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A Quarterly Publication of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America



Lessons From The Moors

The Burka Debate

**Adopting Pakistani
Children**

**APPNA 1st Youth Essay
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Lessons From The Moors And Elsewhere

Al-Andalus was a flourishing and unique civilization at the height of the Middle Ages of Europe. It was in its zenith in the 12th century AD. In the daily routine it was often difficult to distinguish between Christian, Jew, and Muslim. The safeguards afforded to the “People of the Book” were in exemplary practice. Al-Andalus was both a connection and a conduit between the East and the West.

The largest library in the rest of Europe had 36 volumes of books. At the same time, the University of Córdoba contained 500,000 volumes. But more than abundant paper created the milieu for this thriving culture of Arts and Sciences. Freedom of secular and religious thought and learning; tolerance of free and open exchange of ideas was the norm. Muslims, Jews and Christians alike spoke their minds. A senior European clergyman is said to have complained that young Christian men were devoting themselves to the study of Arabic, rather than Latin.

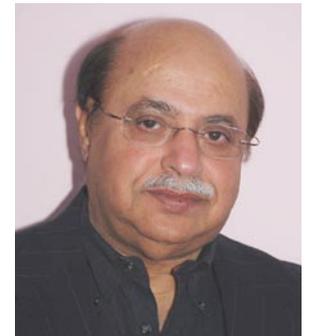
Muslims were then in a progressive mode and liberal influences were quite apparent. In another way Al-Andalus was considered a place apart. Women and men were mostly at par in social status. Women had a pivotal role and were active participants in political and cultural affairs. They helped shape the cosmopolitan life. Ali Ibn Hazm – an Andalusian scholar, advocate of a literal reading of the Qur’an – expressed his opinion that women could have been prophets of God in the past. Walladah bint Mustakfi challenged certain upper class social conventions such as veiling. She wore the words stitched on her sleeve: “I am, by God, fit for high positions.” Women participated in shura councils that made collective political and military decisions for the ruler to enact. Women also played significant roles outside the halls of power. They were active patrons and sponsors of public works. Women of means supported many public fountains, gardens, hospitals, and inns through their own assets. Shams of Marchena was a renowned mystic. She among other female mystics is mentioned by Ibn Al Arabi in his own work on great mystics of the time. The struggle between tolerance and intolerance is an enduring and painful component of the human experience. The refusal to acknowledge and accept as fully human, individuals or groups on the basis of their religion, race, or ethnic back-

ground has caused immense human misery. Sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe provides obvious examples of these tendencies. Amidst religious warfare and persecution, this period also generated powerful, though often isolated, voices for peace and toleration.

Our brethren in Pakistan, like early modern Europeans occupy a different mental world from our own. They do not, by and large, share the values that we associate with the concept of tolerance. While we recognize toleration as a positive value, the majority of them seemingly understand tolerance as the endurance of something negative, even something loathsome. While most Americans today ascribe to the belief that society benefits from having a plurality of peoples and religions, Considerable segments of Pakistanis like early modern Europeans consider the presence of minority groups and religions dangerous to the state and to the very fabric of their community.

In early Modern Europe, the Huguenot struggle for toleration, for the acceptance of two faiths under one ruler, and the ensuing wars of religion (1562-1598) were the occasion of some of the sixteenth century’s worst excesses of religious extremism. The most significant voices for liberty of conscience and freedom of religion in the early modern period emerged in England during the Puritan Revolution (1640-1660). An articulate debate on the principle of toleration was a by product.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s vision and wish for a tolerant and democratic Muslim Pakistan today is not only being held hostage by the extremists, many democrats have also surrendered to their own religious biases and a clearly flawed and lopsided constitution. Is Pakistani synonymous with Muslim? Other ethnic groups are not Pakistani? EQUALITY, JUSTICE and MERCY are inarguable concepts for the Muslim and the secular. Do the minorities not like other Pakistanis deserve Equality, Justice and Mercy? Shall we deny the loyalties of Cornelius and Cowasji, of Dorab and Bhagwandas? Should we dishonor Zafrullah and Salam because some refute their claim to being Muslim? Do we have the right to deny, let alone decide, another’s religion? Have we buried, along with the Quaid, his promise to every Paki-



Salim Chowdhrey, MD

Salim Chowdhrey is a Dow Graduate in the Practice of Psychiatry in New Jersey. He is an Attending at St. Barnabas Medical Center. He teaches in the Department of Psychiatry at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He can be reached at schowdhrey@gmail.com.

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stani of living in freedom, including freedom of religion? Some time ago Muhammad Ali, the famous boxer, was received as a Muslim Hero in Lahore. He was garlanded and carried in a befitting procession. He was then a Black Muslim. His creed was that Elijah Muhammad was a Prophet and was bestowed Prophet hood on a street in Detroit by Fard Muhammad, who was to him, God in Person. What has gone so awry? Why has our thinking become so twisted?

Increasingly, even in Pakistani-Americans, "Pakistani" has become synonymous with "Muslim." Pakistani-Americans must be alive to such misconceptions. APPNA not being a political organization has limitations. Yet as individual physicians and as a healing profession, we are the guardians of the physical and emotional health to foster social well being. In this context it is imperative that we diagnose the maladies and help remedy the dangerous and deadly diseases manifest in our Motherland. The incessant parade of alternating dishonest and corrupt politicians and generals have been doling out snake oil in return for ill begotten, over-stuffed coffers inland and in foreign lands. The maulanas of various convictions, who opposed the concept of Pakistan have now for years circulated a convoluted narrative that Pakistan was created as a theocratic entity. The politicians and the Generals have exploited this falsehood to the hilt. In 1984 came the 295-C clause, usually referred to as the blasphemy law. In the application of the blasphemy law, intolerance has fed on tolerance. A constitution that has triggered violence and repression against women, and sanctioned a religious apartheid that only allows an orthodox, pious Sunni Muslim democratic rights, to run in an election or rule the country.

To paraphrase Akbar Ahmed, we as Pakistani-Americans represent the best opportunity to fight Islamist radicalization, not because we understand Islam, but because we have experienced and understood what American liberty provides to the Muslim experience.

It has been said seeking knowledge is itself an Ibadat. So let us indulge. In this issue of the APPNA Journal we go on our own journey, physical and of intellect; to learn from history and anywhere else we can learn. Mustafa Khan, in his article "The Rise And Fall Of Muslims In Spain", traces the events of the Andalusian conquest and debacle. A travelogue, "Al Andalus: In The Footsteps Of The Moors" by Nadeem Ahsan, complete with impressive photography (credit shared by brilliant 11year old Samar Ahsan) and commentary chock full of information in his own exceptional style, aptly supplementing Mustafa Khan's piece. Burka, a word ringing in the legislative halls of Europe, is a topic of a debate in this issue. Several perspectives are offered to stimulate a discussion in the formal and informal fora of APPNA. In the articles, what comes through is a presence of choice in the vagaries of our culture. What is left unsaid, because it is obvious, is the distinction between oppression as implied by the critics, and Haya, a concept known only to those intimate with the culture. Dr. Anwar Raza, in her article "Mind The Gaps", classifies the whole lot of us in a generation gap. See where you fit in. Our seniors, Drs. Syed Ehtisham, Amjad Hussain, Rafiq Jan, Afzal Arain and Farrukh Malik, titillate us with their impressions. An exciting new section on Youth by Youth is being added in this issue. Dr. Lubna Pal's commendable skills in handling this section from start to finish are appreciated by the entire Publication Committee. The editor of the Urdu section, Dr. Mohammed Taqi, lives up to the challenge offered him and excels at it.

Space and cost limitations led the publication committee to limit the Committee, Chapter and Alumni reports to the winter edition of this Journal.

My personal thanks to Dr. Nadeem Ahsan and Dr. Zeelaf Munir to assign me this labor of love. All the Publication Committee members supported this effort and willingly and generously contributed their time. I am truly grateful to all of them. The best efforts of the entire team with outstanding leadership by Dr. Nadeem Ahsan and the complete support of Dr. Zeelaf Munir produced this issue of the Summer edition of the APPNA Journal. Any shortcomings are entirely mine. I look forward to your comments.

Dear Editor,

I have been attending APPNA meetings for years and am writing to share my observations about the recently held Spring Meeting in New York City. For me this meeting was special in many ways. Above all else, for me it was the remarkably dignified and professional manner in which the Council meeting was conducted. This was Dr. Zeelaf Munir's first meeting as President, despite which her confident handling of the discussions ensured that all affairs were presented and deliberated in a very civilized manner -- showing that given better leadership Pakistani-Americans are indeed capable of civilized behavior. Thankfully the unpleasantness and unparliamentary behaviors which we have witnessed in the past did not get repeated which is very encouraging indeed. Well-deserved kudos to Dr. Munir and also to the other officers who all seemed well-prepared and ready to take questions from the Council members and the general membership. Credit also goes to the Council members who took their responsibilities seriously. Needless to say, this is a wonderful omen for APPNA's future.

Sincerely,
 Mohammad Suleman, MD
 Past President, APPNA

Letter to the Editor

President's Report

President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Salams and Greetings! It is my privilege to present this report to you. The theme for our annual convention this year is "Celebrating APPNA" as there is much to celebrate and be proud of.

National Health Care Day, June 5, 2010: A Phenomenal Success!

I am delighted to share with you the amazing success of APPNA's first National Health care Day, celebrated across the country on June 5th, 2010. This was the first ever grassroots endeavor by APPNA – highlighting giving back to our communities, towns and neighborhoods in our adopted homeland. It was the first time ever APPNA was covered in the American media across the country. It was evident that as an organization APPNA truly can make a difference. The full report is presented in a different section of this journal. I am grateful to all those who helped in planning and organizing the event and all of you who volunteered in your local centers to make this a historic day for APPNA. I would be remiss if I don't specifically thank Drs. Nasar Qureshi and Azam Kundi, the Chair and Co-Chair respectively of the Committee, for their tireless efforts in making this dream a reality.

Visiting Faculty Program

Another innovative program introduced this year is the Visiting Faculty Program. In May, Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) gave final approval to a unique collaboration between HEC and APPNA for the "HEC-APPNA MERIT Visiting Expert Program." Under the program, HEC will provide travel and stay expenses for qualified APPNA doctors who want to teach in Pakistan's medical universities and affiliated colleges for 2-12 week teaching visits. HEC has committed to sponsor up to 100 such teaching visits this year. I would like to thank the MERIT committee for their hard work under the leadership of Dr. Naheed Usmani and Drs. Rizwan Naeem and Faiq Hameedi- Chair and Co-Chairs of the committee respectively.

APPNA in the Big Apple: Spring Meeting, April 1-4, 2010

While every event which unites APPNA members from around the United States and Canada creates avenues for growth and change, this was particularly true of the New York meeting, which was the largest gathering yet for either a spring or fall meeting. At the Council meeting, we advanced the agenda successfully and professionally by turning insightful ideas into action. I would like to thank the Council members for their participation and fulfilling their fiduciary duties.

Distinguished speakers addressed the Healthcare Reform Bill and its impact on physicians. We were honored to have the AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) president in attendance at the banquet. Thank you host committee specially Drs. Noor Khan, Salman Zafar and Rukshi Hameedi.

Part of the exceptional success of the Spring Meeting stemmed from our ability to reach out to the next generation, identifying and addressing their specific needs.

APPNA Youth Leadership Conference (AYLC)

For the first time, we created special programming for the youth of APPNA members. Four distinct panels of high profile professionals captured the youths' creativity and imagination, as they chart their own futures. **The feedback was outstanding**, with calls for ongoing discussions, opportunities for networking, and expanded workshops in the future. I am grateful to Drs. Sarwat Iqbal, Naheed Chaudhry, Shaheen Mian, Mr. Munir Mashooqullah and Ms. Rahilla Zafar for organizing the event.

Young Physicians Career Counseling Seminar

The Young Physicians Committee (YPC) created an innovative seminar, placing more than 80 young physicians in direct contact with several program directors. ECFMG Vice President Dr. Steven Seeling attended. In addition the CYP raised more than \$15,000 to support young physicians housing needs in New York. A special thanks to Drs. Rizwan Naeem-Chair, Saif Siddiki-Co-Chair and Kanwal Awan Shah-Co-Chair and the YPC.

Another worthy **Community Outreach Initiative** for Youth this year was the MATH BEE program for the Pakistani American youth conducted by Drs. Nasar Qureshi and Maleeha Ahsan and their committee. The feedback about the program from within APPNA and larger community was also outstanding.

Governance

The central office policies and procedures are being updated. The focus this year has been on **transparency, accountability, fiscal responsibility and sound financial management**. I am fortunate to have a diligent Treasurer-Dr. Mubasher Rana. Most significantly, I am truly grateful to Dr. Mushtaq Sharif for accepting the responsibility of overseeing the office in this very busy year along with his office management committee. His experience and dedication is priceless.

Election & Campaign Reform

Last but not the least, you have hopefully experienced a positive difference this election season thanks to the election and campaign reforms, and the diligent work done by the Membership Committee (MC) and Nomination and Election Committee (NEC). I would like to thank the candidates, the President-Elect and Board of Trustees. I would specially like to acknowledge the hard work of Dr. Sophia Janjua- Chair MC, Dr. Ahsan Rashid, Chair NEC and Dr. Ihsan UI Haq-Chair BOT.

