and gruesome picture of hell he painted with his words. It also inspired Zobrist greatly. Zobrist approaches many influential people with his concern and is made an outcast in the scientific world and the WHO declares him wanted. With the entire world, except a few who share his view, against him Zobrist still manages to create something which he believes is the only solution to this problem. WHO then hires Langdon to help them understand the clues Zobrist has left to prevent the impending disaster before it's too late.

It is a matter of life and death as Dr. Sinskey of WHO tells Langdon.

Whether it is too late or not, that you'll have to find for yourself along with many other things. Let me tell you though, this book has an ending

you would never have expected. Happy reading . Meanwhile, I start *And the Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Husseini. I have little time to the end of semester break.

The Book Thief

Author: Markus Zusak

Reviewer: Ayesha Imran Malik

Set in the Holocaust in the fictional town of Molching, Germany, *The Book Thief* is the heart rending tale of Liesel Meminger, an orphaned child living under the foster care of the Hubermann family.

The unlikely narrator of this story is Death, who is not in the least way macabre. Death is gentle, clinically detached and a shrewd observer. He provides startling insights into human behavior and explores complex ideas such as those of existential inequality and the futility of war against the backdrop of the Holocaust.

As the title suggests, there is a lot of thievery in the story, mainly driven by hunger; hunger for words, among other things.

The author, Markus Zusak has created characters that are multi-dimensional and arresting. With Hitler being a foil character, almost omnipresent in the setting of the book, it is interesting and heart breaking to see the toll that the Führer took on both Germans and Jews.

The plot keeps the reader engrossed, especially when the Huberman family decides to give refuge to a Jew in their basement. Scenes that

showcase Liesel and the Jew's (Max) earnest friendship are the few of many in this book that will wreak havoc on your heart.

Zusak's incredible literary technique weaves together themes of desperation, loss and love. He peppers the story with the right amount of local color with German words and culture, altogether creating a wonderful historical authenticity, which also makes this book an essential read for someone interested in learning about the Holocaust and the 1940s Germany.

The book is grossly underestimated; perhaps because of the Young-Adult genre label attached to it. Admittedly, the movie was a let-down. However, while it is not a non-fiction type of book exploring a radical new theory or groundbreaking philosophy that future policy makers would prefer, it is books like these that build our apparatus for future decision making, simply because they teach us wonderful and terrible lessons about the human condition.

If you're book worm or a writer, this book will hit you right in the gut, for it captures the magic of words, the comfort they provide and the disastrous power they wield in a true masterpiece fashion.

Alchemist

Author: Paulo Coelho

Reviewer: Abdullah Afzal

In Alchemist, a young shepherd named Santiago seeks his “Personal Legend”, something like a fairy tale. He met an old king who inspired him. He told him his dream. The old man gave him a complete new philosophy, a new approach of the “Personal Legend”. Personal Legend is what you have always wanted to accomplish; the inner voice, the quest of knowing oneself, competing for one’s own ambitions that had nothing to do with worldly things - a life which is something more than existence, more than survival, a life which one lives.

Recognizing one’s personal legend, being able to talk to the trees, sky, ants and to one’s hearth feeling a deeper spiritual connection with everything, everyone, finding one’s own destiny is its theme. According to New York Times it is “more self-help than literature”. As when the old man told Santiago if he really wants something to happen, the whole universe conspires so that his wish comes true. It’s the core of the philosophy of Personal Legend.

A recurring dream which Santiago dreamt in an abandoned church troubled him. In this condition of curiosity, he met an old woman who directed him to travel to Egypt. The next faith deciding encounter with Santiago was with Melchizedek who introduced himself as King of Salem. He endorsed the saying of the woman and convinced him to travel to the pyramids by selling his only valuable i.e. a flock of sheep. He gave him Urim and Thummim two stones with which he had to interpret omens. During his journey, Santiago was looted and he was forced to work in a crystal merchant shop.

After gathering some savings, he decided to go

further in pursuit of his dream. Here the story meets another exciting turn when he meet with an English man who was an alchemist. He learns a lot from him including “Emerald Tablet”, “Philosophers stone” as well as about “Elixir of Life”. He begins to listen to the desert and the soul of the world.

His caravan stays at Al-Fayoum, an oasis, where he fails head over heels in love with an Arab young girl named Fatima. The story reached its climax when he sees two hawks fighting in the sky and predicted a tribal war. The enemies invade and his prediction proved right. He continues his journey with him until Coptic Monastery reached. Santiago reaches the pyramids dug for quite long and found nothing. In the course of time two men beat him he tells them all about himself. They tell him that dreams have nothing to do with actual life. One of them also tells him that he too had a dream where he saw a treasure in the fields of Spain, where shepherd along with his sheep slept under a ruined church with a sycamore growing out of it. Santiago gets to the point that the treasure for which he has struggled so far is within himself. The reader gets the feeling of inspiration as the story progresses. One starts discovering himself, a journey from outside to inside. It makes one understand that knowing others is wisdom and knowing yourself is enlightenment. One thing that you have that nobody else has is you, your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. In short, Coelho at least gives us a process and set of obstacles we might well expect and his hero overcomes all of them. The way Santiago set his priorities to achieve what he wanted is not just impressive and motivating but amazing as well.

