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Christian and Muslim clergy launch RSHE guide for schools

Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)
Practical Guide to Faith Sensitivities for Schools



Creating faith-inclusive schools



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Christian and Muslim clergy launch RSHE guide for schools

A new resource to help teachers support their planning and delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) lessons to pupils in primary, secondary and special schools has been launched at the Al Hikmah Centre by local faith representatives.

Reverend Simon Cash of Dewsbury Minster and Mufti Mohammed Amin Pandor from the Kirklees Parents and Community Alliance (KPCA) officially unveiled the “Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE - Practical Guide to Faith Sensitives for schools – creating faith-inclusive schools” document during a press conference at IMWS.

Before delivering lessons teachers are advised to read through the key faith perspectives on the topics relevant to their lesson. This will enable them to understand how pupils in their class may understand and respond to the content being delivered.

Faith schools are permitted to teach the ‘distinctive faith perspectives on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious.’

The guidance is very clear that in all schools teaching ‘should reflect the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.’

Schools must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Under this act schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristic (age, sex,

race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation).

Upon the requests of many parents, the KPCA guide has been shared with a plethora of schools in Kirklees. The organisation is said to have undertaken a vast amount of research at the behest of the local community and has produced a guide that parents are comfortable with as it is backed by scriptural evidence from a parents’ faith perspective, with a view to ensure that no family or child feels isolated.

Mufti Pandor believes all local schools should be able to use the guide to navigate their way through the RSHE curriculum in a faith sensitive and age-appropriate manner.

He said: “Across all faiths there are common goals and values, many of which will form the foundation of an effective RSHE programme. Establishing these goals within a school’s RSE policy helps parents and community members see what is being delivered through RSHE links to their own faith or family teachings.”

“I am grateful to our communities of faith for the dialogue we have had over RSHE and for their willingness to contribute so proactively to this helpful document. As a voluntary organisation, KPCA is proud of its ambitions for RSHE and this is a further example of our creative partnership.

“The contribution from our key local faith leaders to this area of school and community life is invaluable in our shared endeavour to promote respectful, positive healthy relationships, and to develop a town, a community and society where all are welcome, accepted and understood.”

The guide, which is available on the

IMWS website, contains information that revolves around four main areas: the legal position, Muslim and Christian sensitivities, a practical Scenario and finally, a number of frequently asked questions.

Kirklees Parents and Community Alliance (KPCA) was formed in 2019 as a grassroots voluntary organisation and is led by Christian and Muslim clergy and have a wide array of members which include professionals, faith scholars, and members of the local community.

In July 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) published statutory guidance for schools for Relationship Education, Relationship Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE).

However, concerns of relevant faith communities have been expressed in parts of the UK, in relation to the lack of transparency from schools about what they teach, when they teach, use of resources, age-appropriateness and how they cater for RSHE pupils from religious backgrounds.

Mufti Pandor is of the opinion that children going to school should be able to do so without having to feel ashamed or ridiculed and insists this is a protected characteristic in the Equalities Act 2010 and should be taken into account when delivering RSHE as stated in the law.

He said: “Schools must also foster good relations between those who share a particular characteristic and those who don’t; this might take the form of raising awareness, celebrating uniqueness, and through British Values work. Within the RSHE guidance there is scope for schools to take positive action to deal with disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic.”

There are no ‘no go areas’ in Dewsbury

Residents in Dewsbury have lambasted the Daily Mail for publishing an article by Ed Hussain that highlighted Dewsbury as one of four northern towns as ‘no go areas for white people’.

Mr Hussain, who was previously senior advisor to former Prime Minister Tony Blair, turned up unannounced for Jummah namaz at Masjids in Dewsbury and said visiting the town was like “visiting a different country and century.”

The self-professed foreign relations expert claims in order to write his recently book, entitled ‘Among the Mosques: A Journey Across Muslim Britain,’ which was serialised by the Daily Mail, he spoke to Muslim taxi drivers, business owners, imams as well as white residents about Masjids and the surrounding community.

However, a plethora of local people have contested the article and insist they are fed up with the negativity perpetuated by Hussain and the Daily Mail.

Local community worker and activist Tanisha Bramwell said the town is an example of tolerant inclusiveness and recalled meeting a Muslim family who praised her work within the community and made a donation to her food parcel project.

“I took my nephew to the park today. A couple walked by me. They soon returned and asked me my name. Once given, they said the most wonderful things about my work.” said Tanisha.

“They then donated money to our food parcel project. After the week I’ve had, it really meant the world to me.”

Paul Ellis, a former councillor for

Dewsbury West and the president of the Dewsbury Chamber of Trade questioned the accuracy of the article and insists Dewsbury is full of friendly people.

He said: “The media needs to lay off towns like Dewsbury. While people like Ed Hussain, who has never lived here, gets to publish his book and the Daily Mail gets a headline, people in other parts of the country read it and must think God knows what about the North, despite having never been here. Towns like Dewsbury have some of the friendliest people you’ll meet.”

He also sent an invitation for reporters to visit the town and see for themselves and view the positive contribution the Muslim community makes to Dewsbury: “I have no problem promoting it and we’d love for Daily Mail reporters to come to Dewsbury and see the town properly.”

“In the first few days of lockdown, we had people from the local mosques contacting people at the nearby churches to see if there were any people in their parish who needed food parcels or shopping done for them.”

Musharaf Asghar, who is known for his appearance on Channel 4’s Educating Yorkshire, ridiculed the article and labelled it in a tweet as “lies”.

“Anyone who is afraid to enter Dewsbury is more than happy to drop me a message and I’ll take you to one of the best ice-cream parlours in [the town],” he wrote in the tweet.

Hussain’s book has also been criticised for containing a number of unverified sources and being “error strewn”.

In one section of the book, Hussain claims he interviewed a man named Mahfuz

Alimain, who is described as a “senior official” at Manchester Council. Alimain allegedly told Hussain that Muslim refugees in the UK had grown “accustomed” to violence.

“Syrians and Libyans, Yemenis and Palestinians who come to British mosques have seen bombs and destruction daily. Killings are normal for them,” Alimain is quoted in the book as saying.

“Peace in Manchester troubles them; they feel they need to seek revenge and justice for the wrongs done to them in their countries.”

However, after a question from a British medical practitioner, Manchester City Council insist they have no knowledge of anyone named Mahfuz Alimain who has worked for the council.

The clarification came in response to a question from Dr Siema Iqbal, who tweeted the council and Hussain’s publishers asking for further details about Alimain.

“Hi @ManCityCouncil Who is Mahfuz Alimain? It appears no one seems to know who he is @BloomsburyBooks do you fact check before publishing? Or is this in the fiction section?” Iqbal tweeted on June 7.

Manchester City Council responded: “Hi Siema, Just to confirm on this, we don’t employ a Mahfuz Alimain, nor do we have any record of having employed anyone of this name. Thanks.”

Paigaam reached out to Hussain and the book’s publisher, Bloomsbury, for comment, but did not receive a response by the time of publication. However, Hussain recently responded to accusations that Alimain was a “made up character”, saying that the name was an alias.

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93,000 people vaccinated at the Al-Hikmah Centre



Normal life is set to resume after the government announced all legal limits on social contact are set to end on the 19th of July.

And after more than a year of battling the Covid-19 pandemic, the effort to vaccinate the local area against the deadly virus is shifting away from the Al Hikmah Centre.

Now, rather than asking the public to show up at the Al Hikmah Centre or another large site to get the shots,

coronavirus vaccines are being made more widely available in doctor's offices, pharmacies and temporary walk-in clinics set up in businesses, Masjids and community centres.

Since the vaccination effort began at the Al Hikmah Centre, on average between 4 to 5 hundred vaccines were being given out every day with as many as 900 being administered on certain days.

Commenting on the news that by the end of June, an estimated 93 000 people have been vaccinated at the Al

Hikmah Centre, IMWS Centre Manager, Nadeem Raja said the organisation was honoured to have played their part in fighting the Covid-19 virus.

He said: "Thousands of people have been vaccinated; however, we could not have done this without the effort of our executive committee, staff, volunteers and relevant partners who have made all this possible.

"We would also like to thank our primary care networks (PCN), who along with their practices have worked with us

collaboratively in order to deliver a Covid-19 service that has no doubt saved many lives."

Dr Chantel Ratchliffe, GP and Clinical Director of the Batley and Birstall Primary Care thanked the Indian Muslim Welfare Society for allowing them to use the centre to administer so many jabs.

She said: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Indian Muslim Welfare Society first and foremost for allowing us to use the Al Hikmah Centre.

"IMWS played a leading role in administering so many people with two jabs and promoting the benefits of the vaccine to ensure they have longer lasting protection against the virus. They really did emphasise the importance of having the second jab."

Dr Imad Riaz, GP and Clinical Director of Spennings Health and Wellbeing Primary Care Network acknowledged that the fact that IMWS have helped to facilitate a lifesaving service for many.

He said: "This is a real milestone moment in North Kirklees and I'm honoured to be involved.

Steve Brennan, Senior Responsible Officer for the vaccination programme in Kirklees, said the vaccination programme in Kirklees has made great progress thanks to IMWS: "

He said: "We've delivered jabs to so many. The vaccine take-up level in our area is wonderful. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers involved."

Money raised by distributed in Gaza



Following the outstanding efforts of Batley based diner and takeaway Dixxi Express who raised an amazing £17,385 for the IMWS Gaza appeal by donating an entire day of donations and takings to IMWS as part of their 'Day of giving' initiative, hundreds of long-suffering families in Gaza have benefited.

The society's long-term charity partner, Palestine Welfare House has ensured stoves, pots, pans, warm food, gas cylinders, utensils, large trays of food, chicken and rice, medicines, medical equipment, medical help to hospitals and help for orphans and much more has been given to the people of Gaza.

"Thanks to the kind and generous donations of our members, our efforts to support the poor and needy people of Gaza by delivering essentials such as gas cylinders, utensils, stoves and many more items have been provided to people as many they cannot use their kitchens anymore because their homes have been bombed," said Munir Daji of IMWS.

"The fact that we could help during their time of need is a testament to our community and I would like to thank everyone who contributed. May the Almighty accept all

your efforts in protecting these people whilst they have nowhere to live, and the risks associated with getting sick during such testing times. It is envisaged that by just providing warm winter clothing to so many poor, hungry and displaced men, women and children, they will be able to smile and not worry about anything."

Mohammed Nasser of Dixxi Express said he and his business partners, Salim bhai Lunat (Gul) and Imran Laher wanted to show that they "stand in solidarity with the plight of the courageous Palestinians."