I look forward to building upon this momentum throughout the year ahead. See you in Dallas where the best is yet to come! Thank you for your generous support and best wishes.

Think Progressive, Be Passionate, Take Pride



Zeelaf Munir, MD

Zeelaf Munir is a 1989 Dow graduate. She practices Psychiatry in Delaware and New York City.

It was the first time ever APPNA was covered in the American media across the country. It was evident that as an organization APPNA truly can make a difference.

1st APPNA Youth Leadership Conference

Article



Rahilla Zafar

Rahilla Zafar is a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania. She is regular contributor to Knowledge@Wharton and has reported from Afghanistan, China and Colombia. She previously worked for international agencies and was based in Kabul, Afghanistan.

From high-end fashion designers to investment bankers, panelists at the first annual APPNA Youth Leadership Conference proved that Pakistani-Americans have found success in all fields.

With over 78 attendees, the event took place on April 3rd 2010 in New York City. Distinguished Keynote Speaker State Delegate Saqib Ali of Maryland spoke to youth about what inspired him to make the transition from a software engineer to pursue a career in public service. He has proved that charisma and the desire to do good makes it possible for any individual to connect with their community members. Naveen Malik a Northwestern University graduate and former Obama campaigner also gave youth insight into career opportunities in government.

There were several panels throughout the day focusing on how individuals can make themselves stand out and excel within their respective fields. Ulya Khan a senior executive from Thompson Reuters gave advice on she has been able to thrive within the company while finding a balance managing her family life. Heart specialist Hina Chaudhry spoke about how her passion for stem cell research led her to an unexpected career in entrepreneurship as well as guest commentator for news outlets such as CNN.

Harvard Business School (HBS) graduate Zainab Wasti of Johnson & Johnson spoke of how finding the career she was most happy in required a lot of exploring. She volunteered in a hospital and worked in an IT lab in college only to realize that business was her passion. Another HBS alum Asad Hussain, an investment banker at Morgan Stanley, spoke of the importance of networking within his company and how he makes an effort to get acquainted with other employees even if they are from different divisions. Shahid Khan who serves as the chair of OPEN New York and has a media consultancy of his own gave youth a special talk on mastering networking.

Attendees also had the opportunity to hear how those in finance such as Sadiq Malik, Nabeel Kaukab and Sameer Shamsi are finding success in finance despite tough economic times. Fashion designers Nyla Hashmi and Fatima Monkush, founders of the clothing line Eva Khurshid, spoke on how they managed to launch their line in tough economic times.

The youth were also able to hear from NPR journalist Bilal Qureshi on how to break into a successful journalism career. Wharton Business School alum Nushin Alloo spoke on how she left a lucrative business career in consulting to follow her passion of learning Arabic and later becoming a diplomat in the US Foreign Service. Rikha Rani had a similar story talking about how she left her job at MAC Cosmetics to work for the Clinton Foundation in India where she negotiated with pharmaceutical companies to provide low cost medicine to the poor.

Tribeca Film Festival winner Musa Syeed explained how his bicultural background gave him inspiration and a unique lens to find success as a filmmaker. He added that Pakistani-Americans have a story to tell and a unique background that others do not. Finally, Salman Azam, founder and partner at Lakeshore Law Group and Wajjid Siddiqui, a partner at Hogan & Hartson LLP, gave youth insight into working in a large law firm and finding the right niche to start your own legal business. Overall the event proved that APPNA is able to inspire and be a resource to youth who interested in all fields, not just medicine.

We are grateful to Dr. Zeelaf Munir for providing the vision and leadership for this initiative. Also, we would like to sincerely thank Drs. Sarwat Iqbal, Naheed Chaudhry, Shaheen Mian and Mr. Munir Mashooqullah for their help in organizing the conference.



AYLC youth in audience

The Rise And Fall Of Muslims In Spain – What Can History Teach Us Centuries Later?



Tariq's Rock

Empires have come and gone throughout the great narrative of history. The lessons offered by their rise and fall can shine a light on the events of the present. One such impressive and unlikely historical event is the conquest of Spain ('Andalusia') by the Berbers ('Moors') of North Africa, which happened almost exactly 1300 years ago.

Prior to the Muslim rule, Spain was ruled by the Visigoths, a group of barbarians, who had wrestled it from a decaying Roman Empire. Life, which was difficult and harsh under the Romans, was no better under the Visigoths for the people of Spain. If anything, they were subjected to an even worse cycle of corruption and exploitation by their new masters. The Visigoths were stuck in a perpetual state of civil war, causing severe hardships for the population. It was under these circumstances of despair and chaos that the famous Berber general Tariq bin Ziyad led his army into Spain.

The conquest of Spain by Tariq has by now become a legendary larger-than-life event: After landing on the beach of Gibraltar on April 29, 711 AD, Tariq's small army immediately faced a fierce attack by a much larger army of the Visigoth king Roderick. After fighting had commenced, Tariq noted that his troops were being slowly pushed back towards the sea. At that moment, he made a fateful decision which would echo throughout the ages as the epitome of supreme courage: He ordered that all of his ships be burnt immediately. Once Tariq's soldiers saw their ships go up in flames, they realized that they had a simple choice: Attack and defeat the enemy or face certain death either by the enemy's sword or by the sea. Having abandoned all hope of escape, the Moors fought with a steely resolve and routed Roderick's army. Out of this battle was born the phrase "burning one's boats," which to this day signifies an iron-will to win.

From the moment they set foot in Spain, the Moors were keenly aware that they shared very little with the Spaniards with respect to race, culture, language, religion and history. The potential for friction and conflict between the two groups appeared inevitable. However, the Moors shrewdly adapted to the norms of this previously-turbulent land very quickly, and soon ushered in an age of peace and prosperity without precedent. How was this achieved?

First, at that time it was a common practice for the conquering army to subject the defeated population to a ruthless peace of domination. However, the Moors demonstrated unprecedented restraint and tolerance as conquerors. This fact is perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Spanish conquest by the Moors and it turned out to be the key to their long-term success. In the subsequent years as the

Moors consolidated their power, they established the rule of law, bringing peace and predictability to the local population. As a result, people from across the European continent flocked to Spain by the thousands in search of a better life. The cities of Cordoba, Granada, Toledo, Guadiana and Guadalquivir became centers for the study of art, literature and the sciences. Great advances in medicine occurred under the liberal rule of the Moors, producing some of the most sought-after physicians in all of Europe. The fields of mathematics, philosophy and astronomy flourished as never before in Europe. This was at a time when the rest of the continent was stuck in the period known as the 'Dark Age.' During these dark times, Spain was a beacon for the rest of Europe, and it shone radiantly, unrivalled in its brilliance and splendor, the preferred destination of the talented and the ambitious. Although the Moors were Muslims, they displayed an extraordinary amount of cultural sensitivity and religious tolerance. For instance, the Jews of Spain, who had previously been relentlessly persecuted by the Church, were given complete religious freedom by the Moors. They eventually became some of the biggest allies of the Moors, gaining prominence in politics and commerce.

It is instructive to compare and contrast the rule of the Moors in Spain to the European colonial history of the past 500 years. European colonialism was characterized by forced subjugation, slavery, aggressive conversion, exploitation of natural resources, deliberate destruction of local customs and a concerted effort to keep the local intellectual development in a state of permanent infancy. When Spain was reclaimed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492 AD, the Muslims of Spain were given a simple choice: convert to Christianity or face exile. The fact that so few Muslims exist in Spain today is illustrative of the fact that the King and Queen were ruthlessly successful in their quest for domination.

We can learn several lessons by looking at this unique period of history, which are quite applicable to the present day. Perhaps the most important lesson is that the Moors respected local social and religious customs despite the fact that they held dissimilar values. They did not seek to change the deeply-held beliefs of the locals by intimidation or coercion. Their ability to adapt to a different culture with its unique history and way of life without offending the native population was their biggest strength. In order to pacify the population of Spain, the Moors demonstrated a soft touch characterized by introducing advances in science, technology, medicine, literature and art. They ruled for over half a millennium in an unfamiliar realm not due to military might alone, but because they made Spain the economic, scientific and cultural capital and the envy of Europe. Simply put, the Moors made Spain a more peaceful and prosperous place to live.

Although the Moors are long gone, one can still glimpse their glory in the halls of the Alhambra palace of Granada. The gentle streams and graceful arches of Alhambra remind us how ambition, intelligence, tolerance, moderation and devotion to the study of arts and sciences can change the future of an otherwise ordinary group of people for the better. Conversely, the same history should also serve as a cautionary tale for us all: complacency, ignorance, intolerance, extremism and a disdain for the study of arts and sciences can take the very same people and make them irrelevant, obsolete, and forgotten. That is the real lesson of Andalusia. If we disregard it, we do it at our peril.

Article



Mustafa Khan, MD

Mustafa Khan is a graduate of University of Pennsylvania Medical School and is an Orthopedic-Spine Surgeon in South Jersey.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that the Moors respected local social and religious customs despite the fact that they held dissimilar values.

Al-Andalus: Walking In The Footsteps Of The Moors

Article



The author, Syed Nadeem Ahsan, trekking in the Iznajar Valley.

Photos by Syed Nadeem Ahsan and Samar Minaa Ahsan. The author, a 1989 Dow Graduate, is in Interventional Pain Management practice in Philadelphia and can be reached at AhsanN@einstein.edu.

seize immediate success, your good fortune will vanish, and your enemies, whom your very presence has filled with fear, will take courage. Put far from you the disgrace from which you flee in dreams, and attack this monarch who has left his strongly fortified city to meet you. Here is a splendid opportunity to defeat him, if you will consent to expose yourselves freely to death. Do not believe that I desire to incite you to face dangers which I shall refuse to share with you. In the attack I myself will be in the fore, where the chance of life is always least.

“Remember that if you suffer a few moments in patience, you will afterward enjoy supreme delight. Do not imagine that your fate can be separated from mine, and rest assured that if you fall, I shall perish with you, or avenge you. You have heard that in this country there are a large number of ravishingly beautiful Greek maidens, their graceful forms are draped in sumptuous gowns on which gleam pearls, coral, and purest gold, and they live in the palaces of royal kings. The Commander of True Believers, Al-Walid, son of Abdal-Malik, has chosen you for this attack from among all his Arab warriors; and he promises that you shall become his comrades and shall hold the rank of kings in this country. Such is his confidence in your intrepidity. The one fruit which he desires to obtain from your bravery is that the word of God shall be exalted in this country, and that the true religion shall be established here. The spoils will belong to yourselves.

PHOTOS

The road from Madrid to the Province of Cordoba passes through La Mancha where Miguel Cervantes based his story about Don Quixote's adventures. The ancient windmills still exist, but now increasingly overshadowed by massive modern wind-turbines that stick out of Spanish landscape like giant exclamation marks.





“Remember that I place myself in the front of this glorious charge which I exhort you to make. At the moment when the two armies meet hand to hand, you will see me, never doubt it, seeking out this Roderick, tyrant of his people, challenging him to combat, if God is willing. If I perish after this, I will have had at least the satisfaction of delivering you, and you will easily find among you an experienced hero, to whom you can confidently give the task of directing you. But should I fall before I reach to Roderick, redouble your ardor, force yourselves to the attack and achieve the conquest of this country, in depriving him of life. With him dead, his soldiers will no longer defy you.”

Powered by their zeal, the Berbers defeated a much larger Visigoth force led by King Roderic, in the process laying the foundations for the establishment of Al-Andalus, the heartland of Moorish ascendancy in Southern Spain, where science and philosophy flourished, and where. In fits and starts, bigotry gave way to pluralism for the next 800 years. Tariq’s Al-Andalus was to become the place where the Moors exhibited the kind of collective intellectual, economic and social brilliance that the world had never seen before.

After Tariq’s victory, many waves of Moors (a term that describes Arab, Syrian and Berber settlers from North Africa) passed through Tariq’s Rock (Jabr al Tariq: Gibraltar), in the process leaving their indelible mark on the face of human civilization.

It was to retrace the steps of the Moors that the we set off from a very cold New Jersey on Christmas eve of 2009.

PHOTOS

The beautiful Iznajar Valley in the Province of Cordoba. Clockwise, from top left: 1. Unused door to a chicken barn. 2. Stunning mountain-top swimming pool. 3. Sun rising over the Sierra Nevada mountain range. 4. Lake Iznajar. 5. Enjoying a morning cuppa while taking in the breath-taking view.



PHOTOS

Iznajar, built under the protection of an 8th century Moorish fort (Arabic: Izn – citadel, Achar – happy: happy castle), is rustic, olive country. Clockwise, from top left: 1. Chopped up bits of olive tree roots are used as firewood. 2. Olives ready to be harvested. 3. An olive press where oil is extracted. 4. Olive trees are hardy survivors. Many are over a thousand years old, having witnessed the coming and going of many an invader, from the Visigoths to the Moors, the Catalicos to Napoleon’s marauders.

PHOTOS

The hills in Andalusia, from a distance, have a doll's head-appearance due to the meticulously planted olive groves.