God's Plenty

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEecs

Befitting His grace and mercy
As the Lord and Creator of the Universe
God's bounties endure forever;
Life perishes if He withholds bountiful supplies
Of air, water and sunlight round the clock;
Life cripples and ends
If there is nothing to fill our stomachs

Thanks to His kindness
There is a continuous replenishment
Of life-sustaining elements over the globe:
Uninterrupted stocks of air, water
Sunlight and food;
Unending abundance of grains,
Vegetables, fruits and meat
In varieties, flavours and tastes galore

God fixes no price for these gifts;
Our misery is of our own making
It is the ungrateful humans
Possessed of greed and lust
Who corrupt and defile God's blessings
Causing scarcity, hunger and havoc
By indulging in hoarding, black-marketing
Profiteering, encroaching on others' rights

Through exploitation, wars and wasteful usage
Hordes of lives starving and perishing
In Sub-Saharan Africa and war-ravaged nations
Chronicle a horrific tale of human apathy;
The dark face of the prosperous world;
The rape of the poor and deprived;
By the mighty and unscrupulous powers
Egotistically usurping God's plenty
Sans any qualm of conscience

Deforestation in the garb of urbanization
Industry, commerce and development
Ominously menacing ecology and environment
Has robbed mankind of enough rain
Wild-life sanctuaries, pollution free zones
Replacing healthy eating culture
With a craze for synthetic food

We have to reap what we are sowing;
God's plenty must be cherished and preserved
God's boons must be shared freely,
Nature's revenge should never be provoked!

Optimism is the faith that leads to
achievement. Nothing can be done
without hope and confidence.

—Helen Keller

Only through experience of trial and
suffering can the soul be strengthened,
ambition inspired and success achieved.

—Helen Keller

Peace will Return One Day !

Mahnoor Majid, ASAB

The birds of peace will come one day
The dark night will end one day
The crying child will cheer one day
The roaming people will return one day
The sadness will be over one day
The happiness will come one day
The nightingales will sing one day
The rain will drizzle one day
The greenery will spread one day
The hope will return one day
The peace will come back one day
And,
The sun will rise one day.

Incomplete

Muneeb Ahsan Malik, NICE

I feel like a unicorn, without a horn
All depressed, shunned and torn;
I feel like a flower, with no beauty
That has no purpose, no duty;
I feel like a fairy, with no magic
To whom things are always tragic;
I feel like a mermaid, with no tail,
To whom things always seem to fail;
I feel like legs with no feet,
I feel so very incomplete.

Magnificent Quaid

A Tribute to Father of the Nation

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEecs

A handsomely tall lithe figure

Stunningly bright, extremely diligent

A leader of integrity with lofty character

Mohammad Ali Jinnah outshone his peers
(Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Chandra Bose, Azad)

As a statesman, par excellence

In South Asia's turbulent history

Jinnah accomplished in the face of colossal odds;
The collusion of Hindu Congress and the British
regime;

No less than what Bismarck and Cavour did
In the glorious service of their nations

Staunchly committed to the Muslim cause

In the vanguard of freedom struggle

As the torchbearer for beleaguered Muslims

Languishing in the yoke of British slavery
Jinnah brushed aside all threats and temptations,

However daunting and overwhelming

Chastising pointblank British Premier, Ramsay
MacDonald

“Are you trying to bribe me, Mr MacDonald?”

He spurned aside his bait of governorship

In such bluntly brusque words:

“Now, I shall never meet you again.”

His daring knew no bounds;

He could cross swords on principles

With the hoity-toity imperial overlords

The likes of viceroys Minto and Mountbatten;

As a young Indian lawyer, he had the gall

To pay back an imperious British judge in the
same coin

Cautioning him with rare courage and aplomb:

“My lord! You are also not addressing a third
class pleader”

A messianic soul with immense courage and en-
ergy

“He was what God made him, not what he made
himself”

So spake Cowasji Jahangir, Parsi leader of note;

A heavenly sent leader, a Mujaddid, indeed

Quaid was a legend even in his life-time

Who always wore his heart on his sleeve;

People exuberantly flocked to his call

Listening to him bewitched, even if he spoke Eng-
lish

A lodestar on the bleak South Asian horizon
He accomplished the feat of goading a slumbering
nation
To rise and tear to smithereens with bravery
The shackles of abject gloom and slavery

A dynamic hero with unflinching faith in destiny
A saviour of Muslims reduced to slaves
He stood like a firm rock with unshakable resolve
Against all treacherous forces, pitted against
His clarion call for freedom

A mere stock of bones, he possessed lion's heart;
His words struck at the chords of his listeners'
hearts
Infusing passion, drive and fervour
In all those who lent ears to his words

A visionary of great conviction and faith
Steeled by resolute will, irreproachable character
He was a charismatic leader indeed;
A rallying point for the seekers of deliverance

Quaid died on September eleven nineteen forty-
eight
Serving and building Pakistan till his last breath;
May the Almighty shower on him His infinite
blessings!
May his soul attain sublime stature in heaven!
And may we be worthy of his selfless devotion!

Legends of his character never fade in history
Nor do his timeless precepts Unity, Faith, Disci-
pline
Lose their meaning, substance and force;
They are enduring beacon lights indeed
Along the road of glory and success

Pakistan is a living glorious tribute
To Quaid's indomitable will, enlightened vision;
His passion to triumph over all odds
With singular valour and devotion

We owe Great Quaid profound thanks and praise
For the priceless gift of freedom
That heartily we enjoy but seldom care
To pay his teachings serious heed and thought
Sadly, drifting fast to the path of doom!