He said: "We are very humbled to have been able to help our brothers and sisters in Palestine. "



Number of people rejecting Queen's honours doubles

For some, it is the icing on the cake, the pinnacle of their career, and a chance to meet royalty.

However, the amount of individuals who have politely declined an honour from the Queen is rising, according to recent analysis.

Since 2011, over 400 people have decided against accepting a knighthood, MBE, OBE or other awards in recognition of their skill, service or bravery, according to Cabinet Office figures.

The number of refusals generally boils down to crimes perpetuated under the name of the British empire and apprehension around governments using the 700-year-old system to reward people.

Prof Kehinde Andrew, from Birmingham City University, said there was increasing focus on the history of empire and racism, and the awards' links to the country's bloody imperial past. OBE stands for Officer of the Order of the British Empire, while CBE signifies Commander and MBE, Member.

"This leads to more people rejecting honours and seeing them as problematic," he said. "The bigger story is that thousands of people accept them. Aside from the problematic nature of empire, it doesn't exist anymore, so why are we handing out orders of the British empire?"

The honours nomination system and selection process is discreet. Nominees are asked by Downing Street if they will accept in advance of the announcement and are usually able to privately reject the offer.

There has been speculation that the scheme could be revamped to remove the word "empire" from awards such as the OBE.

Why are people from a plethora of backgrounds rejecting the opportunity to receive an honour from the Queen?

A Cabinet Office spokesperson said: "As the figures show, refusal rates for honours remain extremely low. There has been considerable reform to the honours system in the last 25 years to ensure it is inclusive."

Howard Gayle, Liverpool Football Club's first black player, who has since campaigned with Show Racism the Red Card, refused an offer of an MBE in 2016 because accepting it risked his ancestors "turning in their graves after how empire and colonialism had enslaved them."

"This is a decision that I have had to make and there will be others who may feel different and would enjoy the attraction of being a Member of the British Empire and those three letters after their name, but I feel that it would be a betrayal to all of the Africans who have lost their lives, or who have suffered as a result of empire," he said.

The poet Benjamin Zephaniah also rejected an OBE in 2003, dismissing it as a relic of colonialism and calling for clarity over the shocking circumstances over the passing of his cousin, Michael Powell who died whilst in Police custody.

"Benjamin Zephaniah OBE - no way Mr Blair, no way Mrs Queen. I am profoundly anti-empire. You have lied to us, and you continue to lie to us, and you have poured the working-class dream of a fair, compassionate, caring society down the dirty drain of empire," he said.

He also said he had begged Blair to meet him to discuss crime in Britain and asked the Queen to "Stop going on about the empire. Let's do something else."



Chief Executive of Star Academies honoured with Knighthood

Mufti Hamid Patel, the Chief Executive of Star Academies which runs a number of award-winning schools including Tauheedul girls and boys schools in Blackburn, has been knighted for his outstanding services to education in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Now also known as Sir Hamid Patel, the education specialist has been at the forefront of Star Academies since its inception in 2010.

The latest school performance tables published by the Government show that the organisation was the highest-performing multi-academy trust in England and its schools secured first, second and third places in the national rankings, with five in total in the top 15.

Mufti Hamid dedicated his Knighthood to everyone at Star Academies who has worked to nurture the next generation.

"This is a tribute for all those who have worked so hard at Star Academies whose care, diligence and passion continue to inspire young people and nurture tomorrow's leaders.

"All those involved with our schools at every level - our talented teachers, and our supportive parents, governors and wider community - have made a telling contribution to the positive impact we have had

on the lives of so many children and young people.

He said: "This is a tribute for all those who have worked so hard at Star Academies whose care, diligence and passion continue to inspire young people and nurture tomorrow's leaders.



"All those involved with our schools at every level - our talented teachers, and our supportive parents, governors and wider community - have made a telling contribution to the positive impact we have had on the lives of so many children and young people.

"The last 16 months have arguably been the hardest that any of us working in education have experienced but we, like those across the sector, have continued to put our pupils first, prioritising their wellbeing and giving them the best academic, extra-curricular and social opportunities."

Star Academies trust is responsible for 30 primary and secondary schools which are located in the North West, London, the West Midlands and Yorkshire whilst three of its schools have been designated by the Department for Education as Teaching School Hubs - to train and

support new teachers and the continuing professional and personal development of those working in education.

Their schools also play vital roles within the communities they serve. During the pandemic, Star Academies established StarLine, a free national parent helpline backed by more than 20 expert partners, to support families with home-schooling, their wellbeing and other pressures related to the pandemic. The helpline reached 1.5 million parents while it was open.

The Trust also established

Star Family Hubs in 13 towns and cities to support its pupils and their families and its schools' wider communities during the pandemic. Star used school kitchens to cook 100,000 hot meals for hungry neighbours and homeless people, as well as providing 7,500 families with weekly food parcels.

It also sourced and distributed 10,000 hygiene packs and 13,500 items of PPE for key workers. Last year, the trust also published a toolkit to help schools re-open safely and in line with Government guidance following the end of the first national lockdown. The document was downloaded more than 30,000 times.

Kam Kothia DL, Chair of Star Academies, said: "On behalf of the Star family, we are extremely proud of Mufti Hamid and congratulate him on his well-deserved knighthood.

"This prestigious honour is testimony to his dedicated leadership, selfless service and unfailing commitment to improving outcomes for our young people across the country. It is also an affirmation of the work that is continually undertaken across Star schools nationally.

"This recognition does not signal the completion of Star's work. It will redouble our mission to nurture today's young people and inspire tomorrow's leaders."

Will Joe Biden hold Israel to account?

US President Joe Biden has been urged by members of his own Democrat party in an open letter to do more to protect Palestinians and hold Israel accountable for its actions in and over Gaza, where a ceasefire seems to be holding.

More than 500 Democrats have signed an open letter urging Biden to take a firmer stance against Israel.

And although the signatories stressed that they commended Biden's efforts to broker a ceasefire, the mere sight of the horrific violence that unfolded in recent weeks in Palestine has struck a chord.

The letter seems to encompass broader US public opinion, especially amongst millennials who have become more critical of Israel. However, Jewish and Arab Americans were among signatories to the open letter to Biden.

Among its demands, it says the Biden administration must "investigate whether Israel's most recent assault on Gaza violates the Leahy Law, prohibiting US military aid from funding foreign military units implicated in the commission of gross violations of human rights."

The letter reads: "We implore you to continue using

the power of your office to hold Israel accountable for its actions and lay the groundwork for justice and lasting peace."

The letter adds: "The very same values that motivated us to work countless hours to elect you demand that we speak out ... we remain horrified by the images of Palestinian civilians in Gaza killed or made homeless by Israeli airstrikes."

Whilst rebuking both sides for the amount of violence reported, the letter singles out Israel for particular blame due to its sophisticated military power and its continued occupation of the Palestinian population along with the blockade against Gaza.

"While Israelis had to spend nights hiding in bomb shelters, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip had nowhere to hide. It is critical to acknowledge this power imbalance – that Israel's highly-advanced military occupies the West Bank and East Jerusalem and blockades the Gaza Strip, creating an uninhabitable open-air prison," it said.

Biden recently sent his secretary of state, Antony Blinken, to the Middle East, saying in a statement: "Following up on our quiet, intensive diplomacy to bring about a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Blinken will meet with Israeli leaders about our ironclad commitment to Israel's security.

"He will continue our administration's efforts to rebuild ties to, and support for, the Palestinian people and leaders, after years of neglect."

While Biden met with the leaders of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Jordan, he did not meet anyone from the Hamas group that runs Gaza as they have been designated by the United States as a "foreign terrorist organization" contact between US officials and the group are therefore banned.

That means the US must rely on third countries such as Egypt and Qatar to pass messages to Hamas. The move comes amid a deepening split in Democratic ranks, between some vocal members of its progressive wing – such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez – and other centrist figures including Biden who have taken a consistently pro-Israel stance.

As vice president to Barack Obama, he refused to tow the party line. For example, throughout 2009 and 2010, he advised Obama against his strategy of publicly pressuring Benjamin Netanyahu to freeze settlements, urging instead that there should be "no daylight between" the US and Israel.

When in 2010, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pressured Netanyahu in a phone call for a complete

settlement freeze, as well as sincere assurances that he would move forward with negotiating a two-state solution, Biden followed up with a more appealing call, one that encouraged Netanyahu to ignore a "divided administration."

Similarly, Biden also opposed Obama's wishes to abstain and not veto, UN resolutions condemning Israeli settlements in 2016.

In addition, in the run-up to the 2020 election, certain members of the Democrats believed that they had secured assurances that the party's platform at the convention would contain references to the Palestinians suffering an "occupation," an historic first.

However, Biden personally intervened to ensure the word was not used, therefore, refusing to exert even the slightest pressure on Israel.

The reality is that no one expects the US to execute an about-turn and support Palestinian statehood or to sanction Israel as if it were Venezuela.

However, at the very least, the US can make its billions in aid and advanced military equipment conditional on Israel not defying official US policy. It can signal in that it cares equally about Palestinian and Israeli lives.

Will Israel's new Prime Minister be worse than Netanyahu?

The chances of a reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians under Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister was an absolute nonstarter.

However, the rise of hardliner and Jewish nationalist Naftali Bennett to the position of Prime Minister after he ousted Benjamin Netanyahu, from a Palestinian perspective, offers little or no hope at all.

Whilst some observers hope Bennet may succumb to cower under pressure from the Biden administration and turn out to be pragmatic, this appears to be unlikely given that his core backers are from the far-right.

Therefore, any attempt to resume the peace process and make room for the aspirations of a Palestinian state would infuriate the far right, some of whom are already describing him as "a traitor" for forming a coalition of centrists, leftists and the Arab-Israeli Ra'am party, headed by Mansour Abbas.

However, the Biden administration has already asked for a freeze on illegal settlements. It is soon to open a consulate for Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and is expected to push Israel to return to the table for peace talks.

Despite a small amount of

hope for the Palestinians, the rise of Bennett to the position of prime minister could be more dangerous, according to a prominent academic.