Clockwise, from top left: 1. A double rainbow after a rainstorm. 2. Two different varieties of olive trees. 3. Trees enveloped in clouds. 4. The earth takes on different hues on the same hill. Every square foot of the hillsides has been planted with these hardy olive trees that seem to not mind the arid, rocky soil of Andalusian hills.



It was to retrace the steps of the Moors that we set off from a very cold New Jersey on Christmas eve of 2009. Our mission, as it often is on our family vacations, was to get off the beaten tourist track; a quest for as much adventure as modern travel will allow.

We arrived in Madrid on a rather easy direct flight from Philly and made our way by rental car to our casita ("little house" ala French chalet) in the hills of the Province of Cordoba; a charming little hill-top abode, located in almond and olive groves, that provided us with breathtaking vistas of Lake Iznajar below and the snow-capped Sierra Nevada mountain range to the East.

Iznajar is very rural, remote, but centrally located in the heart of Andalusia, providing manageable driving access – factoring in little children and all – to such Moorish towns as Cordoba, Granada, Sevilla, Antequerra, Malaga and Gibraltar. Despite its rural location, the casita came equipped with all modern amenities including satellite TV (complete with Pakistani channels!), swimming pool and a charming little fireplace that burnt gnarled, chopped-up root-trunks of olive trees that are ubiquitous to the area, the economy being based on everything olive; fruit, oil and power-generation from the left over residue after the oil had been pressed out.

Our hosts at the casita were a charming British couple that lived next doors, our only neighbors for miles. They clued us in to the lack of predictability of Spanish utility services. Power outages are not uncommon and people have generators as back up (sound familiar?). Voltage fluctuation is common too; the promised 240 volts often actually amounting to as little as 160 volts! And then there's the water. In Andalusia we were cautioned to not drink or cook with tap water. Restaurants don't even

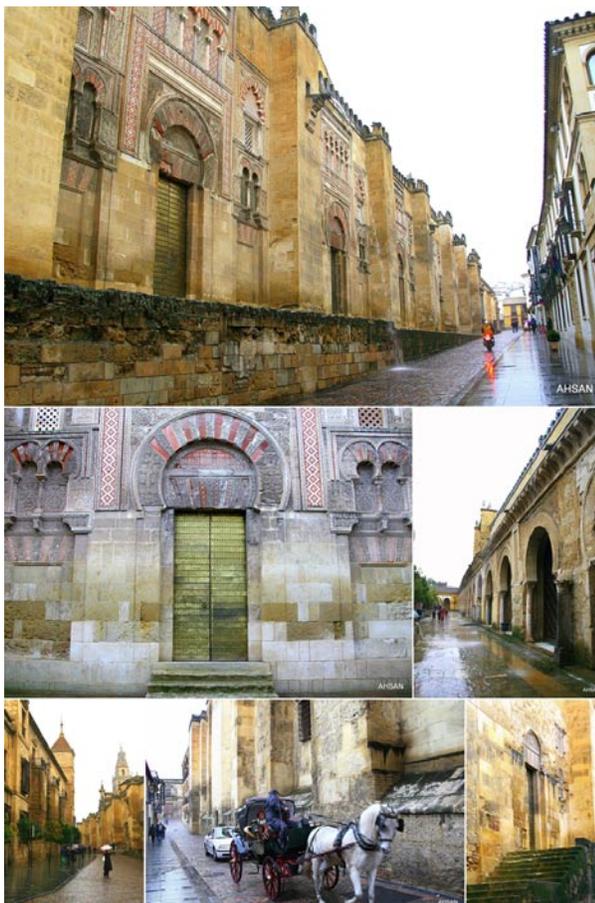
PHOTOS

The food in Andalusia is wholesome, with emphasis on fresh salads and fish. Clockwise, from top left: 1. Andalusian salad at a rest-stop; Tuna, shrimp, kiwi, olives, lemon, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, eggs, carrots, raisins, walnuts, avocados, etc.! With mayo on top. YIKES! 2. Delicious Spanish tangerines. 3. Scary looking fish at a grocery store. 4. Freshly caught octopus.



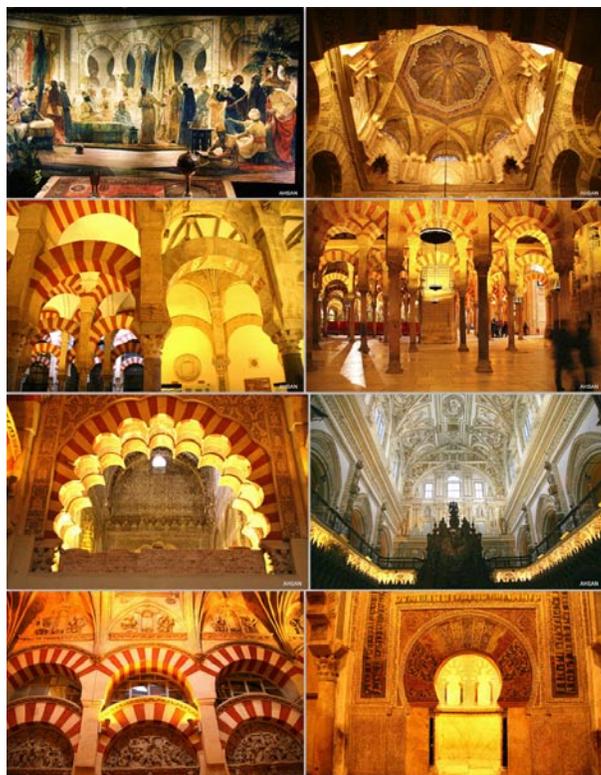
bother serving tap water, the options only being agua regular versus the fizzy seltzer variety. And bottled water isn't cheap. In fact, quite oddly, as many visitors discover to their fascination, in many parts of Andalusia, locally produced wines are cheaper by the liter than water. And in true European style, gas isn't cheap either. But it helped our cause that our French rental car was powered by a particularly thrifty diesel engine, the manual transmission on which proving to be the source of some excitement on the steep hilly roads of Andalusia. It helped my cause though that my gear shifting skills were in good nick from driving my Stuttgartian toy car back home.

The roads in Spain are very well-maintained and well sign-posted. Most have in fact been built recently with money that came from being accepted into the European Union (EU). (Until not too long ago Spain was a poor country, with poor infrastructure, struggling under Fascist rule). Spanish drivers are courteous and law-abiding; this despite the fact that in our ten days in Spain we did not see a single driver pulled over by the police. And the cars in Spain are little, as they have to be because many of the ancient roads of the inner cities and villages are completely impassable for larger vehicles. GPS-based navigation works well, except, as we discovered to our substantial chagrin, in the hills of Provincia de Cordoba where we had to make our way repeatedly through some pretty exciting (read scary!) mountain roads; complete with Karakorum-style hairpin bends, rock-slides, darting wildlife



PHOTOS

The stunningly beautiful Mezquita de Cordoba. Clockwise from top left: 1. Outer door. 2. Inner courtyard on a rainy afternoon. 3. Moss laden steps to an outer door. 4. Carriage drawn by an arched-neck Andalusian horse. 5. Rain-soaked street by the mosque.



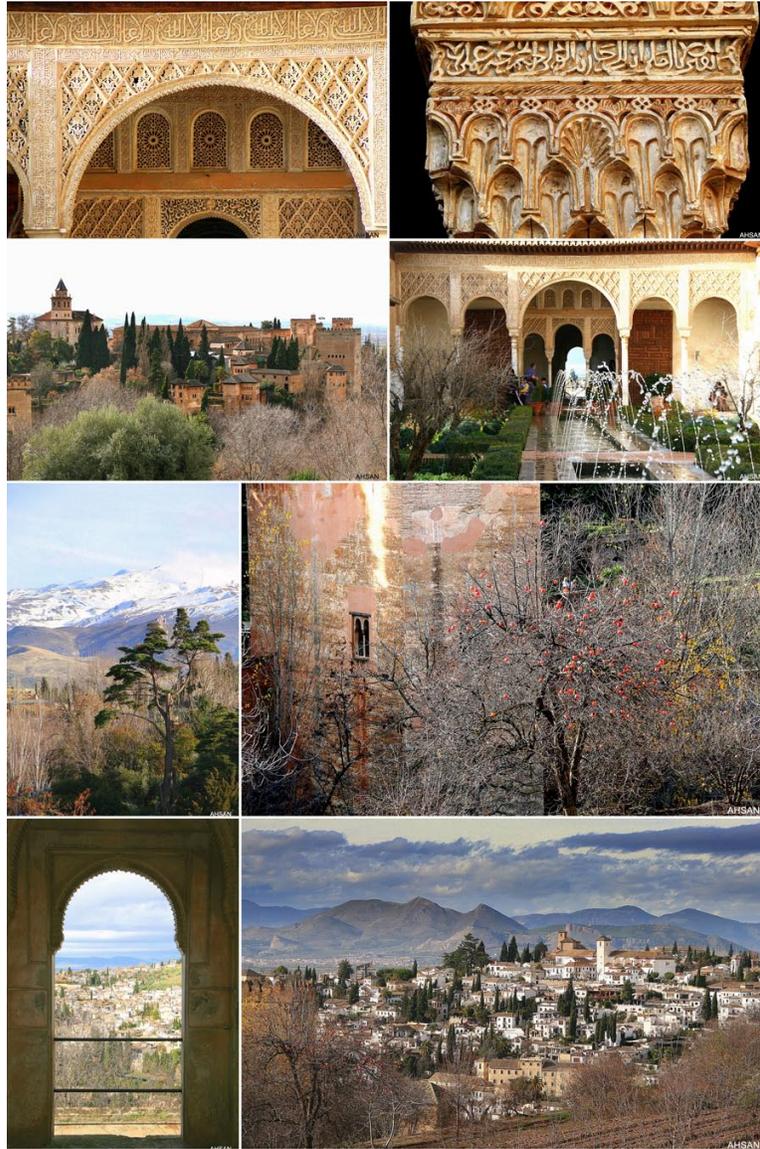
and intense darkness after sunset. Every trip back and forth from our casita, across the 30 kilometers of very narrow mountain roads – with no guard-rails – was an adventure, exciting enough to even bring about a fairly insurmountable urge to petition the protection of the Almighty; somewhat along the lines of there being no atheists in foxholes, which, if anything, should be a massive argument against foxholes, instead of being, as is usually held, an argument against unbelievers. These drives were reminiscent for me of the drives I took as a child to such outposts of Pakistan as Kaghan, Kalaam and the Khyber Pass. I could almost hear my mother's voice as she would be reciting every Quranic ayat she could remember as my father would regale us with the heroics of his Army Corps of Engineers and the FWO – with the emphasis on exactly how many of the brave soldiers had plunged to their deaths from the heights of each precipice we would pass.

We found Spanish monuments to be rather subdued. They have little of the opulence of Versailles, little of the grandeur of the Vatican, little of the sheer magnitude of London's architecture. But what these monuments lack in grandiosity and flamboyance, they make up for in charm, the brilliance of what they signify and the photogenicity of the terrain they astride.

PHOTOS

Inside the Masjid e Qurtaba. Clockwise, from top left: 1. A stunning tapestry displaying a Moorish court scene. 2. The central dome. 3. The famous double-arches inside the mosque. 4. Frescoed ceiling of the cathedral housed in a portion of the mezquita. 5. The famous minbar. 6. The austere arches of the mosque were catholicized by the addition of human figures after Cordoba fell to the Catholics. 7. Original portion of the mosque showing intricate Moorish artisanship. 8. Confluence of the original portion of the mosque with a section that was added later.

. . . we did manage to hone our dumb charades skills while eliciting many giggles from our children . . .



PHOTOS

Al-Hamra Palace Complex in Granada: Clockwise, from top left: 1 & 2. 700 year old Moorish calligraphy and filigree work in the summer palace. 3. Courtyard in the summer palace. 4. An orange tree bereft of leaves. Orange trees abound in the old city centers. Citrus fruits, along with rice, saffron and almonds, were introduced to Spain by the Moors. 5 & 6. Views of the beautiful city of Granada from the palace. 7. Granada is situated in the shadow of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada. 8. View of the main palace from the palace gardens.

Cordoba, with its brilliant Mezquita (masjid) rather elegantly exemplifies this. It also bears testimony to the humanity of its Moorish conquerors, who, exhibiting restraint very uncharacteristic to the conquerors of the time, – instead of sacking or burning a heathen temple – purchased half of the large Visigothic church of St. Vincent from the local Christians for use as a mosque. This went through multiple future expansions to become the famous Mezquita of Cordoba, which to date remains a gem of Islamic architecture despite the Catholicization the mosque has undergone after the Moors left (it is now the Cathedral de Cordoba). As the capital of the Western Islamic Caliphate, Cordoba was the largest, most prosperous, and civilized city in all of Europe. Its scholarship, philosophy, architecture, and craftsmanship were without rival in the entire world.