*Otto von Bismarck, a conservative Prussian
statesman who dominated German and European
affairs from the 1860s until 1890.

** Camillo Paolo Filippo Giulio Benso, Count of
Cavour, was an Italian statesman and a leading
figure in the movement toward Italian unification

I Remember, My Beautiful Peshawar

Dr Rumeza Hanif, ASAB

I remember,
The morning wind bringing happiness on the
faces of Peshawarites
Spring giving birth to flowers in Bagh-e-Jin-
nah and Bagh-e-Naran
Muezzin's call to prayer rising from Masjid
Mahabat Khan
And Peshawar museum telling the story of
glorious Budha

I remember,
Bab-e-Khyber enhancing the glory of Khyber
Pass
The dignified passage which has welcomed
many
From Alexander, Mahmud Ghaznawi to Sha-
habuddin Ghauri
And where the tribesmen gathered together
with Quaid under one flag

You can never cross the ocean until you
have the courage to lose sight of the
shore.

—Christopher Columbus

Either you run the day, or the day runs
you.

—Jim Rohn

I remember,
The University of Peshawar opening doors for
knowledge seekers
Old trees in the campus telling the stories of
grand scholars
Students wandering in the lawns of the Uni-
versity
So full of life, so full of hope

I remember,
The shops and stalls of Meena Bazar attracting
shoppers
Shopkeepers chatting, women bargaining and
children buying toys
Some drinking *kehwa* or *chai*, others eating
chaat
Beggars asking for money and praying for the
alms
I still remember...

Whether you think you can or you think
you can't, you're right.

—Henry Ford

The two most important days in your
life are the day you are born and the
day you find out why.

—Mark Twain

Mother

Maab Saleem, SEECs

Through darkest of nights, through coldest of pain
She held me tight, she kissed me, sane.
From my cries for food to my cries for fetish,
She made me calm and let me relish.
My rage, my contempt, my mistakes, my guilt
Her love, love and love, I was always repaid with.
When my arms were hurting and my legs won't move
She was all upon me and didn't let me behoove.
In the midst of trouble, when I turned to her
She prayed all night until she made it right.

I went here, I flew there
Never could feel the love anywhere.
One day it had to end, I knew it all along
Didn't know my neglect would do it before time.
Now that she's gone, I know what she deserved
Not a heartless me and not a lonely room.
Not that what I gave her, not that what I did
She needed a little love to be repaid with.
Why to cry over now, I shouldn't hurt her soul
She would strive to come back to wipe my tears off.

Where should I look now, where to find a mother?
Nobody to hold me tight, nobody to kiss me, sane.

Crumpled Paper

Varda Dar, S³H

How many times have you
written something, only to crumple those pieces of paper;
Because you changed your mind,
Because you felt that the words didn't capture exactly
What you felt then,
At that time?
Did you ever find yourself
Searching desperately for words
that don't exist,
To capture what you felt then,
at that time?

Equinox

Zaineb Naveed, S³H

A ray of sunshine ignites darkness,
And I travel through time;
Carrying some but then leaving behind,
Another year has gone by,
But years are only illusions wrapped up
in endless time.
A pinch of memories to last,
And eternity hails to fade away
As I witness a trick of mind
Rusty leaves ruffle
Against the blow of cold winds,
It's nothing but a spring forgotten in disguise.

Sun-burnt Roses

Ayesha Bela, S³H

The sun burnt roses in the unmarked streets,
The walls stained with revolutionary graffiti
And the dark legends of the heroes worshipped.
The child wails in the broken cradle,
The soaring humidity, the parched tongues,
Flailing hands in the shadows —
Plead to end the suffering.
Slowly the sky trickles,
The earth resounds with the rain drops,
Rising conflagration in the hearts
Searches the sky for the fulfillment of promises.
The power lines quiver uncontrollably,
The nail box rattles.
The cat's eyes glowing beneath the rusted Foxy,

Soon, the rain wanes out,
The windows drip with water,
The eye lids collapse.

The world left with commotion —
Harsh music.

Whatever you can do, or dream, you
can, begin it. Boldness has genius,
power and magic in it.

—Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Of Naan-breads and Their Disciples

Haneen Khalid, S³H

A little man I saw,
Leaning over the tandoor, concentrating, red and puffing
As a steam engine watching the naan-bread- no,
Guarding it-lest it might fashion for itself,
Some floury feet
And flee
Snickering to the hills
He brandished two metal hooks,
A formidable mid-section
Graveyard to many valiant bread-knights
And a sweat-laden brow challenging the summer heat,
To herd masterfully the fruit of his labour;
In perfect rhythm, he started to flick, and heft
And twirl and flick again,
And in all grace, naan-breads descended, squarely on the
Pretty-patterned cloth
I had spread in humble offering,
At the mouth of the fiery den;
I gathered my bountiful bundle and pattered off,
Savoring the warmth my tiny hands clutched, and
The little man went back to his skill;
Small actors, we were, on a small, symbiotic mission,
Crossing for a while and then walking away;
Today I wield a pen, and he wields his hooks;
But the starry summer sky after the evening meal
Twinkles at us both.