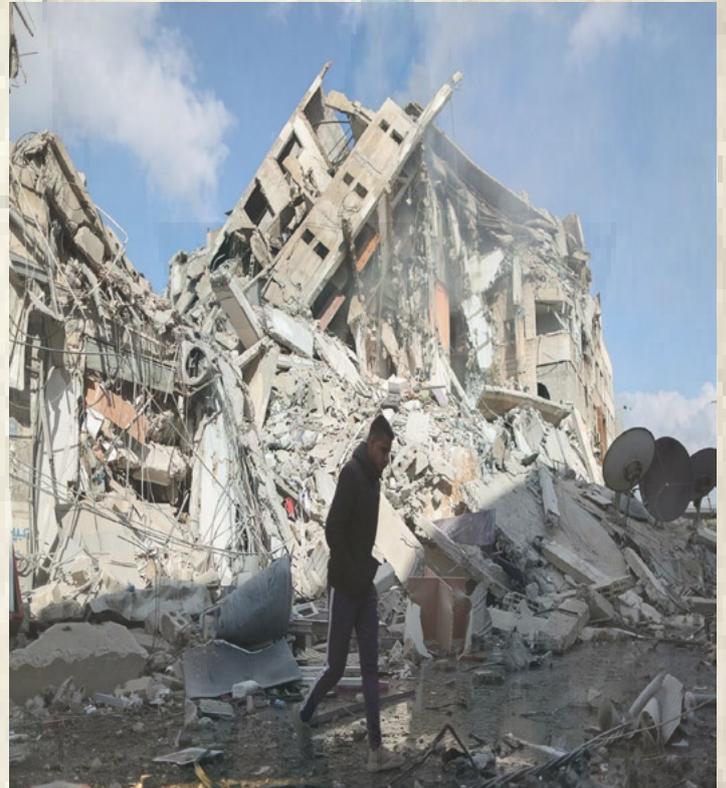
Mkhaimar Abusada, an associate professor and chairman of the department of political science at Al-Azhar University in the Gaza Strip insists Bennet is very stubborn and set in his ways.

"Netanyahu expanded settlements but he also froze them back in 2009 and 2010 after pressure from Barack Obama," said Abusada.

"The difference between Netanyahu and Bennett is that Netanyahu, as we have seen, can buckle under international pressure. Also, he seemed flexible on the two-state solution. Sometimes he would say he was ok with it. Bennett has a much more ideological and tougher stand."

Mustafa Barghouti, president of the Palestinian National Initiative political party, concurs with Abusada and expects Bennett to be worse than Netanyahu from the Palestinian perspective.

"Bennett advocated clustering Palestinians in Areas A and B, which is only 38 percent of the West Bank, and annexing the remaining 62 percent which is Area C," said Barghouti, referring to the three-way division of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the



Oslo Accords signed in 1995.

"Continuing settlements in Area C means the assassination of the possibility of a two-state solution. He is definitely worse than Netanyahu."

However, Yoel Guzansky a senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) who specialises in Gulf politics and security believes the coalition of Bennett's former colleagues in the Likud party along with the Yesh Atid centrist party, left-wing Meretz party, as well as for the Ra'am party will not survive as he has doubts about their political plans.

"What kind of consensus this weird government can adopt, that is the big question," said Guzansky. "Usually when

you have different parties with different ideologies in a government they have a lowest common denominator that unites them. In this case, it was the consensus to oust Bibi. But Bennett faces many challenges."

However, he also believes Bennett might turn out to be rational in relation to tensions with the Palestinians.

He allowed the flag march by Zionist nationalists in Jerusalem which was seen as a grave provocation by the Palestinians. Hamas reacted by floating incendiary balloons into Israeli cities. This resulted in Israel launching air strikes. Tellingly, no one was killed, and no clashes were reported on the ground.

Covid-19 medical bills are pushing Indian families in debt

For many Indians the battle with Covid-19 may be over, but the stress associated with battling the deadly disease in hospital ensures this is just the beginning of their nightmare.

Many lives have been overturned by the loans they have to repay courtesy of huge Covid-19 medical bills. Many have dipped into years of savings, sold jewellery, mortgaged property, and borrowed from family and friends just to clear extortionate medical bills.

The Indian constitution guarantees access to health care for all citizens. However, an institutionally weak and resource-starved public health care system has meant that India's private health care sector is responsible for the majority of inpatient and outpatient care.

One hospital authority told a patient that charges for entering ICU came to approximately Rs 9,800 per day which equates to around £100 per day (excluding charges for oxygen cylinders). However, as the patient's condition worsened, the hospital had to administer oxygen through a ventilator.

As the oxygen cylinders were used hourly, there were no specific charges, but the total charges came in between Rs 20,000 to Rs 35,000 in a day, which amounts to over £400 a day. Ultimately, the final bill she paid was around Rs 9 lakh which amounts to £9,000.

Following the revelation that so many people are in trouble of spiralling into debt, several independent organisations demanded that the fees of private hospitals be capped.

Sadam Hanjabam, CEO of Ya_All, one

of the organisations behind the drive to cap the prices, said that many people continue to stay in home isolation because they "fear huge medical bills in hospitals."

"They only rush to health centres when it gets serious and by that time it is too late," Hanjabam said, "So if we do not cap the price, many might die just because they are too scared to seek treatment."

While price caps are in place in many states in the country, poor implementation of the orders and lack of grievance redressal make them practically useless.

Inayat Singh Kakar, Delhi-based public health activist and researcher, who is associated with All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN), said that while many states have put price cap orders in place, implementation was poor.

"Different states have done things differently. For example, in the Delhi government order, most things, including care of co-morbidities during Covid treatment, are covered in the cap. But in some states cost of all treatments is not covered, allowing the hospital to overcharge on those aspects," she said.

"In the bills, we analysed last year, we saw that many hospitals charge excessively on PPE, medicines, and came up with different ways to overcharge and profiteer."

Kakar said that therefore it was important for states to build upon the experiences of overcharging by private hospitals during the first wave and realign the orders.

"There are no checks and balances to make sure that the implementation is happening as per the spirit and letter of the notification, so the hospitals get away with it," she said.

In Chennai, a 27-year-old man working in the IT sector is paying Rs 60,000 daily for his father's treatment. For that, he has borrowed from his brother-in-law and other relatives and even pledged his family's jewellery.

On May 22, the government issued an order to regulate treatment charges at private hospitals.

But according to the 27-year-old, many are unaware of the caps the government has enforced. "It's a desperate time and many just want to get into some hospital without questioning the price," he said.

Such cases of overcharging are rampant – and only some make it to social media, and ultimately get help. "Lots of stories don't come out because people are just quiet about it and don't want to fight the hospital," said Kakar.

She said many hospitals usually do not want to implement the caps and therefore, do not inform the patients about it. "That is why we need the states to be more proactive," she said.

While several states have issued caps recently, and some like Mumbai, Pune have conducted audits of bills in private hospitals, many lives have already been upended by loans and debts. Some, like Guwahati-based Nath, said they will fight it in court when things become "more normal". Yet, others are too distraught to do so.

India has recorded 26 million cases – second only to the US – and is now the epicentre of the global pandemic.

Nearly half of India's virus deaths occurred in the last three months. The country is also only the third in the world to record more than 300,000 deaths –

Has Labour lost the support of Muslims?



Keir Starmer has been warned not to take Muslim voters for granted, as support for the Labour party, and his personal ratings, has dwindled amongst Muslims.

Muslim voters have traditionally voted for Labour with constituencies with sizeable Muslim populations considered to be some of the party's safest seats.

However, since the curtain was drawn over Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, amidst a change to domestic and foreign policy, along with concerns over Starmer's position, the relationship between Muslims and the Labour Party is now particularly fraught.

According to the poll of 504 British Muslims, carried out

by Survation on behalf of the Labour Muslim Network, 72% said they identified with Labour and the party had a net favourability rating of +42%.

However, 37% said their view of Labour had become more unfavourable in the past 12 months, as opposed to 25% whose view of the party had become more favourable – a net -12% drop in favourability.

Answers to questions about Starmer's leadership were even more troubling for Labour. Asked their opinion of Starmer, 22% of British Muslims had a favourable attitude towards his leadership, while 29% were unfavourable, giving the Labour leader a net favourability of -7%.

Starmer's recent question for the Prime Minister on whether

he is prepared 'to press for a renewed international agreement to finally recognise the State of Palestine,' was labelled as a cynical ploy to influence voters in Batley and Spen, who recently weighed up whether to elect another Labour MP in Batley.

His call to Boris Johnson mentioned the number of children killed in Gaza and Israel. He said: "The appalling violence recently which killed 63 children in Gaza and two children in Israel shows just how urgent this is.

"For too many people in Palestine the promise of an end to the occupation and the recognition of a sovereign Palestinian state feels more distant than ever.

"So will the prime minister take the opportunity this weekend to press for renewed agreement to finally recognise a state of Palestine and to stop expansion of illegal settlements and to get a meaningful peace process back and running."

Responding to the Labour leader's question, Boris Johnson said the government's position on the Middle East continues to support a two-state solution.

He said: "It's been a long-standing objective of this government, and I think it's common ground across this House, that the solution for

the Middle East peace process is a two-state solution and we continue to press for that."

"I've made that position plain both in my conversations with the Palestinian Authority and of course with Israel," Johnson added.

However, critics have accused the Labour Leader of double standards, accusing the Labour leader of creating a "hostile environment" for Labour members of Palestinian descent.

A letter sent to Starmer in mid March by more than 25 British-Palestinian Labour members, including writer Nadia Hijab and academic Ghada Karmi, has yet to receive a response.

The letter reads: "Some of us have been members of the party for decades under different leaders and never have we experienced a party environment so hostile and unwelcoming to us as it has been since you took over its leadership," the statement reads. "Not even during the dark days of the illegal war on Iraq.

"Our community of traditional Labour voters is therefore deeply concerned and alarmed, and we fear that without your immediate action, their growing alienation from the Party will become a permanent rift."

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ENGINEER YOUR FUTURE

What do you think of when you hear the term Industry 4.0? Or when you hear Digital Transformation (DT)? Or when you hear the Internet of Things (IoT)? These are areas where new and emerging technologies are being advanced and it is where new jobs are being created too.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our young people will be concerned about their future prospects, especially in these troubled and uncertain times. Consequently, it makes sense that they start thinking about their careers. For those with an interest in science and engineering, they should consider education or apprenticeships that can lead them to careers in these technologies.

The new jobs are set to be in areas such as: Artificial intelligence (AI), Automation, Robotics, Electric vehicles, Driverless cars, Smart sensors, and Renewable technologies for solving climate change. This is where people will be able to have a profession which offers a lifetime career path as well as a livelihood, as it has been reported that these new areas could be recession proof.

What will today's 10-year-olds do when they are 25? What kind of jobs will disappear, what will be created? Which new skills will be valuable in the job market? There have been numerous reports on this by government think tanks.