Also on display at Cordoba's Museum of Three Religions in Cordoba was very complimentary mention of such Muslim men of science and philosophy as ibn Rushd, ibn Arabi, etc. While it may well be an act of oversimplification of history, but it would, nonetheless, not be far from the truth to state that the sequence of events set in motion by Tariq's conquest of Spain followed by the establishment of the Cordoban Moorish Caliphate, the intense intellectual sophistica-

tion that the Moors engendered through their policies of urbane pluralism, that allowed the brilliance of philosophers like ibn-Arabi and ibn-Rushd to flourish, which sparked the wondrous European phenomenon called the Renaissance.

The famed Al-Hamra Palace complex (Castile de Alhambra; The Red Fort of Granada), while still bearing silent testimony to the brilliance of the Moors, has been subjected to similar senseless destruction, first at the hands of the Catholics of the ilk of Ferdinand and Isabel who tore down large sections of the palace, followed by the barbaric Napoleonic soldiers that plundered the palace and, on their retreat from Granada, tried to blow up the entire complex, but for the valor of a crippled soldier, (Jose Garcia) who stayed behind to remove the fuses. More recently, thanks in part to impetus generated by Washington Irving's Tales of the Alhambra, the Spanish government has taken on a sophisticated campaign of restoring the buildings, in part, by meticulously removing the accretions of later times. Along with Cordoba's mosque and Sevilla's Alcazar, AlHamra offers a unique insight into the rather precocious cultural, architectural and intellectual sophistication of such Moorish dynasties as the Umayyad Emirate, Caliphate of Abdar Rahman III, the Al-Movarids and the Al-Mohads.

As follows at the passing of every great civilization, al-Andalus fell upon hard times after the Moors were ushered out by the Catalico Monarchs. And despite the simultaneous 'discovery' of the Americas by Columbus in 1492 and the systematic plunder of the New World by the Conquistadores that sent unimaginable wealth back to Spain, Andalucia never recovered its former splendor, passing, instead, into deeper and deeper poverty with each passing century. Worse still was the intellectual and social degradation that this region went through, going from the pluralism of the Moors, where Jew, Christian and Muslim lived and flourished side by side, it came to pass that the Muslims and Jews were banished from Spain by the Ferdinand and Isabel, ushering in an era of abject poverty that the region is just barely starting to recover from. No mention anywhere



is to be seen of the infamous Spanish Inquisition, a church-led crusade of unimaginable barbarism inflicted upon people suspected to be Heretics (read Muslims, Jews or worse, practitioners of witchcraft).

The Spaniards are pleasant, welcoming and polite but speak virtually no English. But they patiently take the time to explain things with much by way of hand gestures and encouraging smiles. Needless to say we did manage to hone our dumb charades skills while eliciting many giggles from our children as we made fools of ourselves with our handy dandy

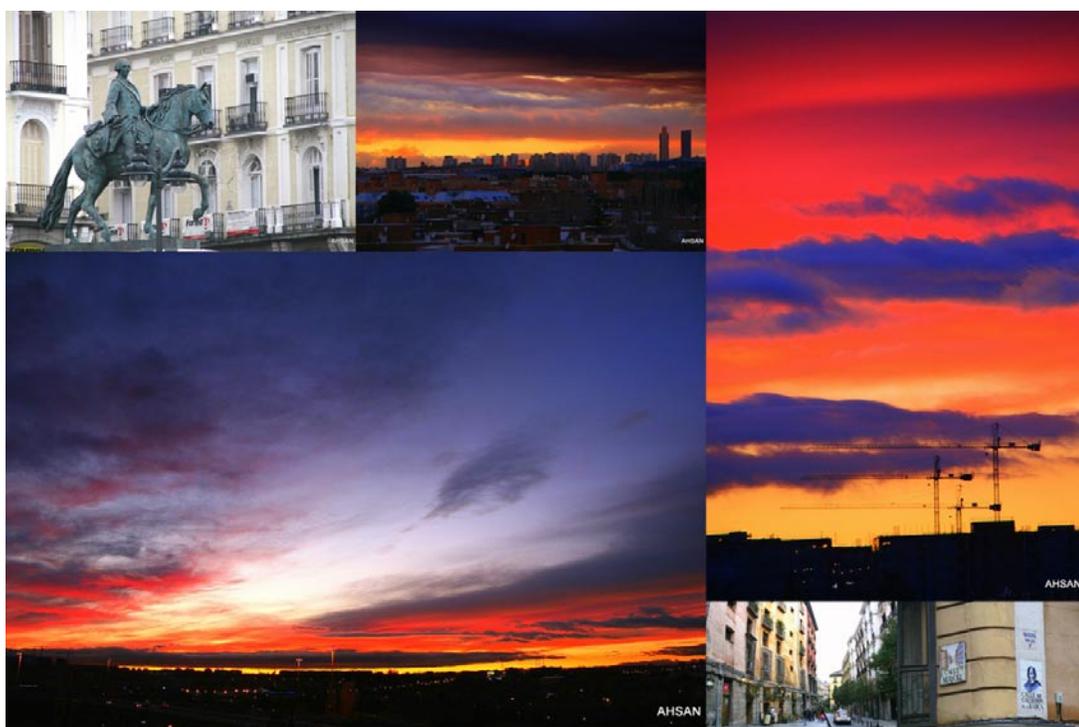
Spanish phrase-book. But, with as much as 36% of Spain's GNP being tourism-dependant, economics alone would be a good reason for the Spaniards to consider multilingualism, because after a while it becomes quite frustrating for the non-Spanish tourist to have to struggle with what should be the simple tasks of ordering a meal, asking for directions, or even fresh towels.

All in all, though, Southern Spain offers a truly memorable experience for the adventurous traveler. Our children in particular found the trip enjoyable, educative and exciting. While us paindoo Pakis find fascination in most anything foreign, our American children take much in their presumptive strides, having been there and done that. But the Moors did indeed capture their imagination, to the extent that, on the flight home, they expressed an interest in returning to lost world of Al-Andalus.

PHOTOS

Street scenes of Madrid. Clockwise, from top left: 1, 2 & 3: Street performers. 4. Postcards. 5. The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha standing guard in a shop window.

All in all, though, Southern Spain offers a truly memorable experience for the adventurous traveler.



PHOTOS

Madrid sunsets are spectacular. Clockwise, from top left: 1. Carlos III. 2, 3 & 5. Stunning sunsets captured from the hotel balcony. 4. Street signs also bear images of the person the streets are named in honor of.

The Burka: My Interview With An Artist

Article



Lubna Pal, MD

Lubna Pal is a reproductive endocrinologist at Yale University, New Haven, CT, and a 1988 graduate of Dow Medical College, Karachi.

While the nostalgia of yesteryears may have been rendered unduly rosy by an amnesic bliss that deepens with every passing year, the Pakistan of the 70s and 80s was making strides. As a people, we were comfortable in, nay proud of, our identity; our heads were held high and hearts abrim with hopes and promise. Despite the tragic truncation of the country (with the loss of East Pakistan) and germination of seedlings of distinctiveness amongst the ethnic factions, we remained unified in our concepts of singularity of language (Urdu), apparel (Shalwar Kameez), and goals. Modesty of behavior, attire and thought were aspired for individually and collectively. For the young women of our generation, adoption of the Duppatta, Chaddar and even the Burka was as acceptable a “norm” as was their absence. These clothing accessories were an expression of our cultural heritage: neither was their adoption a perceived virtue nor their omission a proven vice. Recent years unfortunately have witnessed an amalgamation of boundaries between cultural nuances and religious inflictions, shattering the latter precept.

The hijab or veil, an Arabian substitute to Indo-Pak Subcontinent’s chaddars and burkas, has permeated the Pakistani society with misplaced gusto; viewpoints that are equating adoption of hijab with “purity” and classifying as “reprobate” those who may be less embracing of this observance are increasingly apparent. Equally misplaced are perceptions of the so called liberal (regardless of geographic affiliations) that adoption of an accessory covering, whether the Duppatta, Chaddar or the Burka by women of South Asian heritage, or hijab by the Arabs (although a mushrooming phenomenon in the non-Arab world in recent years) must always be an imposition, and hence synonymous with persecution of womankind; consideration that espousal of a particular attire may reflect “cultural norms”, or even serve as a medium of “liberal expression” by women of any socio-cultural stratum remains glaringly amiss. Thus Nilofer Haidar’s photographic exhibit at the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Connecticut titled “Demystifying the Burka” comes as a breath of fresh air. The exhibit included photographs taken while the artist was on a trip to her homeland, Pakistan. The 25-image sequence is of young girls without head covering,

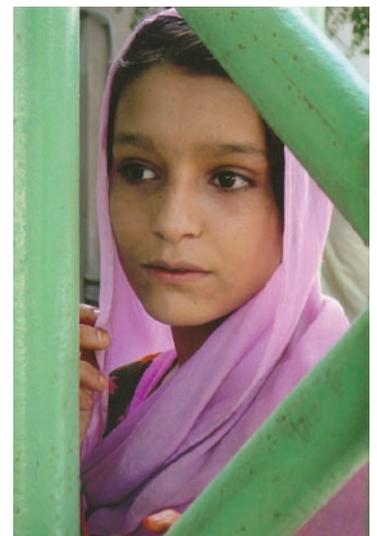
preteen and teen-aged girls with head covering, burka clad women, and chador-clad women of Pakistan.

I was particularly intrigued by the medium of her focus and enquired if she could rationalize her fascination with the Burka; here is Nilofer’s response: “Her name was Jamila Khatoon, Lady Jamila. Not Mrs. Mohammed Sharif . . . just Jamila or Ammi Jan to one and all. Darling grandmother! She was my late paternal grandmother and as long as I can remember, she wore the Burka . . . Married at 17 to a young, progressive and upcoming lawyer she remained fiercely independent and compromised on very few things . . . but never ever on the Burka!!! She had 3 of them: one was her daily wear made out of cotton. The second, a black silk Burka that she wore to her “ladies meetings”; but the crowning glory was her black, velvet, embroidered ball gown like Burka . . . it was exquisite! When she wore it we (the grand children) knew that it truly must be a special event. It covered every inch of her body except for the eyes and for those she chose to wear, evening or day time, Parisian, dark glasses . . .”

When asked if as a young girl growing up in a household enriched by the bustle of second and third generation family members (as Nilofer so eloquently describes), was ever Ammi Jan’s insistence for, and adherence with wearing the Burka perceived as anything other than by choice, Nilofer’s response: “My grandfather was a patient man not used to losing battles but he was not happy about her cloaking herself and over the nearly 55 years of married life requested her frequently to leave it behind. She never did. She studied and became a practicing Ladies Homeopath, educated all her children, joined politics and was in her own way a moving force in the movement for Pakistan’s independence . . . but . . . always from within the comfort and security of her Burka!”

As a clinical researcher, I was particularly interested in hearing details of the “study methodology” and in this context requested Nilofer to share the circumstances that led to her attending the Community Health Center “armed” with a camera. Nilofer: “It was purely by chance that my mother, along with her friend (both ladies have been volunteers

. . . the crowning glory was her black, velvet, embroidered ball gown like Burka . . . it was exquisite!



since the last 30 years at this mother and child health clinic) approached me on one of my recent visits back home (to Karachi). My mother's friend's 11 year old grandson (living in Sydney, Australia) had requested grandma to help with a school project that would focus on the indigent Pakistani's in general and the Afghan refugees, in particular; Grandma, while familiar with the cultural spectrum of attendees at the child health center, was flustered as she had never used a digital camera, and enquired regarding my expertise and experience. Brashly confident, only knowing the very basics of photography, I agreed; donning my sensible shoes, and in my shalwar kamiz with arms bare, I went along to the clinic."

Intrigued more than before by the setting of an impromptu exploration, I was hoping for more methodological details: Can you share your "on ground" experiences? Nilofer: "It struck me at once, as I entered the stark, and dreary, grey and sensible looking compound that despite the courtyard's grey monotone the atmosphere was vibrant with color . . . this beauty of rainbow was all around me!!! There were at least 50 women of all ages clad in bright, flowing burkas (some of which were expensive looking), and others in white Chaddars and Dupattas . . . they looked like misplaced flowers! The 2 hours that I spent interacting with the women, explaining my task, asking for their permission (here I, the writer, heave a sigh of relief at this acknowledgment of informed consenting . . . all requisites for an epidemiological quest are being duly addressed!) and then taking photos were memorable." My enthusiasm and request was as much a source of excitement, as of distress for the subjects of my attention. I did not expect to be pitied. It was I, in my cotton jora with missing sleeves, unable to afford even a simple Chaddar, who was perceived as poor!

"Did you get a sense of whether the Burka and Chaddar clad women perceived their apparel as repressive", I ask, still not quite sure if the research question may have implications for long term psychological detriment for the subjects? Nilofer: "Sakina. a young woman in a green Burka (picture) said to me "It's the fashion now and for me this is the cheapest and least expensive way to be fashionable". I

did meet some who were not enthused, who expressed that the decision to adopt the attire was not theirs; they however did acquiesce to following a custom that is as old as time. I was pleasantly surprised to hear from the majority of women I interviewed (ranging from those in the dawn of youth to the twilight of their lives) that it was their choice to embrace a practice that has been the "norm" for their household and community (to this writer, this rationale sounds quite rational, dispelling a need for further conjecture). I stood enlightened and proud of this group of eloquent and communicative Pakistani women, and yes relieved too, knowing that none perceived their choice of covering, whether the Burka, Chaddar, Chador or Duppata, as a symbol of "oppression". Heartening was the observation that the notion of their attire being a reason for attracting outsiders pity was quite alien to this group. Au contraire, it was I, the one clad in inexpensive cotton with missing sleeves who was the recipient of their sympathy! The generosity and the openness that I experienced was as inspiring as the richness of color, culture and confidence witnessed during my brief encounter with the indigent women of Pakistan within a small community center.