Contemporary Conundrum

Tayyaba Iftikhar, S3H

The “what ifs” hover over you like some form of suspended
confetti.

Pieces of paper ready to slice open a freshwound

Aiming to destroy the kingdom under your

Tissue paper skin.

Ink drips from the pen as you pour your anxieties

In an old diary: What will the future hold?

Am I worrying too much? The ache is a fungus

Festering for years

Over the canvas of your mind.

You dab perfume on your neck, prayers on
your lips.

They touch the crease between your eyebrows.

Our words tremble with hope.

Silence of the Vengeful

Muhammad Musaddiq Sajjad, NICE

The temptation,

The irresistible power

The all-consuming darkness

The price to see an end.

Driven by hate’s cold fire, the fallen rise to avenge,

An impending doom none shall prevent

The world awakens to the darkest of dawns

Death, in its most hideous form.

Army

Muneeb Ahsan Malik, NICE

Standing awake in the snowy dark night
Carefree of anything as harming as frostbite
Wearing the prideful loyal brown uniforms
Carrying its dignity and all abiding norms
Why do they not surrender in the harsh sandstorms of summer
Because they wish to take the breath of every enemy murmur
Going fearlessly high up in north, deep the seas in south
Many days with not a droplet of water or a nibble in mouth
Carrying huge massive loads of weaponry and arms
Wishing to blow all evils with the sparkling charms
Years and years away from their families and homes
Yet never ever a separation from their homeland forms
Why is it that difficult to salute these great brave sons
Who never dare to think once while missing all those funs

Repent O Muslim! Before it's too Late...

Fariah Hanif

When the darkness gets hold of you so tight,
It becomes your terror; it becomes your fright,
Catching hold of every breath, every sight,
It brings you low from every might,
It haunts you every day and night,
It won't go until you fight,
Fix it now .. make it right
For the darkness of your sins maybe great,
It shall lead you to a disturbing fate,
You shall become a sign of hate ...
Repent o Muslim ! Before it's too late

Beggars

Muneeb Ahsan Malik, NICE

Sleeping in the misty dark streets
Without even the need of blanket sheets

Singing aloud to pray for helping hands
Closing the day with the sorrowful strands

Mingling with the strangers of the night
Thinking for some blinking pathway light

Why were they destined to beg?
Sometimes, walking on a single leg

Don't they feel the scorching sun?
As if they exchanged miseries for fun

Born as the string of the same nation,
Why then only do they face the world's inflation?

Tears are long ago sealed in the eyelids
For they now do not feel crying for their bids

Imagining our own terrible life in the blazing hell
Why didn't we stop them the instant they fell?

Not even the slightest feeling in our heart triggers
Why why why they were chosen by fate to be beggars?

Comprehension

Muhammad Asim Ayaz, NICE

What resides, midst of the stream
Shrouded, beneath the watery grave
Is it what it truly seems?
Or just a façade, did nature pave?

Amidst the pebbles, shells of old
Resembles a sparkling gem
Glimmers like a piece of gold
Clearly apart from them

Could it be just a perception?
Mere thoughts of a lonely mind?
The creek in its deception
Takes all but truth behind

Through the glade, chanced, a lonely ray
Rummaging, fumbling, across the dark
Stumbling upon, the bed it lay
Finally meeting its mark!

A jewel did nature craft so pure
No lad or lass did ever bore
For time is what we witness flow
The trinket us, the stream a show

Thy conscience is, what purifies thee
The mind, a hub of misery
Thy heart is, what makes you see
That faith is love, not mockery

Football

Abdullah Zafar, MCS

My ambition my dream
A legend I scream
With a ball at my feet
A trophy in my hand
Players be a fleet
In the centre I stand

“A dream?” they asked
“Football”, I answered

My passion, my ambition, my lifelong aim
Heard from people “It sounds so lame”

Harder I worked every time
Proving people I did no crime

Deciding my future was only right choice
Sometimes the roads less taken are less taken for
a reason.

Afraid to Face the Fact

Osama Waqar

The truth of life, the wealthiest health,
The cause of good, the happiest act.
The need of love, the sky above;
We are afraid to face the fact.

The powerless power, the lifeless life,
The truth unspoken, the pain intact;
The nicest of things, the powers of thought,
We are afraid to face the fact.

The skies' a blue, the sound of 'woo',
The rivers have shrunk, the stars react,
The storms noise; and people's too,
We are afraid to face the fact.

The right is wrong; the wrong is right,
The nature of natures; shall keep the pact,
The time has come, the time of flight,
We are afraid to face the fact.

The day, the sun; the night, the moon
The 'now' the wealth; the 'then' the ruin
The brain, the dream, the heart, the act,
We are afraid to face the fact.

16 December 2014

Shaafay Zia

And then we went blank,
Struck by horror and grief ,
Cascades flow from every eye ,
For to this, there is no relief.

Then we went black,
Our eyes and our blood,
Souls drained by tears,
Lost those who we loved

Then we looked back,
To the memories they must have had,
The dreams yet to come true,
The laughters they didn't get to have.

Then we cried for the lost to come back,
Everyone has cold feet ,
Stunned by the dreadful tragedy,
Helpless we all seem.