The technology behind the First Industrial Revolution was water and steam power which, for example, mechanised textile production. The innovation made factories commonplace bringing more people to the cities. In the Second Industrial Revolution, electric power made mass production possible. The Third Industrial Revolution

was based on semiconductors, which facilitated the data processing that automated production and created the digital age.

We have now entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) and it is taking shape in our time. Generally speaking, it describes the growing trend towards automation, artificial intelligence, smart technology. One primary area of Industry 4.0 focuses on the use of machine to machine communication (M2M), artificial intelligence and IoT technology to make 'smart' factories that have increased automation and self-monitoring with the ability to analyse, diagnose and communicate without the need for human intervention.

In healthcare and medicine, the new technologies will lead to advances in regenerative medicine, wireless medical provision, diabetes monitoring and management, nanomedicine, virtual reality and robotics in surgery. Other areas will see advancement in cloud computing, quantum computing, connected devices/sensors, robots, wearables. As a result, this will see a demand for highly-skilled scientists, engineers, and artificial intelligence, computing and biomedical experts.

In the UK we have many internationally recognised universities and companies where much pioneering research and development in science and engineering that take place. UK government policy is also a force for change where, for instance, innovation in new technologies is advancing to meet the government commitment for all vehicles to be electric powered by 2030. The UK are also making plans to be a world leader in green energy in a commitment towards net zero emissions by 2050, by investing £160 million and creating 60,000 new jobs.

People will be familiar with the traditional science and engineering degree subjects to study at University, which themselves can lead to rewarding careers in both the traditional sectors and in the growing technology sectors. Though, some young people may want to pursue a more applied discipline, then an alternative option for them would be to study for a university degree in an interdisciplinary subject, such as Mechatronics, Biomedical Engineering, Material Science, etc. Interdisciplinary subjects may be less familiar to some but they are just as important and valuable to these sectors. Careers can then be sought in industry where many companies offer graduate training programmes.

Apprenticeships are another route to gaining a career because it has been reported that there are skills shortages in the new technologies. They help you gain the skills and knowledge you need, where entering employment earlier means there is potential to progress in your career quickly. For careers help your local careers office or at your school can offer advice. And also look at University websites for the degrees they offer in the field that you are interested in. IMWS also have a volunteer led Careers Support Group where members may be able to help and point you in the right direction.

IMWS Muslim Burial Services



The IMWS Burial Services are continuing as normal. Our services are open to everyone, free of charge, regardless of whether they are members or not.

We are fully supported by our local area Masjids and our senior Ulema. We appreciate the support of our community and will strive to improve our services to meet the needs of our community.

We welcome all volunteers. If you would like to help please contact us directly.

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Ebrahim Chopdat

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Hanif Mayet

07927 495 961

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07739 142 988

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Legal Column

A case on how Solicitors did not give up to enforce a debt.

Many businesses and individuals who are owed money sadly become accustomed to hearing explanations and excuses for non-payment. However, in one case it was shown that specialist lawyers do not give up and are adept at bringing pressure to bear on debtors to meet their obligations.

The case concerned a judgment debt of about £230,000 owed by a financial adviser – the debtor – to a former client – the creditor. With a view to enforcement, the creditor obtained an order directing the debtor to submit to an oral examination before a judge at which he would be required to provide documents and undergo cross-examination as to his financial and other resources.

The debtor gave various reasons why it was difficult for him to attend such a hearing. He said, amongst other things, that he had suffered an injury to his foot, that he was abroad, that his travel was restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that he may have contracted the virus. An attempt to conduct the hearing remotely was aborted after the debtor encountered problems activating the video function of his computer.

After eventually succeeding in bringing the debtor before a judge, the creditor questioned his credibility and argued that the failure of the remote hearing was entirely due to his cavalier approach to the court order. The debtor stated that he was an honest witness who had given complete answers to any questions put to him and who had engaged fully and properly with the court process.

Following the hearing, the judge noted that parts of the debtor's evidence, and his general demeanour, gave an adverse impression of his credibility. In failing to disclose a number of documents, including bank statements, during the hearing he had failed to comply with the court order. The case was referred to a High Court judge for consideration of what punitive or coercive steps should be taken against the debtor in the light of that finding.

Bought to Book for Maternity/ Pregnancy/ Discrimination

Employers who are found to have discriminated on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity will swiftly be brought to book. That was certainly so in the case of a tanning salon worker who was being made redundant out of the blue on the very day she returned from hospital with her baby.

The woman, was on maternity leave when she gave birth to her third child. On her discharge from hospital with her baby, she and other salon staff received a letter from liquidators informing them that they had been made redundant. She received no notice that her job was at risk; there was no prior consultation and the letter came as a complete shock to her.

At a time when she should have been taking pleasure in her new baby, she found herself without a job and under financial pressure. She suffered anxiety as a result and her GP noted that she felt overwhelmingly sad.

She eventually found a new job, but was only able to complete two shifts before the COVID-19 lockdown was imposed. Due to her brief employment, she was not placed on furlough.

The salon made no response after she launched proceedings and her complaints of unfair dismissal and discrimination on grounds of pregnancy and maternity were all successful.

Following a hearing, an Employment Tribunal awarded her a total of £8,895 in damages. The award included £4,000 to reflect injury to her feelings and £1,000 for the stress and anxiety she suffered due to her employer's conduct.

'NHS CHARITIES TOGETHER' FUND:

The programme aims to increase outreach, engagement and communication with residents from the BAME community in North Kirklees who are disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.

Do you know, or work with, a community group or organisation who could help? We are looking for groups and organisations that can come up with creative ideas to support these individuals health and mental wellbeing.

THE FUNDING PROGRAMME IS NOW OPEN FOR SMALLER GRANTS OF UP TO £1K TO COMMUNITY GROUPS IN NORTH KIRKLEES. BIDS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED BY 31ST AUGUST 2021.

Groups can apply for the funding by requesting a bid application from Mansoor Aftab (Project Lead) at Mansoor.aftab@swyt.nhs.uk or 07810 153087 or from Humaira Vachhiat at humairavachhiat@gmail.com.

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Who is Dajjal?

What will be the Task of Nabi Isa A.S when he descends to the earth from the heavens before Qiyaamah?

Every human being has two angels accompanying him all the time. What are their names?

Value of Salah in Masjidul Aqsa

Value of Salah in Masjidun Nabawi

What are the names of the angels who will question a person in the grave?

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Brain Teasers

Riddle 1: What has a head and a tail but no body?

Riddle 2: Where does one wall meet the other wall?

Riddle 3: What building has the most stories?

Riddle 4: What tastes better than it smells?

Riddle 5: What has 13 hearts, but no other organs?

Riddle 6: It stalks the countryside with ears that can't hear. What is it?

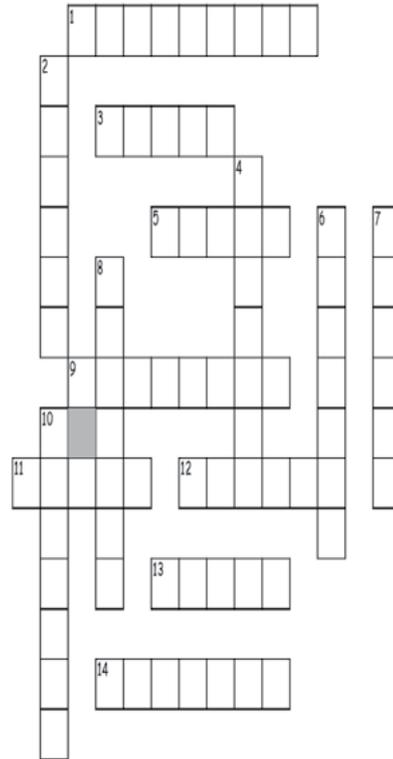
Riddle 7: What kind of coat is best put on wet?

Riddle 8: What has a bottom at the top?

Riddle 9: What has four wheels and flies?

Riddle 10: I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?

Islamic crossword puzzle



Across

1. Carry one place to other
3. Holy book of Islam
5. Muslims accept descendant
9. Group of merchants
11. Green area in desert
12. Leader of Arabs
13. Announcer
14. tower of mosque

Down

2. Procedures of government
4. Fierce
6. Choose Muslim Leaders
7. Muslim house of worship
8. Muslims give to poor
10. Marketplace

Answers

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Answer: A coin | 5. Answer: A deck |
| 2. Answer: On the | 6. Answer: A garage truck |
| 3. Answer: The | 7. Answer: A coat |
| 4. Answer: Your | 8. Answer: Your legs |
| 5. Answer: A deck | 9. Answer: A gar- |
| 6. Answer: A garage truck | 10. Answer: Seven |
| 7. Answer: A coat | |
| 8. Answer: Your legs | |
| 9. Answer: A gar- | |
| 10. Answer: Seven | |



and Bubbles Car wash raise £4,936 for Gaza

Dixxi Express has once again focused their attention towards supporting the needy in Gaza.

Dixxi's Mohammed Nasser held a Palestine Fundraiser car wash on Sunday the 13th of June at Bubbles Car Wash on Commercial Street in Heckmondwike to show that they "have not forgotten the difficulty that the courageous Palestinians find themselves in," by donating an entire day of sales and donations from kind hearted individuals to IMWS as part of their Gaza appeal in association with Palestine Welfare House in Gaza.

Mohammed Nasser, who has been working closely with IMWS, said he is truly humbled with the support the local community have shown.

He said: "We had a very good turnout on both days, and I was very impressed with the support shown to the cause. The money has been sent off to IMWS, and I will be updating everyone as and when I receive any information from brother Munir Daji and Palestine Welfare House as to how many people have benefited.

"I would like to thank IMWS and those who volunteered on what was a very hot day. We had a great deal of support from friends, family, Dixxi customers and local people. I am glad to see that £4,936 has been raised."

Naveed and Kashy of Bubbles Car Wash said: "The benefits of the donations will be very useful for plenty of people, especially as Gaza has been bombed repeatedly, population are living in poverty and the living conditions are abysmal.

"Thanks once again to everyone who helped out, they will get rewarded by the Almighty."

IMWS Charity worker Munir Daji said: "It is good to know that out of the sadness of the bombing of Gaza, we have helped in a small way to help alleviate some of their suffering."

Salim bhai Lunat of Dixxi said he was delighted with the amount of money raised and praised staff members at Dixxi Express for once again ensuring much needed funds were raised for Gaza.

He said: "It's great to see our staff and many volunteers come together and

show that not only can they work hard all afternoon, they also have very big hearts."