Serendipity may best describe the sequence of events that led to the inception of this endeavor; during the course of a day spent at a busy community health center that caters to the indigent Pakhtun and Afghani refugee population of Karachi, amidst a cacophony that predictably emanates from a restrained gathering of kids of all ages, the unwell presenting for sick visits, the healthy attending for routine care, and the accompanying caregivers (mothers, grandmothers, sisters and aunts). Nilofer's camera lens has managed to eloquently capture the elegance within, and pro-choice nuances of attires (burkas, chaddars and duppattas) that are more representative of sociocultural nuances of the Pakistani community rather than an epitome of religiosity, as is commonly misunderstood by many, both within and outside of Pakistan.

Nilofer Gisela Kaiser Haider is a graduate of St. Joseph's Government College, Karachi and is an artist and community-activist in Connecticut.

“. . . a young woman in a green Burka said to me 'It's the fashion now and for me this is the cheapest and least expensive way to be fashionable'.



Photography by Nilofer Haider

Article



Nayyar is an endocrinologist currently working for a pharmaceutical company. He also has an adjunct faculty appointment at the University of Pennsylvania, School of Medicine

There is evidence of possible harm in terms of Vitamin D deficiency . . .

The Free Online dictionary describes burqa as “a loose, usually black or light blue robe that is worn by Muslim women, especially in Afghanistan, that covers the body from head to toe”.

The word ‘Burqa’ elicits many reactions. For some it is a demonstration of a woman’s piety and modesty while for others it is a political statement. Some of its detractors, on the other hand, describe its use as evidence of religious extremism in a society and a method of subjugating women in the name of religion. More interestingly, this is debated passionately by people who are not the end users of burqa, i.e. feminists of both genders. The echo of this debate is heard not only in the mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan but also in the corridors of power in Paris and Amsterdam. This debate is nothing new and has been going on for centuries. One would wonder what would have happened if there was no burqa (burqa knock-out for those of you with a more basic-science bend). Would we have a better society? Using the same logic, what would have been like if every woman (and possibly man) in this world start wearing burqa (burqa over-expression)? That would have made the life of Maulana Aziz much easier as he was trying to escape Lal Masjid wearing a black burqa in Islamabad during the siege of the Masjid. Has the use of burqa influenced the accepted measures of progress in a society? Would our world be a better place to live with or without burqa? I leave it to our readers to ponder over these questions.

The task before me is to assess the use of burqa from a medical perspective. Are there any health consequences of wearing burqa? Before I do that I should define the parameters of this discourse. This only relates to the direct effects of a physical barrier. Obviously, normal clothing provides that barrier but burqa increases the covered surface area. Searching the literature, there are no data that sheds light on the psychological effects of burqa on “volunteer” users. One could easily imagine a higher likelihood of anxiety and depression in non-willing users. It is quite striking that despite several centuries of its use, we have not been able to produce a single well conducted study to evaluate the psychological well-being of users versus non users. For the supporters and proponents of burqa, if such study is conducted and shows positive results, it will give an additional reason to advocate burqa use above and beyond the centuries old argument of pride, religion and culture. For young scientists who are reading this, it could be an idea for their masters/doctoral thesis.

Moving on to the physical barrier aspect, I was thrilled to see a report from the holy land. “The effect of wearing the veil by Saudi ladies on the occurrence of respiratory diseases” published in Journal of Asthma, 2001. Results, however, were rather disappointing. Using a questionnaire, authors reported that respiratory infections and asthma were significantly more common in veils users ($p < 0.00001$ and $p < 0.0003$, respectively). As per authors, “this unex-

pected finding was probably secondary to infection”. This raises another question. Does wearing burqa predispose women for more infections? What is the mechanism? We will need more studies to answer these important questions. Undeterred, I continued to look for any positive effects of burqa on hair, skin-texture or hygiene but again there was nothing substantial to report. Knowing that the absence of evidence is not necessarily an evidence of absence and hence one still needs to perform well conducted studies to reach a more definite conclusion. Nonetheless, it was somewhat disappointing that a practice that is a mode of life for so many and consumes so much time and energy for supporters and detractors alike has not been scientifically evaluated to provide an unbiased medical perspective of its utility. This, of course, could be of great help for the future users of burqa evaluating the pros and cons of her and (may I dare to say) his choice of covering. Getting desperate, I tried to cast a wider net, by putting “burqa or veil and beneficial effects” as my PubMed search term. Again, to my great dismay, I did not get any hits. Instead, I got the dreaded response, “No matching results”.

Disheartened, I moved on to the “cons” of wearing burqa. The first and obvious issue in my mind was the possible restriction of peripheral vision. Depending on the type of “jali” (small openings to see through), one could easily imagine a reduction in peripheral vision and higher likelihood of accidents and injuries especially in urban settings. However, there are no data on the incidence of accidents or falls in burqa users versus non users. My next question was related to sunlight. Are there detrimental health effects due to possible decrease in sun exposure? Here I got multiple hits about the use of burqa/veil and Vitamin D deficiency. From Dearborn, Michigan to Morocco and from Lebanon to Kuwait and Turkey, multiple studies conducted in burqa users versus non-users reached the same conclusion. Burqa blocks sunlight leading to higher incidence of Vitamin D deficiency in its users compared to a matched controlled population of non-users. Vitamin D deficiency increases the risk of osteomalacia, osteoporosis and fractures. This was

neither surprising nor unexpected. It is recommended that burqa users should take regular supplements of calcium and Vitamin D.

Religion, culture and politics aside, currently good evidence is still lacking to support the use of burqa for medical benefits. There is evidence of possible harm in terms of Vitamin D deficiency that needs to be corrected to avoid fractures, pain and disability. More studies are needed to adequately evaluate different dimensions of this centuries old practice.



Osteoporotic fractures in a patient with Vitamin D deficiency.

Whither To, Pakistani Women?

Article

Controversy about Muslim/Pakistani dress for women never fails to amaze me. Some how a non-issue has been given so much importance as if the very survival of Islam and/or Pakistani culture depends on it. Fortunately it does not. It never has.

A few years ago a young woman of Pakistani parentage refused to wear the school uniform because, according to her, it was unIslamic dress. That public school in Great Britain had more students of Pakistani background than the native English. In deference to the wishes of Pakistani parents, the school board formed a committee of parents to recommend proper attire for girls. The school board accepted the recommendation and mandated shalwar-kameez as the school uniform. The girl wore the uniform until she was senior and then she refused. Instead, she demanded to wear a long abaya worn by Arab women. The school refused and the case ended up in courts where it was eventually thrown out.

Such controversies are not unusual in the Diaspora. But what caught my attention were her remarks she made in an interview. She said shalwar-kameez was unIslamic.

I thought of my mother and countless generations of non-Arab Muslim women who wore that dress and practiced the faith in ways that abaya-clad desis can only dream of. I was offended when in her naïveté or stupidity or both, she painted a whole segment of Muslim women who could teach a thing or two about religion, acceptance and grace to these self-righteous women. To me those careless remarks tried to make my mother a lesser woman.

My mother was an unlettered woman of uncommon wisdom and wit. The only gift of education she had ever received was her ability to read the Qura'n with correct pronunciation and she passed that gift on to many generations of young girls and boys who would come to our home after school to learn the reading of the Qura'n. Her dress, like millions of women in India and Pakistan, was shalwar-kameez.

So what is a proper dress for a Pakistani Muslim woman? Without sounding preachy or quoting religious texts, let me lay down some principles that are enmeshed in our Pakistani culture. Let me say unequivocally that Islam is not the only religion or tradition that has a corner on modesty. Most people in the East, irrespective of their religion, subscribe to a set of values that are commonly referred to as Eastern Values. Those include the norms of social behavior, mixing of sexes, respect for the elderly, respect for parents, and proper dress, both for men and women.

So then what is an Islamic dress? Is it an all-covering burqa? Is it the niqab, hijab or a simple scarf or the combination thereof? Does a dupatta or a shawl suffice?

There are three pertinent references in the Qur'an (24:31, 33:53, and 33:59) that lay down guidelines for Muslim women who are advised to cover themselves appropriately when outside the home. The underlying principle is to dress modestly and not be a walking sex symbol. They are further told to guard their private parts and not display their beauty, their embellishment and their adornments.

Pardon my gaze, but I have often seen the adornments and embellishments on full display while the hair is tightly covered.

The varied and conflicting opinions about dress cause confusion in the minds of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. But if the dress was merely a personal choice that would not infringe on the rights of others, we could brush them aside as a minor irritant. But certain form of dress affects and occasionally offends others in the society.

Four years ago Mr. Jack Straw, the then British foreign secretary, created considerable controversy when he refused to meet women clad in burqas or wearing niqaab from his constituency if they declined to show their faces. To him it was important that he talk to them face to face. Shortly thereafter a veiled Muslim teacher was let go from a junior high school in Britain when she refused to remove her veil in her classroom.

Now the controversy has resurfaced in France where last year a parliamentary commission recommended a partial ban on veils. If the parliament accepts these recommendations, veiled women could still walk on Champs Elyees, but will be denied services at public places like hospitals, schools and transit facilities. President Nicolas Sarkozy wants a total ban instead of a partial one. More recently a woman was arrested in France for driving a car while fully clad in a niqaab. The case is pending.

To a great majority of Muslim women, however, it is the modesty in dress that is important whether it is a western dress, African dress, or a dress worn in the Indian sub-continent. In the absence of a unifying central religious authority, Muslims, mostly Sunnis, interpret the scripture according to their own cultural background and there is a plethora of competing and contrasting opinions. Anyone with a megaphone and a strong opinion can get on a soap box and start telling others what is Islamic and what is not.

It is interesting that some of Muslim Pakistani women were raised in the West and in families where neither hijab nor niqaab was part of their upbringing. This retrograde feminism, and here I refer to the niqaab only, with an in-your-face attitude adds yet another layer of suspicion in the minds of the non-Muslim majority. It seems to shout, louder than the words ever could, "I am different and I couldn't care less about others around me."

Such pseudo-religious issues add credence to the widely held notion that Muslims are averse to change and that many of them still cling to traditions that are archaic and out of step with the world around them.

If some Muslim women are determined to shroud themselves from head to toe, as is their right, then they should give up their right to teach in public schools or drive a car.

A civil society has the obligation to be sensitive to the religious practices of its minorities, but a line has to be drawn for the overall good of people where the rights of the society outweigh religious whims of a few specially in areas that are not pivotal to the practice of faith.



S. Amjad Hussain, MD

S. Amjad Hussain is an Op-ed columnist for The Daily Toledo Blade and Professor Emeritus, Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, College of Medicine, The University of Toledo, Ohio.

Let me say unequivocally that Islam is not the only religion or tradition that has a corner on modesty.

The Burqa: *Uncovered*

Article



Layla Revis

Layla Revis is a journalist and women's rights activist studying for her Masters of Science in Media and Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She has worked for the Women's Reproductive Rights and Assistance Project, is a member of NOW, The Gender and Development Network, and is the Media Coordinator at Women for Women International.

... many Pakistani men and women I've spoken with explained that they rarely saw anyone wearing the burqa in 1980's Pakistan, outside of a few underdeveloped villages and television programs.

For some from the South Asian tradition, the burqa is simply a colorful outfit – flashes of verdant greens or bright blues - the silky petals of a fragile flower. Unfortunately, descriptions of colorful fabric can not conceal the need to examine the greater significance of a garment that serves to obfuscate a woman's face and form, rendering her incapable of effectively communicating, and making it decidedly difficult for her connect with all members of society in the same way a man is permitted to connect.

The Bengali writer, Taslima Nasreen, a physician, a feminist, a human rights activist and a secular humanist, notes in her opinion piece *Let's Think Again About The Burqa: The Quran does prescribe purdah. That doesn't mean women should obey it.*

"My mother used purdah. She wore a burqa with a net cover in front of the face. It reminded me of the meat safes in my grandmother's house. One had a net door made of cloth, the other of metal. But the objective was the same: keeping the meat safe. My mother was put under a burqa by her conservative family. They told her that wearing a burqa would mean obeying Allah. And if you obey Allah, He would be happy with you and not let you burn in hellfire. My mother was afraid of Allah and also of her own father. He would threaten her with grave consequences if she didn't wear the burqa. All dark inside? Don't you feel breathless? Don't you feel angry? Don't you ever feel like throwing it off? My mother kept mum. She couldn't do anything about it. But I did. When I was sixteen, I was presented a burqa by one of my relatives. I threw it away."