Now our tears fall by,
Eyes, like the devastated desert, run dry,
Mothers never thought they would have to say
goodbye,

They went to school, they never came back,
This is a black day, we will never forget that

Polio

Hunza Hayat

Let's come together;
Share the grief of ones in pain,
Bring hope to their hearts
Bring ease to their brains,
The ones who suffer,
Lend them a shoulder
Extend a hand,
Act as shelter in the hurricanes,
Educate all about Polio

Guide how to refrain,
Saying no to vaccination
Is simply insane.
Shade your tomorrow,
From heavy showers of rain,
Save the Nation's future,
Don't leave it in a dark lane.
Let's come together;
Make life sustain.

Senile

Malik Shoaib Atta, CAE

I have now turned grey
I have now turned senile
I have become time's prey
I cannot even walk a mile
I am determined still to live
But cannot stand even for a while
I want to become young again
Run as wind, flow as Nile
I want my hair coloured
Stiff body and resist to bile
I want my skin glowing
Piled teeth and closeup smile
Now its time to have a nap
And to forget all fragile.

Dollars and Cents

Abeera Sedhan, ASAB

In a crowd but still alone
Are these people to me known?
All have causes of their own
Talking in a sugary tone
I wonder what's behind their masks
Lust is peeking through sweet talks
Leaving Johnny deep behind
Perfect disguise of being kind
I sit static, eyes vacant
Can I judge them? No I can't
Stainless robes as white as saint's
Worshipping dollars and cents.

Peace

Akmal Ahmed Khan

Once my teacher told me peace is bliss and harmony
I asked the teacher where is peace
Peace is around you, she would reply
The trees, the birds, the dirt all rest in peace

Then I grew up, and on the streets I saw crime and fraud
I asked my father where is peace
Peace is in the countryside, he would respond
Where there is no fraud and fleece

I remember serenity and tranquility in the fields
When I could walk to school humming and singing
But soon I see vandalism and corruption all over the region
Neither the village nor the metropolis is free of wrongdoing

Purity and innocence is only in beliefs
I am lost in the world to find peace
But now I see it only in dreams
Suddenly the innocent asks where is peace?

The best revenge is massive success.

–Frank Sinatra

People often say that motivation
doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing.
That's why we recommend it daily.

–Zig Ziglar

Nothing am I without you --- *Maa*

Fariah Hanif

When I was 1 you taught me to walk
You taught me how to laugh and talk
When I was 3 you held my hand
You taught me how to run and stand
When I was 5 you would play with me
You would run every time I tried to flee
When I was 8 you would kiss my head
Wish me good night and go to bed
When I was 10 you would send me to school
That's when I started to think I'm cool
When I turned 13 you would tell me what's right
And as always we would end up in a fight
When I turned 16 you would fix my hair
And that is when I didn't care
As I turned 18 you looked at me
Growing up fast is what you'd see
As I turned 20 you would give me instructions all the time
To stay away from every crime
And now as I am growing up ... you've stopped it all
You think I have grown up but I still feel small
I feel hollow and empty inside
I need you for my life has dried
I'm sorry I ignored you for so long
But you are the one who made me strong
Nothing am I without you Maa
You are my love and my hope
With you all my troubles I can cope
Just never leave and stay by my side
For under your shade I need to hide.

Blossoming Darkness

Amna Ameer, AMC

You might have been the best thing that happened to me...
I think of you and happiness overwhelms me...
You are so bright the glare makes my eyes tear.
And I look away trying to catch my way back to getting near.
But I stand there at the garden gate beside the rising vines.
And I place my hands on the flowers that will wither with time.
But I look at you in the middle of an ever green spring.
I've been struggling to survive since the very beginning.
So I didn't say these words to you before.
But I've written them in sands of un-named sea shores.
Because you are the luxury for the lucky ones.
But I carry a tornado with me whirling a past of lost love.
Still I dream of ways of confessing them to you.
In subtle ways I'll find comfort in you too.
But you're a gem I can't afford right now.
One day I'll walk into the garden of your whereabouts.
And I'll drown in your scent as it will linger with your memories.
With enough strength I'll imagine your crescent smile.
Just know that beauty has always destroyed me.
And you've shaped every thought that will occur this February.
And once I don't feel so broken by the tides of time.
I'll wait for the season to name your spring mine.
I'll be able to lift these feet that carry the weight of the world.
You are the sanctuary that sings the songs no one has heard.
I don't know when the stars aligned and I saw you.
I was destined for autumn until I found my way to you.
But bear with me until I stop secretly stealing gazes.
And find you blossoming in the center of my darkest places.

Oh my Lord! It's Monday again

Tabinda Ashraf, CEME

You will certainly agree with my view
It has been a trend there's nothing new
How difficult is bearing the outrage and pain
When by burdens we, the students get into chain
Oh My Lord! Its' Monday again...
A chaos ahead and relaxation is banished
Naivety wilts and calmness gets vanished
From enjoyment when compelled to refrain
It then becomes harder for the charms to sustain
Oh My Lord! Its Monday again...
Being forced to submit the bidden assignments
A deep sigh for having no more chance of deferments
Why couldn't one exercise restraint,
A regret over why didn't the time maintain,
Oh My Lord! Its' Monday again...
It's not possible to repatriate the bliss of joy
To save from turmoil we can't even try
How to crush down this hustle again?
And bring ourselves out of this drain?
Oh My Lord! Its' Monday again...

When I stand before God at the end of
my life, I hope that I would not have a
single bit of talent left and could say, I
used every thing you gave me.