Al-Hikmah Wedding bookings

IMWS are pleased to announce that wedding bookings at the Al-Hikmah Centre will commence from the 1st of July 2021.

IMWS Management has confirmed that due to Covid-19 the number of weddings guests

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Long Covid symptoms & recovery

Warning signs



high-grade fever



Breathlessness
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Chest pain



Dizziness on standing

Complications



Lung fibrosis



impact on kidneys



Heart



very rare cases of mucormycosis

Whilst Covid-19 symptoms may pass quickly for most, some people are suffering long-term effects. We outline the symptoms of long Covid, and some tips to help manage them.

What is long Covid?

Long Covid is a term to describe the effects of Covid-19 that continue for weeks or months beyond the initial illness. The health watchdog the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) defines long Covid as lasting for more than 12 weeks, although some people consider symptoms that last more than eight weeks to be long Covid.

Researchers analysed data on people who reported their symptoms of long Covid on the COVID Symptom Study app and identified two main groups of symptoms. One is mainly respiratory, such as a cough and feeling breathless, but also includes fatigue and headaches. The second group of symptoms affects many parts of the body, including the heart, brain and the gut.

In the study of 4,182 people, heart symptoms were commonly reported,

such as palpitations or increased heart-beat, as well as pins and needles, numbness and 'brain fog'.

What are the symptoms of long Covid?

Although most people who get Covid-19 recover quickly, for some the effects of the virus can last for weeks or months. This is known as "long Covid".

For some, it can seem like a cycle of improving for a time and then getting worse again. These long-term effects aren't only among those who needed to go to hospital, or even who felt seriously unwell when they first caught the virus.

Lasting symptoms of coronavirus can include:

- fatigue
- breathlessness
- anxiety and depression
- heart palpitations
- chest pain
- joint or muscle pain
- not being able to focus ('brain fog')
- distortion to your sense of smell

Is it normal to get chest pain after Covid?

Chest pain is a common symptom of Covid-19. Some people are experiencing chest pain that lasts beyond their initial Covid-19 infection, or that starts in the weeks after they've had the virus.

It's important to remember that even if you have had Covid-19 and are now are experiencing chest pain, it may not be related to the virus.

When should I seek urgent medical help?

Call 999 if you experience:

Chest pain that is sudden or severe and doesn't go away.

Sudden chest pain that is accompanied by vomiting, nausea, sweating, or shortness of breath.

Sudden chest pain that is accompanied by a loss of consciousness.

If you have chest pain that comes and goes, you should still speak to your GP about it or call 111 – as chest pain should never be ignored.

Some people with severe Covid-19 also experience heart and circulatory problems during their illness.

What happens at your appointment

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and the impact they're having on your life.

They may suggest some tests to find out more about your symptoms and rule out other things that could be causing them.

If the symptoms are having a big impact on your life, you may be referred to a specialist rehabilitation service or a service that specialises in the specific symptoms you have.

These services can help manage your symptoms and help you recover. Find more information about different types of chest pain on Your Covid Recovery from the NHS.

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એક સત્ય વાસ્તવિકતા

-મહંમદ યુસુફ સુફી લાજપુરી, બાટલી.

એક પતિ-પત્ની અને એના બે નવજવાન છોકરા અને છોકરી સાથેનું પરિવાર એક શહેરમાં રહેતું હતું. એમની આર્થિક હાલત ઘણીજ સધ્ધર હતી. જીવન જરૂરિયાતની દરેક વસ્તુ જેમાં રહેવા માટે બંગલો, સવારી માટે કારો, અને પૈસે ટકે પણ ઘણાં સુખી હતા. આ પરિવારમાં જે વસ્તુની ઉણપ હતી તે સંતોષની હતી. જે કમી હતી તે બરકતની હતી. જીવમાં સંતોષ ન હતો.

એક દિવસ પતિ-પત્નીએ આપસમાં મથેરો કર્યો કે, આપણા પાસે સફળ જીવન માટે જે સામગ્રીની જરૂરત છે તે તમામ વસ્તુ છે. તે છતાં આપણાં જીવનમાં સંતોષ નથી. ઘરમાં બરકત નથી. એનું શું કારણ? પતિ-પત્નીએ ઘણાંજ ચિંતન મનન પછી નક્કી કર્યું કે, આપણાં શહેરમાં એક બુઝુર્ગ રહે છે. એમને બોલાવીને આ અંગે પૂછવું જોઈએ. પતિ કહે છે કે, હું કામથી આવું છું ત્યારે તે બુઝુર્ગ મસ્જિદમાં જતાં હોય છે. આવતી કાલે હું એમને મળીશ. અને આપણાં ઘરે એમને બોલાવીશું. દરેક હકીકત તેમના સામે રજૂ કરીશું.

જ્યારે તે બુઝુર્ગની મુલાકાત આ ભાઈ સાથે થઈ ત્યારે તેમને પોતાના ઘરે આવવાનું આમંત્રણ આપ્યું. તે બુઝુર્ગે જવાબ આપ્યો કે, હું દરરોજ અસરની નમાઝ થી લઈ મગરિબની નમાઝ સુધી મસ્જિદના ફરતે રહેતા મુસલમાનો સાથે મુલાકાત કરું છું અને તેમની સાથે દીનની જરૂરી વાતો કરું છું. ત્યારે હું તમારા ઘરે પણ જરૂર આવી જઈશ.

બીજા દિવસે અસરની નમાઝ પછી તે બુઝુર્ગ એમના ઘરે ગયા. સલામ, ખેરખેરિયત પછી આપસમાં ઘણી વાતો થઈ. દરેક વાતોનો ખુલાસો થતો રહ્યો. આ બધી વાતચીત અને તેમના ઘરના માહોલ વિષેની જાણકારી જાણ્યા પછી બુઝુર્ગને અનુભવ થયો. કે આ ઘરમાં ન તો નમાઝ છે ન તો કુરઆન મજ્હની તીલાવત. મતલબ કે, આમાલની કમી છે. નેક અમલથી ઘર ખાલી છે.

બુઝુર્ગે ઘરના દરેક સભ્યો જેમાં રહેનારની પત્ની અને તેમની છોકરીને પર્દા પાછળથી સંબોધીને જે અગત્યની વાત કરી તે ઘણીજ મહત્વની હતી. બુઝુર્ગે તે સમયે જે મહત્વની નસીહત કરી તે આપણાં બધા માટે પણ અત્યંત ઉપયોગી અને ફાયદાકારક તથા લાભદાયક છે. અને આપણાં કીમતી જીવનમાં તેના ઉપર અમલ કરવાની જરૂરત પણ છે.

બુઝુર્ગે મુહબ્બત અને દર્દભર્યા અંદાજથી સમજાવ્યું કે, આસ્માનથી દરેક મોઅમીન મુસલમાન માટે રહમત, બરકત તથા દિલનો સુકુન ઉતરે છે. પરંતુ જ્યારે આ સર્વે વસ્તુને ઘરમાં ઉતરવાની જગ્યા મળતી નથી, ઘરનું વાતાવરણ એનાથી ઉલ્ટું હોય છે તો તે દરેક ખેરની વસ્તુ ફરી આસ્માન ઉપર જ જ્યાંથી આવી હતી ત્યાં ચાલી જાય છે. કારણ કે, આ ભલાઈ અને ખેરની વસ્તુને ઉતરવા માટે ભલાઈ અને ખેરનો માહોલ હોવો જોઈએ. એમને ઘરમાં પ્રવેશ માટે પવિત્ર સ્થળની જરૂરત હોય છે. જ્યારે ઘરમાં એનો અભાવ હોય તો એ ઘરમાં દાખલ થતી નથી. આ એક સત્ય વાત અને વાસ્તવિકતા છે, જેને કોઈ નકારી શકતું નથી.

બીજી અગત્યની વાત એ છે કે, દરેક મોઅમીન મુસલમાનનું ઘર બંદગીની દ્રષ્ટિએ ઝીકર, તીલાવત અને દુરૂદ શરીફ વગેરેથી ઘર આબાદ રહેતું હોય છે.

આ મહત્વની બાબતના અમલ માટે મરદોએ નમાઝ મસ્જિદમાં અને ઓરતોએ પોતાના ઘરમાં પાબંદીથી પઢવું જોઈએ. કુરઆન મજ્હની તીલાવત પણ કરતા રહેવું જોઈએ. જેમાં દરરોજ સવારે સુરએ યાસીન શરીફ તથા રાત્રે સુરએ વાકીઆ, સુરએ મુલ્ક અને સુરએ સજદાની તીલાવત મોખરે છે. જુમ્માના મુબારક દિવસે સુરએ કહફની તીલાવત કરવાનું પણ ભૂલવું ન જોઈએ. સાથે દુરૂદ શરીફથી ઝબાનને તર, આબાદ રાખવું જોઈએ.

ઉપરોક્ત દરેક અમલ બતાવવા પછી તે બુઝુર્ગ મગરિબની નમાઝ માટે તે ભાઈને અને તેના બન્ને નવજવાન છોકરાને મસ્જિદમાં સાથે લઈ ગયા. મગરિબની નમાઝ અદા કર્યા પછી તે બુઝુર્ગે આ પરિવાર માટે ખુબ દુઆ કરી કે હે પરવરદિગાર! આ ભાઈને અહીંયા સુધી લાવવું અને દીનની વાતો બતાવવી એ મારું કામ હતું. એનાથી આગળનું રહમત, બરકત અને દિલને સુકુન સંતોષ આપવાનું કામ મારું નથી. એમના દિલને દીન તરફ ફેરવી દો. અને નેક હિદાયત અતા ફરમાવો.

પ્રિય વાંચકો! તમને ખબર છે? ત્યાર પછી આ પરિવારનું શું થયું? આ પરિવાર એક વિધ્વાન બની ગયું. નમાઝોની પાબંદી, મસ્જિદમાં નિયમિત રીતે હાજરી આપી જમાતથી નમાઝોની અદાયગી, કુરઆન મજ્હની નિયમિત તીલાવત અને દિવસભરની તેમની રહેકરણી ઈસ્લામી તાલિમ મુજબ વીતવા લાગી. અને આ રીતે હવે તેમના જીવનમાં સંતોષ, શાંતિ સુકુનની ભરમાર થઈ, સાથે તેમની કમાણી અને રોજીમાં ખૂબજ બરકત પણ થઈ.