Here, Nasreen was able to make the choice, but to talk about this choice and to write of this choice – that would require something else: self-confidence and bravery. A fatwa would be issued on her head and she would not be alone. For many women who have chosen to reveal their rejection of the burqa, they are met with death threats and intimidation. Most find lives in the West to avoid cutting their careers – as well as their lives – short. Among them, Iranian novelist Azar Nafisi (*Reading Lolita in Tehran*) and Marjane Satrapi (*Persepolis*), just two thought-provoking intellectuals all too often missing from the 'But-Women-Want-To-Wear-The-Burqa' debate.

In fact, many Pakistani men and women I've spoken with explained that they rarely saw anyone wearing the burqa in 1980's Pakistan, outside of a few underdeveloped villages and television programs. These days, many cite the spread of Wahhabi Fundamentalism, thanks to Saudi funded mosques and madrassas, for the resurgence of burqas on the streets of London and the markets of Lahore. Worth also mentioning in this context are the famous Muslim feminist opponents of the burqa that include another Muslim Bengali writer, Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain, who criticized the Burqa in her utopian novel *Sultana's Dream* and Parvin Darabi, author of *Rage Against the Veil*.

This isn't simply an issue of cultural relativism or the need to support a woman's right to dress as she so chooses. For

at one time in the Western world, it was also the cultural 'norm' for a woman to dwell solely in the home. Less than a hundred years ago in the United States, it was also a cultural 'norm' that only permitted men to vote. Another cultural 'norm'? Wealthy white men owning slaves. Cultural norms can no longer be used to pressure women to conform to subservient roles that place a price on their so-called 'virtue.' It is, as James Curran explains, "Patriarchal ideology dressed up as social morality."

Donning a burqa clearly serves to separate a woman from partaking in the same behavioral norms and equities as a man. A full account of the patriarchal history of this garment and the biological meanings behind it must also be taken.

Much of this burqa debate reminds me of the early debates surrounding the suffrage movement. Surprisingly, there were plenty of women who did not support their own right to vote either. Other women tried to proclaim that working women – and voting women – simply couldn't be good mothers. Both men - and women - perpetuated cultural 'norms' and ideologies that focused on a woman's purity and virtue as a way to restrict their power on the basis of biology. From the 18th to 20th centuries, women were told they were best suited to the home.

Some men and women even helped to encourage the repression of female sexuality just as others today might be seen as encouraging the repression of female sexuality with the acceptance of the burqa today. Termed a 'biologically determinist' approach to further maintain, as Curran calls it a 'patriarchal offensive,' in *Media and Power* he writes, "One key explanation for this continuing inequality was that suffragettes had been more successful on the political front than on the cultural one. While women become in 1918 equal citizens, many were still socialized through peer group pressure, schools, family tradition, and the mass media into acceptance of domestic and subordinate roles."

And the women in Pakistan who reveal that they are not wearing the burqa by choice... where, I ask, is their voice? Might they, like Nasreen, ask, "Why are women covered?"

"Because they are sex objects," Nasreen answers. *"Because when men see them, they are roused. Why should women have to be penalized for men's sexual problems? Even women have sexual urges. But men are not covered for that. In no religion formulated by men are women considered to have a separate existence, or as human beings having desires and opinions separate from men's. The purdah rules humiliate not only women but men too. If women walk about without purdah, it's as if men will look at them with lustful eyes, or pounce on them, or rape them. Do they lose all their senses when they see any woman without burqa?... Irrespective of which book says it, which person advises, whoever commands, women should not have purdah... These are symbols of women's oppression. Through them, women are told that they are but the property of men, objects for their use. These coverings are used*

to keep women passive and submissive. Women are told to wear them so that they cannot exist with their self respect, honour, confidence, separate identity, own opinion and ideals intact. So that they cannot stand on their own two feet and live with their head held high and their spine strong and erect."

Sure, many covered women might disagree. Many might praise the values of culture, but culture too – and the insistence upon gender-oriented fashion and behavior – is often the very thing that causes a society to remain impotent to change and progress. Cultural 'norms' also have a very strong tendency of leaving little room for those who are homosexual or struggle against gender biased, sexually stigmatised 'norms' imposed by a patriarchal order. The reality is that, in strict Islamic nations like Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and conservative communities from London to Lahore, women are told to wear the burqa and failure to do so can result in harassment, beatings, or death.

Interestingly enough, Edward Cody in *The Washington Post* quotes Andre Gerin when writing about the controversial burqa ban in France, delving a bit deeper into the physical and medical implications of such cultural 'norms'. "[Andre] Gerin said, behind them [burqa clad women] are what he called "gurus" who are trying to impose Islamic law . . . doctors at the Mother and Child Hospital in Lyon told him during a visit Thursday that they are threatened several

times a week by angry Muslim men who refuse to allow their pregnant wives or daughters to be treated by male doctors, even for emergency births when nobody else is available. "The scope of the problem is a lot broader than I thought," he said at a news conference here summing up his findings . . . Gerin said representatives of several other European countries, as well as Canada, have expressed interest in his hearings, which included testimony from women's advocacy figures, Muslim leaders and sociologists . . . "History or biology teachers frequently are challenged by fundamentalist adolescents whose religious beliefs are contradicted by what they hear in school, and in some communities half the girls in junior high physical education classes refuse to participate on religious grounds."

So, the fact of the matter is that, for the small percentage of women who find spiritual meaning or safety behind the burqa, the issue can either go as deep – or as shallow – as the Kohl-rimmed eyes peering from behind it wish to delve. Thus, the more we support cultural constructs that 'biologically determine' that a woman's sexuality must be repressed, the more we find ourselves as willing accomplices to patriarchal practices disguised as cultural or religious 'norms' - further perpetuating underdevelopment, gender inequality, and victimization . . . by way of 'virtue.'

Women are told to wear them so that they cannot exist with their self respect, honour, confidence, separate identity, own opinion and ideals intact.

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Article



Furrukh Sayer Malik, MD

Dr. Furrukh Sayer Malik is a graduate of KEMU class of 1988. He is a Heart failure transplant Cardiologist at Centennial Medical center in Nashville Tennessee.

... I caught my father looking at the lights. I could see the sparkle and a tiny tear drop at the corner of his eye.

The spring in Lahore, Pakistan is brief much like the twilight of early morning. Fleeting yet pleasant. This spring break I took my kids to visit my ailing father. He is also in the twilight of his life. The sparkle of his being, once all encompassing is now brief and fleeting. I wanted my kids to meet him and at some level reach that once energetic soul in his stroke struck body. The ordeal of the long flight home was softened by the anticipation of his warm touch and reassuring smile. He did not recognize us in the early morning twilight. He was better in late mornings and every now and then he would giggle with the little one. At times I could sense his bewilderment. He was half his self. His physical incapacity was no match to the daily indignation of loss of body controls. While there I would give him his daily bath, help with fresh clothes and then his favorite place by the front porch. He wanted to listen to the loud traffic and the cacophony of life around. I loved to look in his eyes for that reassuring recognizance; at times I would be rewarded. Lately he had stopped talking. Like Forrest Gump he had run out of words. A few times he would call my name but like the load shedding in Lahore his lucidity would be intermittent.

He loved to look at the daily newspaper. I do not know if he could read it without his sharp mind or if it meant much to him. I would out loud read the top stories. Besides the daily misgivings in Lahore, one day a news item caught my attention. The event was called Mela Chiragan (the festival of lights). In the power shorted Lahore I was inquisitive of the festival of light. It seemed out of context but the story took me back many decades. I could hear my father singing folklore about the daily life and the purpose of living. I did not remember the words but I was always enthralled. He would say the Kaffis were by folk saint Shah Hussein also known as Madho Lal Hussain. Incidentally the Mela Chiragan was the Urs of this folk saint. I remember visiting the place as a child but I have no recollection of any thing else. I prodded my father about Lal Hussain. He looked at me but there was no other interest.

The area besides the famous Shalimar garden is now transformed into a sea of makeshift businesses, with hundreds of people chasing their souls. The place was empty. A few people in a corner under the large oak tree. I asked about

the Urs and the person asked me to come in the night. The following night the place was lit with kerosene lamps. One could hear the drums from a distance and the road leading to the mazaar was full of men, women and kids. There were foods kiosks, flea market shops and throngs of women in colorful tunics. There were groups of people dancing and singing There were others just milling around. A few purposefully in pursuit, others just standing like me in awe of this place.

The sounds were deafening as you would get close. The mazaar was serene. I pushed father's wheelchair and realized how difficult it was to get closer. As I pushed into the heart of the commotion, I realized I may have made a mistake. I wanted to turn back when I caught my father looking at the lights. I could see the sparkle and a tiny tear drop at the corner of his eye. The drum beat was rhythmic and loud and it would resonate in your chest. Every now and then a group of grown men would start dancing to the rhythmic pulse of the drums. I could hear few singing the story of life and its torrid journey. There were some who were in this trance of a dance, eyes closed and heads shaking to the percussion of the beat incessantly. They appeared to be oblivious to things around. I asked somebody about this particular state and I was informed that the dance was Dhammal. As if the time had stopped. There was light and no concerns of load shedding. The place was eclectic. There was inner tranquility. The outward spontaneity was infectious. My father was shaking his good arm and his head was rocking to the drums. I stopped and looked to harness this splendid moment of joy. His smile was purposeful as he shook his body to the beat of the drums. The soul of the place energized him and I believe I heard him say, "Lal Must Qilander".

I looked around, threw my hands in the air and joined in this dance of life they called "Dhammal".

Sujjen bin raatan hoiyan wadyan
Ranjha jogi,men joggian, kamli Kar kar sadian
Mass jhurey jhar pinjer hoyo, Karkan lagiyan hadiyan
Main ayani niyoonh kii jannan, birhoon tannawan gadiyan
Kahi Hussain faqir sain da, larr tairy main lagiyann

Upcoming Meetings



July 22–August 4, 2010
8th APPNA International Meeting
Far East



October 15–17, 2010
APPNA Fall Meeting
Miami, Florida



December 26–29, 2010
APPNA Winter Meeting
King Edward Medical University, Lahore

For more information or to register, please visit our website.

www.APPNA.org

We're A Family

Families are formed in many ways and one of these is by adoption. Most people looking to complete their families through adoption turn to the many adoption agencies in the US that assist couples in adopting from China, Russia and other parts of the world. Unfortunately, there are no agencies in the US that handle adoptions from Pakistan. Many people living in the US who want to adopt from Pakistan, give up on the idea because they don't know where to turn to for information or where to go for assistance. Having adopted two beautiful babies from Pakistan, I hope I can demystify the process and provide resources and information to those of you who want to adopt from Pakistan.

There are two main aspects to adoption - emotional and logistic. The emotional aspect is crucial and you, the adoptive parents, have to decide whether you are mentally ready to take this step. Adopting a child is a lifelong commitment and both parents have to be on board unconditionally. Once you decide on this course, make sure you communicate your decision to your family and friends, especially those in Pakistan, because you are going to need their help to get this done.

There are two things you can do simultaneously to start the adoption process. One is to find an adoption agency in your state to do your Home Study. A Home Study is a comprehensive report usually prepared by a licensed social worker and it includes biographical information on you and your spouse, your financial situation, your ability to support a child, family life and parenting styles. A Home Study usually takes 2 – 3 months to be completed.

While the Home Study is being done, you can go to the next step in the process, which is to start researching and contacting agencies in Pakistan that place children for adoption. If you are tempted to bypass the agencies in Pakistan and go for a private adoption (and many people will suggest that you do), please resist that temptation! A private adoption can cause many problems when applying for your baby's immigration, including refusal of visa. The most reputable and experienced organizations in Pakistan are Edhi Foundation and Kashana-i-Atfal in Karachi, and SOS Village in Lahore. Ideally, the application for adoption at these organizations should be submitted in person. You should be aware that at any given time, the number of applicants at these agencies far outnumbers the babies available for adoption. You want the agency to remember you and put a face to your application.

Since you are adopting from outside the US, your adoptive child needs to go through the US immigration process. Once your Home Study is complete, you need to file form I-600A with the USCIS. Form I-600A is the "advance processing of orphan petition" and is filed when the baby has not been identified. Once this petition is approved, USCIS sends you an approval notice, with the caveat that the final decision to grant an immigrant visa rests on the US Embassy in the country of adoption.

The hardest part in the whole process is waiting for a call from your chosen agency in Pakistan informing you that your baby has arrived. But don't lose hope! This time will pass and you can fill it by frequently calling the agency, asking your contact person in Pakistan to visit the agency, choosing a pediatrician in the US, getting your prospec-

tive baby onto your health insurance, buying baby things, getting advice from friends on how to take care of a little baby and reading as many baby books as you can lay your hands on. It is also a good idea at this time to find a lawyer in Pakistan who is experienced in handling international adoptions.

One fine day, you will get that call! It's crucial that you give the organization the name and information for your contact in Pakistan who will initially act on your behalf. Some organizations require that this person be a close family member e.g. parent or sibling. Some organizations also require that your designated contact pick the baby up right away. Only Kashana requires prospective parents to pick up the child in person, so you or your spouse must be ready to fly out at very short notice. Remember, there are hundreds of people on the agencies' lists and if you or your contact is slow in responding, they will place the baby with the couple next on their list.