—Erma Bombeck

That Falcon without Wings !

Zainab Khalid, MCS

Can you not feel it, can you not see?
All that is meant to be.
It's a falcon without wings
Nothing but hatred to the world, it brings
Why did He give it feathers only.
And why not wings?
Broken pieces with no meaning.
It was on purpose make it realize
And so there it was...
Already half way through when it realized
To get lost in its own sea...
Explore the world it was, the reason for existence
Build feather by feather...
A strong belief until you have it...
There you have it, your own wings
Fly your way to the light...
It's been waiting longing for you
That falcon is the pearl, the gold, platinum
And the titanium, one in a million
Who found its way to heaven,
It took only realization so simple a thing
Yet the world is astray, mine is left unstated
This one is waiting for that ray of realization!

Gadgets

Abdullah Zafar, MCS

Television, laptop, phone	Microsoft at its peak
Like an American drone	Giving people reasons to freak
	Intel inside Pentium Four
Tearing apart lives	Hey there, shut the door
Husbands and wives	
	Light night shows
A sudden call	Heavy eyebrows
A frightened stare	Moustache grows
A short stall	Just a weekend dose
Hi, hello from nowhere	Gadgets around.

Sweet Absence

Aslam Bazmi

Absence of hate, anger, envy and greed;	Thank you sweet, serene Absence!
Absence of anxiety, pain and suffering;	Many thanks, indeed
Absence of malice and meanness;	For the mighty potion of your presence!
Absence of poverty and wretchedness;	Can we always stroll together
Absence of sorrow, grief and ingratitude;	In every season and weather?
Absence of despair and depression	I pray you surround me forever
Absence of fear, disease and sickness;	Wrapping me in your soothing shawl
Make Absence the most blessed boon	

God's Artistry!

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

Far beyond human fancy
Exceeding feats of human intellect
Transcending the flights of human genius
God's breathtaking artistry;
Bewitching colours, shapes and patterns
Surpasses all man-made marvels

Majestic peaks, mighty oceans
Placid rivers, sprightly springs, serene lakes
Picturesque valleys, sprawling deserts and plains
Offering ravishing sights and climatic flavours
Celebrate their Maker's inimitable mastery

God's Infinite Creative genius;
His incredible artistic designs, manifesting
In the creation of the earth and heavens:
The Sun, the Moon, Stars
Mindboggling galaxies;
Humans, animals, birds, insects
Plants, flowers, vegetables and fruits
In countless billions;
Treasure troves of precious minerals
Sparkling pearls, rubies, topaz and gems—
Can neither be fathomed nor glorified enough

Wonderful bird and animal species
Parading different shapes, sizes and colours;
Humans born with vastly differing features:
Tall, medium, pigmy, thin and fat
White, black and brown
With various voices, gaits and postures;

Males and female easily discernible
By a myriad of styles of smile, giggle
Laugh, snore and even cry;
Each one with dissimilar features:
Colour, shape and size of eyes;
Contours of noses, ears and lips
Patterns of fingers, nails and toes;
With no exactly identical twins
Anywhere in the world!
God's artistry baffles all descriptions!

Variegated flowers and fruits
Adorned on fabulous plants and trees;
Each boasting its shape, aroma colour and taste;
Each snugly placed in Providence's packing;
Piquant pomegranates; lusty bananas;
Mouth-watering watermelons;
Succulent pineapples;
All commemorate God's supreme artistry
Beyond human fancy and thought!

Life shrinks or expands in proportion
to one's courage.

—Anais Nin

Few things can help an individual more
than to place responsibility on him, and
to let him know that you trust him.

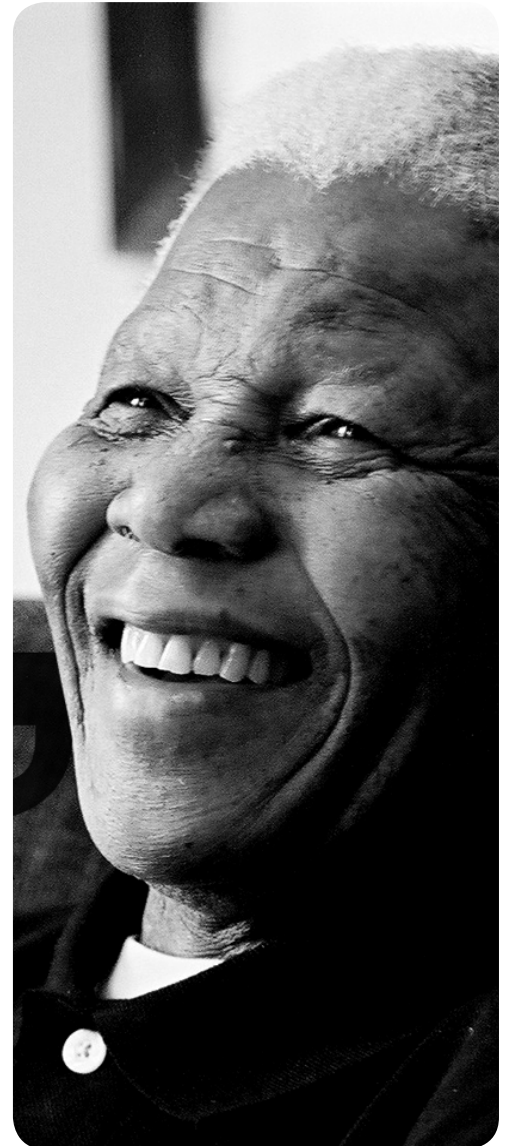
—Booker T. Washington

On the death of a Towering Legend

(A Tribute to late Nelson Mandela)