ઉપરોક્ત લેખથી જે નસીહત મળે છે તે એ છે કે, દિલનો સંતોષ દુનિયાની જાહોજલાલી, એશોઆરામમાં નથી. આ પરિવાર પાસે દુનિયાની દરેક એશોઆરામની સામગ્રી, જાહોજલાલી હતી પરંતુ દિલનો સંતોષ ન હતો. સંતોષ કોઈ દુકાનમાં મળતો નથી. એ ખાલીસ ખાસ ઈબાદત, ઝીકરમાં જ મળે છે. માટે આપણે બધાએ આ પરિવારથી બોધ, નસીહત પ્રાપ્ત કરવું જોઈએ અને આપણી રોજબરોજની જિંદગીને બદલવાની અને ઈસ્લામના અહકામ ઉપર ચાલવાની દરેક કોશિશ કરવી જોઈએ. પરવરદિગાર બધાને અમલની તૌફીક અતા ફરમાવે આમીન.

કોરોનાની સાચી હકીકત.....

દુરિયા તો પહેલે હી આ ચુકી થી જમાનેમેં
કોરોના ને આકર ઈલામ અપને સર લે લીયા

ગુજર રહી હે જિંદગી એસે મુકામ સે
અપને ભી દૂર હો જાતે હૈ, જરા સે ઝુખામ સે

તમામ કાયનાત મેં એક કાતિલ
બીમારી કી હવા હો ગઈ

વક્તને કેસા સિતમ ઢાયા કી
દુરિયા હી દવા હો ગઈ.

ચાલો આજે કંઈક સાઈં જાણીએ

-રફીક અહમદ કભાસ

પુરૂષ પણ સાવ કેવો હોય છે ?

સમજીએ આ એક કહાણી મારફત

એક દિવસ મારી પત્નીને તાવ આવ્યો હતો. પહેલા દિવસે તો એણે કશું કહ્યું નહીં. પરંતુ જ્યારે બીજા દિવસે એનાથી ઉઠાયું નહીં તો મેં પૂછી લીધું, કેમ તબિયત સારી નથી કે શું? એણે કહ્યું ના ના સારી જ છે જરા થકાવટ જેવું લાગે છે. પતિ ઠીક છે કહી પેપર વાંચવા બેસી ગયો. ખરાબ તબિયત હોવા છતાં પણ એણે મારા માટે ચા બનાવી. પેપર વાંચતા મારી નજર એના પર પડી. ખબર પડી કે એને તો તાવ આવ્યો છે. મેં કહ્યું તને તો તાવ આવ્યો છે? તું તો કહે છે ખાલી થકાવટ છે. તેણે કહ્યું થોડુક તાવ જેવું છે પરંતુ ચિંતા જેવું નથી. મને થયું મામુલી તાવ હશે, સાઈં થઈ જશે. પત્નીએ તાવ સાથેજ મારા માટે ટીફીન તૈયાર કર્યું, નાસ્તો કર્યા પછી મેં કહ્યું, તને તાવ આવે છે જેથી સાંજનું ખાવાનું બનાવીશ નહીં આપણે સાંજે સાથે બહાર જમવા જઈશું. તેણે કહ્યું ના હું બનાવી દઈશ. મેં કહ્યું ના સાંજે હું ઓફિસેથી તને ફોન કરી દઈશ તું તૈયાર રહેજે. હું એક મજબૂત દિલનો પુરૂષ છું મામુલી બીમારીથી વિચલીત થતો નથી.

ઓફિસે પહોંચી કામમાં મશગુલ થઈ ગયો અને ભૂલી ગયો કે પત્નીની તબિયત સવારે જરા ઢીલી હતી. સાંજે હું ઘરે આવ્યો. પત્ની સૂતી હતી. મેં ન્હાઈ ઘોઈને કપડાં બદલ્યાં અને પૂછ્યું જમવાનું શું બનાવ્યું છે? પત્નીએ મારી સામે જોયું અને સૂતાં સૂતાં જ દબાયેલા સ્વરે કહ્યું હાં હમણાંજ બનાવી દઉં છું. હવે તબિયત સારી છે. જેવું એણે કહ્યું મારી તબિયત હવે સારી છે અને મારા મનમાં ઝબકારો થયો. હું તો સાવ ભૂલીજ ગયો કે તારી તબિયત સારી નથી. ઓફિસના કામકાજમાં એતો સાવ ભૂલાઈજ ગયું. માઈં માથું શરમથી ઝૂકી ગયું. વાતને ક્વર કરવા મેં કહ્યું સોરી ડાર્લિંગ હું તો ભૂલીજ ગયો આપણે બહાર જમવા જવાનું છે. તું સૂઈ રહે હું હમણાં આવું છું એમ કહી કીચનમાં જઈ બ્રેડ લઈ તેના પર જામ લગાવી સલાડ વગેરે લગાવી પોતાનો પત્ની ધર્મ નીભાવતો હોય તેમ સરસ ડીશ તૈયાર કરી પત્નીને ખવડાવ્યું. તેણે ભીની આંખે બ્રેડ ઉઠાવી ખાંધુ મેં પૂછ્યું હવે તબિયત કેમ છે? તેણે કહ્યું સાઈં છે. હું મોબાઈલ જોતા જોતાં સૂઈ ગયો. બીજી સવારે એ સ્કેલી ઉઠી ગઈ આજે એની તબિયત સારી હતી. મેં તાવ વિષે કંઈ ચર્ચા ન કરી અને ઓફિસે ચાલી ગયો. આ હતી આજથી બે અઠવાડિયા પહેલાની વાત.

હવે હું વાત કહું કાલની. કાલે મને શરદી થઈ ગઈ. ખૂબજ છીંકો આવી. ઘરે પહોંચ્યો તો પત્નીએ કહ્યું તમારી તબિયત ખરાબ થઈ હોય એવું લાગે છે. મારા માથા ઉપર હાથ મૂક્યો અને કહ્યું તાવ તો નથી? પરંતુ ગળું ખરાબ થયું હોય એમ લાગે છે. તમે એક કામ કરો બેડરૂમમાં સૂઈ જાવ હું છાતી ઉપર તેલ લગાવી આપું છું. મેં કહ્યું કંઈ નહીં એવી કોઈ વાત નથી પણ તેણે તેલ લગાવ્યું અને થોડીવારમાં ઉકાળો લાવી. ઉકાળો લીધા પછી થોડાજ સમયમાં ગરમાગરમ સુપ લાવી. સુપ પીધાની સાથેજ ગળાને ખૂબ રાહત મળી. પછી તે મારી પાસે આવી અને માથા ઉપર હાથ લગાવી જોયું અને કહેવા લાગી થોડું કામમાંથી બ્રેક લઈ લેતા હોય તો આરામ મળે. આટલું બધું કામ શા

માટે કરો છો? તબિયત કેવી ખરાબ થઈ ગઈ છે. નાનપણમાં જ્યારે મને તાવ કે શરદી થતી હું સૂઈ જતો અને મારી મા આખી રાત જાગતી રહેતી. આજે પણ હું સૂઈ ગયો અને મારી પત્ની જાગીને માઈં માથું પંપાળી રહી હતી. પછી જ્યારે જાગ્યો તો જોયું કે એ મારા ગળા ઉપર વીક્સ લગાવી રહી હતી. તેણે પૂછ્યું હવે કોઈ રાહત મળી. મેં સૂતાં સૂતાં જ હા માં માથું હલાવ્યું. મને પૂછ્યું જમી લેવું છે ને? મને ભુખ લાગી હતી. મેં કહ્યું હાં. ફટાફટ મારી સામે રોટલી, શાક, પાપડ, દહીં અઠાણું, વગેરે રજૂ કરી દીધું અને પોતાના હાથેથીજ જમાડ્યો. પછી પોતે જમી પોતાના કામમાં વળગી ગઈ.

હું ચુપચાપ સૂતો રહી વિચારતો રહ્યો કે, પુરૂષ પણ કેવો હોઈ છે? કેટલાક દિવસો પહેલાં મારી પત્ની બીમાર હતી, મેં કંઈજ ન કર્યું. ફોન કરી હાલચાલ પણ ન પૂછ્યાં. આખો દિવસ તેણે કંઈ ખાધુજ ન હતું. એક બ્રેડનો ટૂકડો ખવડાવીને પોતાની જાતને ગૌરવવંત માની રહ્યો હતો. મેં એટલી પણ જાણવાની કોશિષ ન કરી કે તેને કેટલો તાવ આવતો હતો. મેં એવું કશુંજ ન કર્યું કે બીમારીની અવસ્થામાં તેને લાગે કે તે એકલી નથી. પરંતુ મને નાનકડી એવી શરદી થઈ ગઈ તો તે મારી મા બની ગઈ. મારો એવો ખ્યાલ રાખ્યો કે હું વિચારમાં પડી ગયો કે સાચેજ ખુદાએ મહિલાઓને એક અલગ જ રૂપ આપેલું હોય છે. સ્ત્રીમાં જે પ્રેમ, કરૂણા અને મમતા હોય છે તે પુરૂષોમાં કેવી? જે દિવસે મારી પત્નીને તાવ આવ્યો હતો તે બપોરે એને ભુખ લાગી હશે ત્યારે એની પણ ઈચ્છા રહી હશે કે પોતાનો પતિ એની સાથે હોય, પણ પુરૂષ પોતાને મહાન સમજી કામ પર ચાલ્યો જાય છે અને માને છે હું કમાઉં છું એટલે જ ઘર ચાલે છે. પરંતુ એક વખત પોતાની જગ્યાએ એક મહિલાને મૂકીને જોશે તો ખબર પડશે કે કેટલું અઘરું છે એક મહિલા, એક મા, એક પત્ની, એક બહેન બનવું.

ગઝલ

જરા સાંજ ઢળતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
ને ચંદ્ર નીકળતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
અહીં હર જગાએ છવાયું છે રણ ને
ઝરણ થઈ દદડતા, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
જુઓ કુંપળોની વધી છે ધમાલો
ને પણો ખખડતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
અહીં પથ્થરો, ટાંકણા સર્વ હાજર
હથોડી પકડતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
હજી રાતની છે ઉદાસી છવાઈ
સવારો ઉઘડતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના
ઝળૂંબી રહ્યાં છે હવે વાદળો ગુલ
પલળતાં પલળતાં, યહાંસે ગુઝરના

-અહમદ ગુલ

(ગુજરાતી ગઝલ, ગુજરાતી કાફિયા અને ઉર્દૂ રદિફ: એક પ્રયોગ)

મુફ્તી હમીદ પટેલને “સર” નો ખિતાબ

સ્ટાર એકેડમીઝ બ્લેકબર્નના સી.ઈ.ઓ. મુફ્તી હમીદ પટેલને શિક્ષણક્ષેત્રે આપેલ અદ્ભૂત યોગદાનની કદરરૂપે બ્રિટનની મહારાણીના જન્મદિનની ઉજવણી નિમિત્તે નાઈટહૂડ-સર-ના ખિતાબની સન્માનિત કરવામાં આવ્યા છે.