This is the time when you catch the next available flight for Pakistan, armed with your Home Study, I-600A approval letter, birth certificates for both of you, family photographs, proof of financial support and many other documents. As soon as you have your baby and the accompanying paperwork from the agency, you can start court proceedings to get guardianship of your baby. You need to get a guardianship decree instead of an adoption decree because Pakistani law does not recognize adoption as a form of affiliation. Hire your lawyer now, if you have not done so already. Your lawyer will present your case to the judge at the family court. The court requires you to place ads in Urdu and English newspapers about the baby so that if there is a claimant, they can come forward at that time. It looks at the documents provided by the local agency e.g. Edhi Foundation, certifying that the baby was abandoned and is unclaimed. It also looks at your financial ability to take care of the child. If everything is in order, the court grants guardianship to both parents and allows them to take the child out of the country for the purpose of emigration.

With the guardianship document in hand, you can apply for the child's Bay form at your local NADRA office and get a Pakistani passport for your child. Now you are ready to file Form I-600. This is the petition to classify the orphan as an immediate relative. You can file Form I-600 in the US or you can file it in person at the American embassy in Islamabad. You can reduce the processing time considerably if you file in Islamabad.

As soon as the I-600 is approved, you can file the petition for your child's immigrant visa. A report on the child's medical exam, the child's passport, passport photographs and birth certificate need to be submitted with the immigrant petition. The US embassy in Islamabad also requires that they see the child when they call you for an interview. If everything is in order, the baby's immigrant visa is usually granted the same day.

Your ordeal is over and you can now take your baby home to the US. Once in the US, you have one last step to complete. Your baby needs to go through adoption proceedings at your local probate court. Your social worker generally arranges this. This is the most painless part of the process. Your baby is legally declared yours through adoption, there

Article

Sofia Bilgramy

Sofia Bilgramy lives in Connecticut. She is an 86 graduate of Kinnaird College, Lahore. She did her Masters in Business Administration from University of Connecticut in 1998

Since you are adopting from outside the US, your adoptive child needs to go through the US immigration process.

is much clapping and congratulations and in my case, my babies were presented with a stuffed toy, an adoption certificate and a beautiful poem. There was not a single dry eye in the room after the poem was read!

The process of adopting a baby from Pakistan can be long, tedious and frustrating. The key to keeping it short and manageable is to do a lot of research, talk to a lot of people who have gone through the process, hire the best lawyer and get help from all your friends and family. Luckily, for people wanting to adopt from Pakistan now, there are wonderful resources that were not available when I was going through my adoption process. A website <http://www.pakistanadoption.com>, started and maintained by people

who have adopted from Pakistan, is a gold mine of information and I would urge people to use it as a blueprint for their adoption journey. Its sister site, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pakistanadoption/>, is a forum where members can ask adoption – related questions and will receive great advice and generous help from other members. Other useful websites are:

<http://adoption.state.gov>

<http://www.nadra.gov.pk>

<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/>

Good luck to those starting out on this path. In the end, it's worth it!

GUEST ARTICLE

Adopting New Ideals

Article



Nadia Babar

Nadia Babar and is a senior at Saint Bonaventure University, New York with a major in marketing and management.

Not only will you change a child's life, but I have a feeling they will change yours.

Growing up in a privileged Pakistani household, I have been given so many opportunities from my family in all aspects of life. Education has always been deemed the number one priority for me to accomplish. Through education I have realized the advantages I have had in the past which have helped me on the path to a successful life. But what about the children of the world that will never get to experience a life filled with a loving family, good health and a rich culture? According to the Asian Human Rights Commission, in Pakistan alone there are over eight million children suffering from malnutrition and almost four million working in conditions unimaginable to a child in the United States. Twenty-three million children in Pakistan have never been to school. These innocent children may never know what the gift of education is. As these children grow they break away from their homes, sometimes because of domestic problems or the inability for their families to provide a basic living. Over ten-thousand children under the age of fifteen live on the streets of Karachi alone. Children all over the world need homes, families and rescue.

Families may look to adopt because of an inability to have children, but what about adding a member for the sole purpose of giving the world's children a life they would never be able to have. Some may think relationships among families are built through blood lines but true relationships are built upon love. Imagine adopting a child and giving him or her love and the life they deserve. These children had no control over where they were born and the conditions imposed upon them but it is the social responsibility of the respected and fortunate people of APPNA to look into saving a child's life.

Being so lucky in my life I often wonder where I might have been if my parents did not work their entire lives to provide

for myself as well as my siblings. I could have been a child living below the poverty line, roaming the streets of Pakistan victim to disease and abuse. Thanks to my parents, I have had a wonderful life, well on my way to achieving my MBA and the only problem I have to worry about is reaching my goals. Everyone in this organization has the power to transform lives, introduce a child to a new family filled with new light and plenty of love. Not only will you change a child's life, but I have a feeling they will change yours.

The joy when a child is born is unexplainable for parents. The same joy can be experienced by all people if adoption is considered. The children living in the slums of the world are our children and our future. They may not have a voice when they join a new family, but as they grow and realize what they have been given, there is no stopping the change that they will someday bring to the world, as our future doctors, lawyers, artists, and business people. I am so thankful for my life and for what I have been given from the start, and one day I want to give those opportunities to a deserving child that will undoubtedly change my life forever. I only hope that people realize they already have millions of children in this world that would love them unconditionally for the life they receive. I urge new families to research and learn about adoption and work to bring their child to a home that will someday become a sanctuary.

Children should not have to worry about where their next meal will come from; they should run freely in a safe neighborhood with their friends laughing every step of the way. It does not matter how they got to that neighborhood, only that they have been given a new destiny and a new, beautiful life.

My Trip to Bolivia: A Story Of Humanity And Service

March 6 – March 22, 2010

This was our seventh humanitarian international trip. The Madera Sunrise Rotary club, under the leadership of Robert G. Bitter (past district governor), has been providing organized help to the needy. We successfully raised funds for wheelchairs. The Wheelchair Foundation pioneered by Ken Behring's establishment (approaching one million wheelchair donations) provides a matching grant to ship wheelchairs to different countries. The local Rotary International club members help in distribution of the wheelchairs to the various cities. Our team assembles the wheelchairs, and adjust and fit the chairs according to the needs of each disabled person.

In many third world countries, often people are embarrassed about disabled family members. The disabled at times are treated less than human. A common belief is that people born with disabilities are being punished for their sins and sins of the family, so both are stigmatized.

On our trip to Peru we saw a woman who had a stroke four years previously and had been confined to her home. When we lifted her into a wheelchair, she started to cry and said this is my car and most precious thing in my house, now I can go out and see the outdoors and talk to my neighbors. She gave every one of us a small handmade gift. She was aware of me being a Muslim and gave me a different gift than our other friends. Her sensitivity and respect for my faith was very touching.

Worldwide there is an overwhelming need for wheelchairs estimated at between 100 million to 200 million. Causes of physical disability include natural disasters, like earth-

quakes, with particularly devastating effects in third world countries, car accidents, war injuries, advanced age and birth defects. However the most horrific causes of disabilities are landmines.

The thanks and appreciations expressed we get in return are far greater than what we give On our trip to Bolivia I remember this 80-year-old bed ridden woman who had been a Professor of Sociology. She suffered from end stage ovarian cancer. She was so appreciative that she had her students make special shirts for our Rotary members. She excitedly said now I can use a wheelchair and do not have to be carried around.

We have sent a container of wheelchairs to an orthopedic clinic in Afghanistan for the handicapped. With the help of APPNA (Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America) we sent four containers (1,120 wheelchairs worth \$200,000) for the earthquake victims of Pakistan and Kashmir. In addition, we sent a container to Afghanistan.

We have traveled to Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and our recent trip was to Bolivia. To reach the under-served and needy we traveled by buses on unpaved roads for 2,200 kilometers (1,367 miles). It was mostly hot and humid and our days were quite long and tiring. Our daily travel was at times 9 hour bus rides. However, our work was very rewarding and fulfilling.

We traveled to many cities including Santa Cruz, San Jose, Santiago, San Rafael, San Miguel, St. Ignacio, Concepcion, San Javier (Xavier), and finally back to Santa Cruz. We drove on to Charagua and San Antonio where we provided an electric wheel chair to a six year old little girl Anita who was born without both legs and her right arm. She immediately started to move the chair with her little left hand and started laughing. This brought tears to our eyes to see her enjoying the comfort and mobility of her new wheelchair. Our last stop was to Montero.

After we returned home and rested we forgot all the hardships we encountered. We only have good memories of our service and the goodwill we received , and friendships we made with people in a far away places. We are truly blessed to be in a position to help others. We are already planning our next trip.

Article



Mohammad Afzal Arain, MD

Mohammad Afzal Arain, MD, graduated from Liaquat Medical College. General surgeon. Colonel US Air Force.

We have traveled to Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and our present trip was to Bolivia.



APPNA's 1st Youth Essay Competition

Competition



Lubna Pal, MD

As the APPNA membership expands and the organization's sway blossoms, so does an appreciation for better representation of the youth of Pakistani American descent. The 1st Youth Essay competition was therefore an attempt to welcome and engage our posterity in activities of the APPNA. Our goal was to initiate a forum that allows expression of our youth's opinions and experiences, in the hope of fostering better communication and dialogue amongst the generations that enrich our Pakistani American community. Our charge, to identify the two best submissions from all received, seemed simple enough. The enthusiasm and fervor with which the young Pakistani Americans have responded to this challenge is heartening, and the keen and sensitive reflections of our youth, the consistency in the expressed "perplexity", "predicament" and "pride" that resonate in the entries relating to "Growing up Pakistani American in America" breathtaking. The timely submissions, the patient, courteous yet persistent enquiries regarding the out-

come of this competition made our seemingly easy task of identifying only two winners even more difficult. While congratulating the two winners of the 1st APPNA Youth Essay Competition, the committee acknowledges all entrants for their stellar contributions! In light of the verbalized rainbow of "agonies and ecstasies" that seem intrinsic to "Growing up Pakistani American in America" the Publication Committee is proceeding with creation of an on-line youth section on the APPNA website (www.appna.org) that will showcase ALL the received essays. We (the publication committee) have deliberately abstained from "modifying, editing or amending" the submitted works, thus allowing absolute expression of our youth's opinion and experiences. We hope that our youth will continue to actively participate in fostering constructive dialogue within the APPNA community and in furthering the image of Pakistani Americans, both locally and globally.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Borderline Living

Essay



Sadaf Qureshi

Sadaf Qureshi, age 19, has just completed her sophomore year at Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

My life, like the lives of many others, but also more than the lives of many others, has been the life of a hybrid; the union of disparate and conflicting elements; of unlikely combinations. I love English literature and the hard sciences. I love crowds but am the most timid and least social of anyone I know. I am the product of a Sunni father and a Shia mother. I have been Muslim in a predominantly Jewish community, and Muslim in a predominantly Catholic community. I have been an American in Pakistan, and a Pakistani in America. Whether I am here or there I am never the real deal, never an authentic import. Instead I am a cheap imitation, a counterfeit. Neither this nor that, one way nor the other.

So there I am – the overlap section of a Venn-Diagram. I am aware, though, that Venn-Diagrams are oversimplified. They were designed explicitly for grade-school, where everything fit neatly into a category, or if it didn't, got quickly shoved into one anyway, or ignored entirely. Or best of all, thrown into the overlap category. There are my options then—be American, be Pakistani, be ignored, or be some random, ill-defined "other." Unless, that is, the overlap section really does constitute its own category, and not just some loose relationship between two, individual entities. I am trying to find out now, what that overlap section is supposed to mean, or if it even exists in any real, significant way. Whether it isn't, after all, just the junk pile, the "everything else" receptacle. Whether the term "Pakistani-American" isn't just an

illusion. Whether pure amalgamation exists, or whether it isn't all just assimilation, or the (at least) partial obliteration of one in favor of the other. Whether I will be left a cultural orphan in my attempts to glean the best of both worlds, or whether I will inhabit, instead, "multiculturalism."

Growing up, my outlook on this question was an optimistic one. Surely, multiculturalism existed, and was a benefit, not an obstacle. It made life better, more interesting, less humdrum. I was exotic, and the subject of fascination. I wasn't just part of the riffraff, the rank and file, because I wasn't just American. Because I didn't bring peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches to lunch every day. Because I was confused about Christmas, and claimed that Prophet Muhammad brought presents instead of Saint Nicholas. Because I was the only one who had been on an eighteen hour flight across the Atlantic. The difference between exotic and bizarre, fascinating and suspicious, unique and peculiar, was a distinction too fine for me to notice at the time, and one I may not have cared for in any case.

I must have thought of myself in the same way that I thought of a good cup of tea. As an American kid, I drank tall glasses of milk, with handfuls of cookies on the side. As a Pakistani kid, I had my first cup of black tea, drowned in sugar, before I was tall enough to reach the top shelves in the kitchen. But I quickly learned that the best way to

have either of those is to have them together – to pour the milk into the black, sugar-filled tea, and to dip the cookies in the resulting concoction. The milk does not become the tea and the tea does not become the milk. The two create something that is entirely its own. Something new, distinct, something hybrid. So there I was – a good cup of tea.