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

N Noble you were born, and nobly you lived
E Emulating the example of great heroes and saints
L Like a messianic soul, pitted against an arch-foe
S Sustaining in the freedom struggle all sorrows and pains
O Overcoming many a monumental trial and tribulation
N Never yielding to 'white' brutality; decades in prison
M Mourn we deeply your death, Great Mandela;
A Angel of peace; the revered father of South Africans!
N Never shall fade your memory from the heart of history
D Deeds of singular courage, perseverance and fortitude
E Enviably supreme, exclusively yours, indeed!
L Lo! The anti-apartheid icon passes away to glorious eternity
A All nations bow to you, Nelson, in awe, respect and honour



A Leader, Par Excellence!

(A Tribute to Late Air Marshal Nur Khan)

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

O, the brightest star of the PAF sky!
We deeply mourn your death,
Your passing away in frail health,
With hearts filled with anguish and grief

The flickering flame of a veteran airman
At last merged with glorious eternity,
Leaving to the mournful blue posterity
A soul-stirring saga of invincible faith
Unflinching courage, incorruptible integrity!

The crucible of 1965 Indo-Pak War
Found PAF combat-ready to the hilt;
In the manner of aggressive eagles
Unmindful of threats and perils
Our brave pilots leapt on IAF planes
Blasting Indian air bases, installations
Radars, arsenals, artillery and troops;
Their courage steeled all the more
Under your aggressive command
Tore to smithereens the IAF myth;
Unable to face PAF air warriors
The IAF dared no more breach our air space;
Leaving to PAF, once and for all
The total command of skies!

You were the apex author of this grand victory
With few parallels in the nation's' history;
God made you a great saviour
By routing at your hands a formidable foe

By divine grace, you made your mark;
Your unique versatility made you singular
In every field, task and assignment;
You set enviable examples of honest will
Extreme daring, incredible devotion
Demonstrating your sterling abilities:
At the helm of PAF, PIA, ministerial portfolios,
Governorship, PCB and Hockey Federation

We wish and pray
The nation has a few more legends
Like you, dear Air Marshal
To steer clear Pakistan of the morass
Of myopic vision, poor commitment

May the Almighty, Most Merciful
Bless you, Adorable Air Chief!
May your nobility and illustrious deeds
Eternally ignite our minds and souls!

Legend M M Alam

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

- M** Most adored, globally acclaimed
- U** Unafraid pilot, wedded to combat flying
- H** He was an incredible ace hero in air war '65
- A** Alam astounded the nation and world at large
- M** Making history, to the envy of air warriors
- M** Mauling and shooting down five enemy airplanes;
- A** A stunning feat enacted in less than a minute
- D** Decidedly setting a world record, yet to be surpassed

- M** Most agile and daring in the extreme
- A** Alam, strapped in his Sabre, struck terror in the sky
- H** His adversaries dared not cope with his ferocity
- M** M M Alam sprang to instant fame in the fight
- O** Over Sargodha in the battle for air superiority;
- O** Odds, however grim, vanished in no time
- D** Delivering air victory at PAF's hands

- A** An ace fighter, voracious reader, passionate speaker
- L** Legend M M Alam was laid to eternal rest in Quaid's city
- A** At age seventy-seven, on March eighteen, two thousand thirteen
- M** May Allah abundantly bless his magnificent soul!



The Loss of a Crown Jewel

(A Tribute to Shaheed Hakim Muhammad Said)

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEecs

You brutal murder 14 years past
Reverberates still in my poignant thoughts;
October, 17, '98 goes down in history
As a black day of colossal grief

On this ill-fated day, we lost forever
Another epic hero, Hakim Said;
An amazing savant, a great genius
With few equals in Asian history
Who slayed this angelic soul;
A messianic ambassador of peace;
For what nefarious motive, for which cause?
This remains painfully shrouded in mystery
In sync with our national psyche:
Bygone are the gone;
We care two hoots for our heroes!

We stand abjectly impoverished
With the passing away of a towering legend;
A man of versatile gifts, illustrious talents,
An embodiment of pristine virtues,
A noted scholar, copious author, editor, reviewer,
A celebrated physician, par excellence
An enlightened educationist; a bibliophile
A saintly sage, a healer of body and soul,
A true Pakistani with a grand vision and dream,
A great humanitarian and philanthropist indeed,
A passionate reformer; an inspiring leader,
A positive thinker, innovator, a true visionary,

An eloquent speaker and prolific writer,
Exceptionally bold with the courage of his convictions,
An exemplary role model, always walking his talk,
An ocean of knowledge, wisdom, spirituality
Yet, a very humble and dedicated dervish
Passionately committed to the cause of humanity

Mostly dressed in white Kurta and shalwar
Becoming his glowing health, robust physique
He looked 'gracefully angelic'
To be very precise and brief

I always envied your poise, frugality and discipline;
Happy, healthy and edifying routines
Sans any cheap and superfluous things:
Sublimity is averse to all trivia indeed