સર હમીદ પટેલ સ્ટાર એકેડમીઝ (તૌહિદુલ ઈસ્લામ ગર્લ્સ હાઈસ્કૂલ)માં વર્ષોથી સેવા આપી રહ્યા છે. તાજેતરમાં પ્રગટ થયેલ પરફોર્મન્સ ટેબલમાં સ્ટાર એકેડમીઝની સ્કૂલોએ નેશનલ રેન્કિંગમાં પહેલો, બીજો અને ત્રીજો નંબર પ્રાપ્ત કર્યો છે, અને દેશભરની ૧૫ ટોપ સ્કૂલોમાં એકાડમીઝની પાંચ સ્કૂલોનો સમાવેશ થયો છે. આવી જ્વલંત સફળતા માટે સ્ટાર એકેડમીઝ ધન્યવાદને પાત્ર છે. તૌહિદુલ ઈસ્લામ ગર્લ્સ હાઈસ્કૂલ નામે સ્થાપાયેલી સ્કૂલનું સ્ટાર એકેડમીઝમાં પરિવર્તન કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. આજે બ્રિટનભરમાં ૨૨ શાળાઓનું આ સંસ્થા સંચાલન કરી રહી છે. મુફ્તી સાહેબે આ સન્માનની પ્રતિક્રિયા આપતાં જણાવ્યું હતું કે, “એકાડમીઝમાં ઘણાં લોકોની સખત મહેનતના પરિણામે એકાડમીઝ આટલા ઉચ્ચ સ્થાને પહોંચી છે. સ્કૂલના ગવર્નર્સો, ટીચરો, વિદ્યાર્થીઓના માતાપિતા અને સમાજના તમામ લોકોના ભરપૂર સહકારથી આ સિધ્ધિ પ્રાપ્ત થઈ છે. એ સૌનું સન્માન થયું છે એમ હું માનું છું.”

એકાડમીઝમાં જોડાવા પહેલા મુફ્તી સાહેબ બ્રાડફર્ડ કોલેજમાં સ્ટ્રેટેજી ચેન્જ અને એક્સટરનલ રીલેસનશીપના ડાયરેક્ટર તરીકે સેવા બજાવતા હતા. યાદ રહે કે, મુફ્તી સાહેબે સંપૂર્ણ દીની તાલિમ ડ્યુઝબરી મરકઝ દારૂલ ઉલૂમમાં પ્રાપ્ત કરી હતી. તેમને ૨૦૧૫માં પણ બ્રિટનની મહારાણી ઈલીઝબેથ-૨ તરફથી સીબીઈ એવોર્ડ એનાયત થયો હતો. **પચગામ** આ સિધ્ધિ બદલ સર હમીદ પટેલ સાહેબ અને એકાડમીઝના તમામ કાર્યકર્તાઓને અભિનંદન પાઠવે છે.

ઈઝરાઈલના નવા પ્રધાન નફતાલી બેનેટ

રવિવાર તારીખ ૧૩મી જુનના રોજ નફતાલી બેનેટે ઈઝરાઈલના નવા વડાપ્રધાન તરીકે શપથ લીધા હતા. પરિણામે સૌથી લાંબા સમય સુધી વડા પ્રધાન પદે રહેનાર બેન્જામિન નેતાન્યાહુના ૧૨વર્ષના શાસનનો અંત આવ્યો હતો. નફતાલી બેનેટે ૧૨૦ સભ્યો ધરાવતા ઈઝરાઈલની પાર્લામેન્ટમાં નજીવી બહુમતી પૂરવાર કરી હતી. જુદી જુદી વિચારધારા ધરાવતા આઠ પક્ષોના ગઠબંધનથી આ સરકાર રચાઈ હતી. જેમાં યેશ અતીદ (૧૭સીટો) બ્લુ એન્ડ વ્હાઈટ (૮સીટ) યિસરાયેલ બેતેનુ (૭ સીટ) લેબર (૭ સીટ) યામિના (૭માંથી૬ સીટ) ન્યુ હોપ (૬સીટ) મેરટજ (૬સીટ) તેમજ યુનાઈટેડ અરબ લીસ્ટ (૪ માંથી ૩સીટ) સામેલ છે. આ પાર્ટીઓને એક છત નીચે લાવવામાં મૂખ્ય ભૂમિકા ધરાવતા યેશ આતિદના પ્રમુખ લાયિદ ૨૦૨૩માં ગઠબંધનની સમજૂતી અનુસાર વડાપ્રધાન બનશે.

નવા વડા પ્રધાન નફતાલી બેનેટ એક સમયે પૂર્વ વડા પ્રધાન નેતાન્યાહુના ખૂબજ નિકટના સાથી હતા. પરંતુ કેટલાક સમયથી તેઓ તેમના પ્રખર ટીકાકાર બન્યા હતા. હવે તેઓ નેતાન્યાહુને હરાવવામાં સફળ થયા છે. બેનેટ પોતાને ધાર્મિક યહુદી ગણાવે

છે. ઈઝરાઈલના કબજા હેઠળના વેસ્ટ બેન્કમાં યહુદી વસાહત ઊભી કરવાના પ્રખર હિમાયતી છે. કટ્ટર રાષ્ટ્રવાદી પાર્ટી ગણાતી બેનેટની યામીના પાર્ટીએ પાર્લામેન્ટની ચૂંટણીમાં ૧૨૦ સીટમાંથી ૭ સીટો જીતી હતી. જમણેરી, ડાબેરી અને મધ્યમવર્તી વિચારધારા ધરાવતી પાર્ટીઓ સાથે ગઠબંધન કરી સરકાર બનાવવા સફળ થયા. બેનેટ માટે આગળ અનેક પડકારો છે. તેઓ પેલેસ્ટિની સ્વતંત્રતાના વિરોધી છે અને વેસ્ટ બેન્ક અને જેરૂસલેમમાં યહુદી વસાહત નિર્માણના સમર્થક છે. પેલેસ્ટિન તેમજ આંતરરાષ્ટ્રીય સમુદાયના ઘણાં નેતા તેમને શાંતિ પ્રક્રિયામાં અવરોધરૂપ ગણે છે.

વિશ્વના સૌથી મોટા પરિવારના મુખ્યાનું અવસાન

દુનિયાનો સૌથી મોટો પરિવાર ધરાવનાર મુખ્યાનું ગયા માસમાં મૃત્યુ થયું હતું. મીઝોરમના બપ્તવાંગ ગામના રહેવાસી જીઓન યાનાની ઉંમર ૭૬વર્ષની હતી. મોટા પરિવારના કારણે તે દુનિયામાં ચર્ચાનો વિષય બન્યો હતો. તે ડાયાબીટીસ અને હાઈપર ટેન્સનની બીમારીથી પીડિત હતો.

જીઓનના પહેલા લગ્ન ૧૭વર્ષની ઉંમરે તેનાથી ૩ વર્ષ મોટી ઉંમરની મહિલા સાથે થયા હતા. મીઝોરમના મુખ્ય પ્રધાનનું માનવું છે કે, મિઝોરમનું બપ્તવાંગ ગામ જીઓન યાનાના મોટા પરિવારના કારણે પર્યટકોનું આકર્ષણ બન્યું હતું. મોંઘવારીના આજના સમયમાં જ્યારે ૪ થી ૫ સભ્યોના પરિવારનું ભરણપોષણ કરવું એક મોટી જવાબદારી છે ત્યારે જીઓન યાના ૩૮ પત્નીઓ ૮૮ બાળકો ૧૪ વહુઓ ૩૩ પોત્રા પોત્રીઓ વગેરેનું ભરણપોષણ કેવી રીતે કરતા હતા તે એક અજાયબ વાત છે. તેમનો પરિવાર બપ્તવાંગના ૧૦૦ રૂમના એક ઘરમાં રહે છે. વ્યવસાયે તેઓ મિસ્ત્રી હતા અને પરિવારની મહિલાઓ ખેતીવાડી સાચવે છે.

સોસાયટીની પેલેસ્ટાઈન અપીલ

ગાઝાના હાજમંદો માટે આપણી સોસાયટી રમજાન માસમાં ચંદો કરે છે. જેમાં આ વર્ષે ફૂડ પાર્સલ વગેરેનું વિતરણ કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. રમજાન માસના આખરમાં ઈઝરાઈલ તરફથી પેલેસ્ટાઈન ઉપર ભયંકર હુમલાઓ થયા હતા. મસ્જિદે અકસામાં પણ તોડફોડ કરી હતી. જેનો વિરોધ પૂરી દુનિયામાં થયો હતો. આ હુમલામાં અસંખ્ય ઈમારતોને તોડી નુકસાન પહોંચાડવામાં આવ્યું હતું. લોકો બેઘર થયાં હતાં. સેંકડો શહીદ થયા હતા અને હજારો માણસો ધાયલ થયા હતા. આમ ઈઝરાઈલ તરફથી મોટી તબાહી મચાવાય હતી.

ઈ.મુ.વે.સો. બાટલી તરફથી આ અપીલ ઉપર વધુ ધ્યાન આપી કામગીરી શરૂ કરવામાં આવી હતી અને તાત્કાલિક રાહતની કામગીરી ત્યાંની લોકલ ચેરિટી સાથે મળી શરૂ કરવામાં આવી હતી. જેના સમાચારો, ફોટાઓ, વિડીયો વગેરે સોશયલ મીડિયા ઉપર આપ્યા હતા. બાટલીની આપણી મસ્જિદો, બાટલી ડ્યુઝબરીના મુસ્લિમો, ડીક્સી એક્સપ્રેસ, બબલ કાર વોશ વગેરે તરફથી ચંદામાં સુંદર સહકાર મળ્યો હતો. પરિણામે કુલ 72 હજાર પાઉન્ડની માતબર રકમ ભેગી થઈ હતી. જે ગાઝા વિસ્તારના હાજતમંદોને ફૂડ, મેડિકલ સુવિધા, દવાઓ, યતીમોને મદદ વગેરેમાં વાપરવામાં આવી હતી. આપ સૌના સહકાર બદલ ઈન્ડિયન મુસ્લિમ વેલ્ફેર સોસાયટી ખૂબજ આભાર માને છે.