Your accomplishments no doubt far exceed
Beyond this humble tribute,
Besides your family and beloved Saadia
You are survived by your phenomenal works:
A treasure trove of 200 books on religion, Tibb;
Health; sciences; literature; Insightful travelogues;
Diverse scientific and academic themes;
Books and journals for youth and children;
PAYAMI, an Urdu version of UNESCO journal, Courier
'O' the post-Pakistan Sir Syed
We salute you for your passion and services

In promoting knowledge and wisdom
In all possible manners and ways:
Travelling far and wide to enlighten masses,
Participating in conferences and seminars
In every nook of the globe,
Organizing scholastic activities in Pakistan;
With memories of Shame-e Hamdard talks
Still etched on many minds and hearts

To crown it all, you leave behind for posterity
The magnificent Madinat-al-Hikmah,
An island of excellence in education and science
(Boasting one of the finest libraries, east of Suez)
Holding in its fold Hamdard University,
College of Medicine and Dentistry,
Al-Majeed College of Eastern Medicine,
Institutes of education, management,
IT, social and herbal sciences,
School of Law; Public School, Hamdard Village
School
Faculty of Engineering Sciences and Technology,
IDARA-E-SAID, being by far the most glorious
tribute
To the dizzying heights you scaled in your life
Towards preserving and promoting your vision
and thoughts

Certain things catch your eye, but pursue only those that capture the heart.

–Ancient Indian

Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear.

–George Addair

For the greater good of human society at large
With your teeming gifts and untold services
God must have willed your coronation
By conferring on you the crown of martyrdom
With angels posted on the gates of heaven
Carrying trays of freshly picked heavenly flowers
For honouring your blessed soul;
What an enviable reward for a devout faithful
The like of you are always rare and scarce!
Your deeds and services in diverse fields
Stand taller than the Himalayas
Surely unsurpassed, for years to come!

As to heaven-ward you gladly soar
In your crimson martyr's robe
We poor earthlings mourn and cry;
Farewell, Shaheed Hakim Said!
Goodbye, with tears petrified in eyes!

May the Almighty give your spouse?
Daughter, Saadia and promising grandchildren
The courage and commitment to keep ablaze
The trail of glory lit by you!
To God we all belong,
And to Him we have to return

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

–Plato

The Poor Man's Shah Jahan

(A Tribute to Manjhi, the Mountain Man)

Aslam Bazmi, Faculty SEECS

Now a part of glorious eternity
You leave behind, Dashrath Manjhi

A saga of rare courage and devotion
An invincible hero born to a poor family
In Gahlor Ghati of Gaya, Bihar
You were destined to accomplish
A feat and wonder, not easy to be conceived
By razing a tract of 300 feet high hills
Carving a 30-foot wide, 360-foot-long path
To access nearby hospitals
From Gahlor locked by hills

A deep humane at heart
You couldn't bear others dying
Like Falguni Devi, your beloved better-half
Who couldn't be rushed to medics
Across 300-feet high hills

You were mortally mocked
When you chose to sell your goats
For buying a chisel and other tools ;
Unfazed by all kinds of ridicule and taunts
Which only steeled your resolve
You laboured day and night
With undiminished vigour and zeal
For long twenty-two years in stretch
Letting nothing stand in your way

Triumph finally kissed your feet ;
Thanks to your arduous toil
Hills had to give way to your iron will
Letting your dream become an epic deed:
Slashing a distance of 70 kilometers
Between Atri and Wazirganj of Gaya district
To a mere 15-kilometer beat

You couldn't build Taj Mahal
To consecrate your love for Falguni
But you amazed the world
By raising a far superior monument;
Dashrath Manjhi Road dedicated
To Falguni and common folk alike!

Your death at age 80 in August 2007
Marked the passing away of an epic hero
Richly honoured through state funeral;
Bravo, old Bihari Mountain Man!
You leave behind to posterity
A legacy of unswerving will;
A passion to serve humanity
Unmindful of personal pain and suffering;
The likes of yours surely deserve
Far richer tributes than this

Glory

Ramsha Khuram, SEECS

Glory is but a tale unheard of
In commoners like me
A song forgotten long ago
When it comes to the ordinary
It is only said to be possessed
By those with riches and wealth,
Benefits of education and health
In the lights that glimmer all day
And those with power who always have their way.
In today's world who can see
The glory in my people's hospitality
In their culture which makes me swell with pride
In the heavenly northern terrain where the magnificent valleys hide
In the songs that the national poets wrote
In the sweetness of fruit from my areas, remote
In the wealth of intelligence in my children's minds
In the unique handicrafts the village women design
In my cuisine with all of its rich spices

In the patriotic soldier's exhausting exercises
Glory, you are no stranger to me
But , yes, to my people you seem concealed
Buried far away, completely veiled
They say they are proud of being Pakistani
But yet they are glad to abandon me
'We search for a better living' they say
They excuse themselves abroad and decide to stay
I need you, my dears, for without you I'm alone
I feel forsaken, bereaved and forlorn.
I have a huge heart so I forgive you yet again
In return pledge allegiance, swear you will not defame
The green and white flag with the crescent and star
To new heights pledge to take it, high above and far
I am a little poor and not 'Land of the Pure' as I was meant to be
But only with your honest help can I become an epitome of glory!

Teach thy tongue to say, "I do not know," and thou shalt progress.

—Maimonides

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

—Arthur Ashe

When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.

—Helen Keller