પુસ્તક વાંચન

□ મહેક ટંકારવી, બોલ્ટન

જાણીતા લેખક ગુણવંત શાહે પુસ્તકોનું મહત્વ સમજાવવા એક ઠેકાણે લખ્યું છે કે જે ઘરમાં ત્રણ સારાં, સંસ્કારી પુસ્તકો ન હોય તે ઘરમાં દીકરી આપવી જોઈએ નહીં. આ વાંચીને મારા મનમાં તરત જ વિચાર આવ્યો કે લેખકે માત્ર પુસ્તકો હોય એટલું જ નહીં પણ સાથે ઘરમાં અવારનવાર વંચાતાં રહેતાં હોય એવાં ત્રણ સારાં પુસ્તકો હોય એમ કહ્યું હોત તો વધારે ઉચિત ગણાત. આનું કારણ એ કે જુઓ ને આપણા જ (મુસલમાનોના) ઘરોમાં એક તો આપણો ધર્મગ્રંથ કુર્આન શરીફ હોય છે, બીજા નંબરમાં બુખારી શરીફ જેવી આધારભૂત હદીસોની કિતાબોની ઉર્ફ કે ગુજરાતીમાં પ્રસિદ્ધ થયેલી નકલો ક્યાંક લાઈનબંધ ગોઠવાયેલી હોય છે અને ત્રીજા નંબરમાં ઈસ્લામ વિષે સમજ આપતી નાની મોટી કિતાબો અને ‘તબ્લીગ’, ‘દારુલ ઉલૂમ’ કે ‘બયાને મુસ્તફા’ જેવા રિસાલાઓ (ધાર્મિક સામયિકો) હોય છે. મોટા ભાગનાં ઘરોમાં આ કિતાબો ઊંચે અભરાઈ પર પડેલી હોય છે અને ઘૂળ ખાતી હોય છે જે એક દુઃખદ હકીકત છે.

એટલે કહેવાનું તાત્પર્ય એ કે કિતાબો તો હોય, સારાં સંસ્કારી પુસ્તકો તો હોય પણ તેમનું નિયમિત વાંચન ન થતું હોય અને તેમના પર ચિંતન મનન કરવામાં ન આવતું હોય તો એ પુસ્તકોથી કોઈ લાભ પહોંચી શકતો નથી. ઘરમાં માત્ર બરકતના તોર પર બેઅદબી ન થાય (!) એટલે ક્યાંક ઊંચે ઠેકાણે રાખી મૂકી આપણે એ કિતાબો સાથે ભારે અન્યાય કરી રહ્યા છીએ. એમ કરીને આપણે એ કિતાબોનો હક અદા ન કરી બેઅદબી નહીં તો બીજું શું કરી રહ્યા છીએ?

મસ્જિદના મારા એક સાથીએ અહીં અમારી મસ્જિદમાં તેમજ ઈન્ડિયા પોતાના ગામની અને આજુબાજુનાં બેચાર ગામડાંઓની મસ્જિદોમાં શોખથી ગુજરાતી તરજુમાવાળા કુર્આન શરીફના બધા જ ભાગો ખરીદીને ઈસાલે સવાબ માટે મૂકાવ્યા. એ દુઃખ સાથે ફરિયાદ કરતાં કહે છે કે ન તો અહીંયાં કોઈની પાસે એ તરજુમો વાંચવાની ફુરસદ જણાય છે ન તો દેશમાં. કબાટમાં જ્યાં છે ત્યાં જ એ હંમેશાં જોવા મળે છે. લોકો રાતદિવસ કુર્આન શરીફ તો પઢતા રહે છે, પણ એને સમજવા માટે એ મહામૂલા ગ્રંથોને ઉઠલાવવાની કોઈને સમજ પડતી નથી. વધારે નહીં તો આપણે દરરોજની નમાઝોમાં જેટલી સુરતો પઢીએ છીએ તેટલી સુરતોનો અર્થ પણ સમજવા આપણે એ તરજુમા અને તફસીરને જોવાની તસ્દી લેતા નથી. જો સમજાએ તો નમાઝ પઢવાની મજા ઓર વધી જાય છે.

આજકાલ મોબાઈલ અને વૉટ્સએપે ઘણી બધી સારી અને ઉમદા ટેવો અને વસ્તુઓનો છેદ ઉડાડી દીધો છે. સવારથી સાંજ સાચી પોટી વૉટ્સએપની ફૂલીપો જોવામાં અને મગજને ગંદુ કરવામાં લોકો જિંદગીનો ઘણો કીમતી સમય વેડફી દેતા હોય છે. એને બદલે કોઈ સારાં પુસ્તકો કે સમાચારપત્રો વાંચવાની તકલીફ કોઈ ઉઠાવતું નથી. અરે! મફત મળતાં પેપરો અને સામયિકો પણ ઘેર લઈ જઈને વાંચવાની કોઈને પડી નથી. જે સમાજના લોકો આ રીતે કશું ખાસ વાંચતા કે વિચારતા નથી તે સરવાળે પેલા ફૂવાના મેંડક જેવા બનીને રહી જાય છે. તેમની અત્યંત સંકુચિત દુનિયાની બહાર

તેમને કશું દેખાતું નથી. આપણા સમાજમાં મિટિંગ મેળાવડાઓમાં લોકો જે વાત વાતમાં ઉકળી પડતા હોય છે તેનું એક મુખ્ય કારણ આ પણ છે કે તેમનામાં શાંત ચિત્તે વિચારવાની, કોઈ મુદ્દો સમજવાની અને કંઈ વાંધો વિરોધ હોય તો તે સારા શબ્દોમાં દર્શાવવાની કે રજૂ કરવાની ન તો ક્ષમતા હોય છે કે ન તો પૂરતો શબ્દભંડોળ. આવી નબળી માનસિક હાલતવાળા લોકો આવેશમાં આવી તરત જ બુમબરાડા કરતા કે ગાળીગલોચ પર ઉતરી પડતા જોવામાં આવે છે. આને એક પ્રકારની વિચાર શૂન્યતા પણ કહી શકાય જેને વિક્ટોરિઅન સમયના જાણીતા અંગ્રેજ ચિંતક અને લેખક જ્હોન રસ્કીને “... આજના જમાનાની મુખ્ય સાર્વજનિક આપત્તિ” કહી છે.

પુસ્તક વાંચનની બાબતમાં અહીં પશ્ચિમની પ્રજા આપણા કરતાં ઘણી આગળ કહી શકાય. જ્યારે આપણે કોઈ પુસ્તકની લાખો નકલો વેચાઈ ગયાનું વાંચીએ છીએ ત્યારે આપણને ખરેખર નવાઈ લાગે છે કારણ કે આપણે ત્યાં સારાં, સંસ્કારી પુસ્તકોની પણ બેપાંચ હજાર નકલો વેચવાનું મુશ્કેલ બની જતું હોય છે. એમાંય કવિતા કે ગઝલના સંગ્રહો તો મોટા ભાગે કવિએ સ્વર્ભર્યે છપાવી લોકોમાં મફત વહેંચી આપવાના હોય છે.

ઈસ્લામમાં તેમ હિન્દુ ધર્મમાં પણ સત્સંગ પર ખાસો ભાર મૂકવામાં આવ્યો છે. એટલે જ કેટલાક લોકો આવો સત્સંગ મેળવવા અને રૂહની માવજત કરવા, આત્મશુદ્ધિ કરવા ખાનકાહોમાં જઈને કોઈ પીરોમુરસીદની સોબતમાં દિવસો વીતાવતા હોય છે. જ્યાં સત્સંગ માટે કોઈ સાચા, સંનિષ્ઠ, વિશ્વાસપાત્ર પીરોમુરસીદ ન મળતા હોય ત્યાં આપણે ભૂતકાળના ઈમામ ગઝાલી, શેખ સા’દી કે મૌલાના રૂમી (રહ.) જેવા કામિલ સંતોનાં લખેલાં પુસ્તકો વાંચીને તેમનો પરોક્ષ સત્સંગ હાસિલ કરી શકીએ છીએ. એટલે જ તો કેટલાક ચિંતકોએ જે ત્રણ ગુરુઓ ગણાવ્યા છે તેમાંનો એક તે વાંચન.

આમ વાંચન ખૂબ જ મહત્વનું છે જેની ટેવ આપણે આપણા બાળકોમાં નાનપણથી જ પાડવી જોઈએ. તેમને મોઘાદાટ મોબાઈલ ફોન લાવી આપવાને બદલે જન્મ દિવસની ભેટ તરીકે અવારનવાર થોડાંક સારાં, સંસ્કારી પુસ્તકો પણ ખરીદીને ભેટ આપવાં જોઈએ અને તેઓ તેમને વાંચે એની ખાતરી કરતા રહેવું જોઈએ. સારાં પુસ્તકોનાં વાંચન દ્વારા ઘણાં અસફળ લોકોની જિંદગી બદલાઈ ગયેલી હોવાના કિસ્સા વાંચવામાં આવ્યા છે. એમાં વળી જેમને કામચાબ કહી શકાય એવા જિંદગીમાં ખૂબ મહેનત મથામણ કરીને આગળ વધેલા લોકોની આત્મકથા કે તેમના જીવનચરિત્રમાંથી ઘણું બધું પ્રેરણાત્મક શીખી શકાય છે. આવું વાંચન આપણી જિંદગીનો પ્રવાહ પણ બદલવામાં આપણને મદદરૂપ સાબિત થઈ શકે છે.

જેમને પુસ્તકોનું વ્યસન હોય છે તેવા લોકો જિંદગીમાં કદી એકલતા અનુભવતા નથી. ભલે તેમની પાસે કોઈ ન હોય, પણ એકાદ સારું પુસ્તક હાથ લાગી જાય એટલે એમની એકલતા દૂર ભાગી જતી હોય છે. પુસ્તકો એક સારા મિત્રની, એક સારા સંગાથીની ગરજ સારે છે. એક સુંદર બગીચામાં જેમ વિવિધ રંગ અને પુશબોનાં ફૂલો ખીલેલાં હોય છે તેમ વિશ્વ સાહિત્યના બગીચામાં પણ ગણી ન શકાય એટલાં સંસ્કારી પુસ્તકોનો ભંડાર પડેલો હોય છે. આ બગીચાનાં ફૂલોની સુંદરતા માણતા જો આપણને આવડી જાય તો આપણે જીવનની કોઈ પણ અવસ્થામાં બારે માસ એ ફૂલોની સુગંધને માણીને આપણું જીવન ધન્ય બનાવી શકીએ છીએ.

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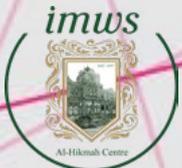
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