But as I grew up, without my knowing when or how, a good cup of tea quickly turned into oil on water, and I became some mixed-up mess stuffed into a neat term – “Pakistani-American.” The problem with being “multicultural,” I realized, is that there is no easy, all-encompassing answer to the question “Where are you from?” The bigger problem is that in a post-9/11 world, those words have the potential to be more of an accusation than a small-talk question, more offensive than amiable. It’s not a question with a single-faceted response either. I could just say “New Jersey,” but that isn’t always satisfactory. My complexion and features signal that I am not just from New Jersey.

Years ago, I might have been able to say “my parents are from Pakistan” and believed that nothing more than thoughts of taxi drivers and convenience store owners, and a misinformed association with Bollywood, might pass through my interlocutor’s mind. Not an entirely fair or accurate representation, but not so terrible either – harmless enough. But for this past decade (at least), that hasn’t been the case. When I hear that question, the answer is a careful one. Cover illustrations from *The Economist* and *Time Magazine* declaring Pakistan “the most dangerous country in the world” flash through my mind; images surrounding the corruption of Asif Ali Zardari and the violent milieu of Bhutto’s assassination resurface; then there’s Al-Qaeda, Bin Laden, the 2005 London bombing, the 2008 Mumbai attack, and most recently, Shahzad Faisal (possibly the worst thing that ever happened to the average Pakistani-American). All of these thoughts behind the response to a deceptively simple question, and in anticipation, also, of what that response might entail for my interlocutor. That’s not to say that no one has ever heard of Imran Khan, Faran Tahir, Nadia Ali or maybe even Muhammad Iqbal. But none of that is nearly as prominent in the American imagination, or even my own, as all of the rest.

So how then, do I begin to craft an identity independent of all the negative associations, or to locate a self that isn’t living along the border? To an extent, neither can be done by me alone. Identities don’t belong to individuals. They are crafted by communities. They are built collectively first, and individually later. The places we inhabit depend, also, on who is willing to let us in, and where we will be welcomed. It depends on who is willing to be open-minded and open-hearted, to ignore media representations of the

few, and to pay attention to the reality of the many. But as a community, where do we begin to knock on doors, to wear down the barriers, to make ourselves welcomed? Should we even have to? Need we start as polite guests, or do we immediately assert permanent residency? And once we make it to the other side of the door, how do we blend in without fading out? Without giving up parts of ourselves? And how do we stand apart, distinctive, without being completely on the outside? Is there a way to be both unified and diverse?

None of these questions have effortless answers, blinking in bright lights and bold letters before my eyes. They are all difficult and nuanced questions, which is to say, they are worth investigating even if no solution can be found or agreed upon. Though I have no answers, I think that for now I will rely on religious narratives as a guide in the same way that we sometimes rely on classical Greek mythology to teach us a thing or two. Religion is, in part, a series of narratives told in multiple versions and variations. Different readings of the same basic plot developments. Think of the story of the Tower of Babel. The people of the tower were initially united by one language. They pompously built a tower that reached as high as the heavens and, as a lesson, God mixed up their tongues, made them speak diverse languages, and scattered them across the Earth. One might say that the tower fell apart because too many people, speaking too many different languages, were huddled into a small space. Their differences became a barrier to cooperation and collaboration. Diversity, then, necessitates differentiation, separation, the inability to communicate. But by another interpretation of the same story, the tower might have fallen, instead, because the people were too proud—too proud to respect God’s realm, but also too proud to listen carefully to one another, to get to know each other, to find a new unifying element without erasing the mark of individuality, to use that individuality to their benefit. Had they reacted to multiplicity in some other way, had they concentrated on similarities as the bridges across positive differences, something else might have come of it.

One story yields a plurality of possibilities. The story of Pakistanis in America is, in many ways, the story of the Tower of Babel. We could tumble and disperse, melt into this country, alone and detached. Or we could stand strong, help keep the tower up, not as a challenge to God but as a challenge to ourselves. At the moment, I optimistically (and perhaps, too naively) choose to adopt the second interpretation of this narrative. There, the opportunity to change the ending exists; there, the potential for alternatives is wholly within reach; and there, unity in diversity can be a reality, not an oxymoron.

Years ago, I might have been able to say “my parents are from Pakistan” and believed that nothing more than thoughts of taxi drivers and convenience store owners, . . . might pass through my interlocutor’s mind.

Growing Up Pakistani-American In America

Essay



Aisha Naseem

Aisha Naseem is 20 years old and a Junior at Tulane University.

The resulting bewilderment characterized my early integration into American society.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, my parents and I immigrated to “The Land of Opportunity” when I was only two-years-old. A subsequent upbringing in the suburbs of Chicago conceded my distinct disposition as representative of two contrasting cultures, merging into an ultimate and unexpected union, both balanced while bizarre.

In the beginning, such an intrepid infusion prompted the production of a culturally confused Pakistani-American child, as I innocently sought to embrace one culture for the sake of another. My enrollment into a predominantly Caucasian school introduced me to a “foreign” environment, which exploited my unfamiliarity of Western tradition. Immersed into an elementary classroom of uniformly shaped and shaded children, I was immediately confronted with feelings of discomfort, insecurity, and embarrassment, as my divergent exterior encountered its first exposure to American children. I stood out like Benazir Bhutto in Pakistani politics. Nevertheless, I was clearly an outsider, perceiving my peers as noisy and chatty and often offensive, as they demonstrated behavior and interest that was contrary to the more stringent and structured, proverbial traditions of my home.

The resulting bewilderment characterized my early integration into American society. Outnumbered, I opted to find refuge in following the majority, attempting to assimilate by observation. Adversely, however, the effects of my increasing Americanization threatened to reduce and replace the values initially instilled by my primary Pakistani connection. A previous interest in Islam struggled to sustain against the sensationalism of Santa—the mascot of Christmas; the hired entertainer at Jesus’s birthday party. Regardless, its appeal was as apparent as the resentment that followed when gifts were exchanged at my school and not at my house, which starkly stood out among the ostentatious others who boastfully lit up my neighborhood. Similar disappointment emerged at home when Mom served biryani over burgers and lassi over lemonade. Hanging salwaar kameez’s sent from my dadi (now “grandmother”) in Pakistan gathered dust in my closet, as I neglected the garments for popular trends, like jeans and graphic tee’s. Meanwhile, my newly acquired proficiency in English gradually became incorporated into Urdu, dissolving the dialect with awkward statements, such as, “Kal, I will be eating dinner at my dost’s ghar.” So frequently used, the new language was given the name, “Urdish.”

My newfound interface with the Western world seemed as a clear winning candidate for the title of “Most Relatable Culture.” However, my Pakistani Muslim heritage prevailed,

as it surfaced during the most trying of times for an adolescent, Ramadan, as I sat lonely and lunchless beside unappreciative consumers of packaged snacks and hot lunches, enticing me with large quantities of sugar, sodium, and artificial coloring and flavoring. Resisting the temptation of the turmoil, I lost weight but gained integrity. My perseverance and dedication to Allah illuminated my enduring allegiance to not only my religion, but also myself and the culture I naturally adhered to, not forcefully assimilated into. I escaped conformity to embrace diversity, while augmenting my cultural cognizance. Such a spiritual experience allowed me to define “different” differently, as no longer describing an outcast or deviation for the norm, but rather as a unique and distinct, privileged individual.

Sharing emerged as an additional advantageous attribute of my Pakistani-American status, as I soon acknowledged that my fortunate condition facilitated my faculty to share this duality with friends that I had once esteemed. Accordingly, I invited my high school classmates to a community gathering at my house. Disregarding preconceived reservations, my reluctant and intimidated guests arrived anyway. Contrary to expectations, they did not stand out. Instead, they were welcomed by friendly faces that were pleased to see such dimension in my schoolmates. A spread of traditional Pakistani cuisine also greeted my guests, as they sampled items like samosa’s, daal, chicken tikka, which left their noses running and faces smiling.

Years following, I came to cherish and regularly rely on my Pakistani principles in times when I felt my American environment compromised with them. I began to believe in the “positive-sum game,” in which positives from each culture balanced and complimented each other. On the other hand, I avoided situations, comparable to the “negative-sum game,” which adds an attribute on one side while subtracting one on the other. Nevertheless, I upheld my inherent ideals as I confronted such milestones for typical American teens as school dances, dating, and drinking. Extracting from the heritage within, I was able to find strength also in myself.

I realized that if my mentality had not grown with the years, I would not be who I am today: a Pakistani-American. Without one, I cannot be the other.

Lastly, diversity should be a privilege, not a problem. Growth is only attainable when it is embraced and appreciated. Culture is a commitment.

My Story

In 1950, I was one of the twelve lucky students from the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP, recently recognized as Khyber Pukhtunkhwa) selected to join the King Edward Medical College (KEMC), Lahore, Pakistan. Academic merit was the sole criterion for entry into medical school then and medical students were as much recipients of admiration of the rest of the student community, as considered solemn bearers of a communal responsibility and beacons of hope. Our professors were the top doctors of Pakistan including Col. Elahi Bakhsh, Drs. Pirzada, Amiruddin, Riaz Qadeer, Sardar Ali Sheikh, Riaz Ali Shah, Ramazan Ali Syed, M. Rashid and Col. Sami.

I graduated from KEMC in 1955. While aspirations were high, the job market was dry. In the Mayo Hospital, Lahore, there were only 12 house jobs (internship equivalent). I was the lucky one to be selected as the House Surgeon of the Delhi Ward under Prof. Amir ud Din, the most respected and admired surgeon and teacher of the time. After completion of the house job, I worked in the capacity of Casualty Medical Officer (CMO) at the Mayo Hospital for 2 years.

In 1954, the USA opened the visitor exchange visa option for South Asia. Our physician colleagues in India discovered this privilege first and chose the option of coming to the USA. We in Pakistan were still focused on the United Kingdom. I remain thankful to Dr. Amirud Din, who advised me to come to the USA and even helped me apply. I was accepted in a Rotating Internship at the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. The steps of application for a Pakistani passport, to get Police clearance, prove my domicile, procure clearance from the State Bank of Pakistan, and arrange for funds in foreign exchange for the journey were most daunting. Luckily, on the intervention of a Federal Minister, I was eventually in possession of my "International Passport". To my surprise, getting the visa to the USA was the easiest of the hurdles then! After completing six forms and visiting multiple offices, the State Bank of Pakistan issued me a total of \$ 64.00, sixty-four dollars. (Dollar was Rs.3 and 12 Annas).

My limited funds made me thrifty. I bought a tin suitcase from Lohari Gate (one of the 12 gates to the old walled city of Lahore) Dry cleaned my only 4 year old suit, and packed my well worn shalwar Kameez. With tearful eyes my relatives (my mother and father could not bear the pain of my departure and did not see me off) saw me board the train for Karachi, the only international airport in Pakistan then. En route to Karachi, the Kunda (clasp) of my suit case broke but I could keep the contents from spilling with a red colored rope that held the case together.

I boarded a small Pan Am airplane, without any idea what I was getting into. We landed at the London airport and I woke up to a new world. I then boarded the ship Queen Elizabeth bound for the USA. I mostly stayed in my shared super third class cabin except for trips to the dining room..

On the 6th day, I sighted the statue of Liberty. I disembarked on pier 34 in New York City, all alone with my suitcase in hand, still held together by the red rope, and with the name of God, a medical degree and high hopes. I eventually reached the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital on June 17th 1958 with a total of \$ 21.00 in my pocket.

The internship started with a monthly salary of \$ 100.00. Meals were a challenge. Expecting pork in all meats, I did not eat a hamburger for three-month and hot dog for a whole year. I was homesick, lost my sleep and appetite, and was so frightened that, if I had had money to go back, I would have gone back within the first 2 weeks. But now when I think about it, I thank God that I did not have the return fare then. During the training period, I could not return to Pakistan for 7 years because of limited finances; my mother cried and cried for having lost her only doctor son. At the commencement of the internship I thought that I was a "big doctor", having been seasoned by the experiences at the Mayo Hospital. I quickly realized that I will need to relearn medicine from A to Z. I passed the ECFMG exam in 1959. After finishing training in the USA, I worked for the US Food & Drug Administration in the New Drug Evaluation branch, and subsequently served as the Director of Research in the pharmaceuticals. I aspired to practice medicine in its broadest sense and who could handle maladies across specialties, and luckily, the specialty of Family Practice allowed this dream to become a reality. I passed the American Boards of Family Practice and opened my present office in the middle of borough of Manhattan of New York City in August 1968. I am still practicing in the same office for the past 42 years. I became a Fellow of AAFP and received the commendation of 25 years and 35 years of continuing membership in good standing from American Academy of Family Practice. I am also one of the most senior members of APPNA.

I believe that my coming to the USA was the will of GOD and was for a purpose. I belong to Hangu, NWFP, the most backward area of Pakistan. During my visits back home, I discovered that a large proportion of poor people within the community were blinded by cataract. They, could not afford medical care for a treatable malady. This appreciation led to the birth of the annual Gul Free Eye Camp in Hangu 18 years ago. We have since undertaken over 9000 cataract surgeries and have treated over 80,000 patients with eye diseases and other related illnesses. I am heartened to report that all the above services are provided free to every patient. For the first 14 camps, God and myself financed the total cost of all camps. Three years ago, my Jan Foundation For The Blind became a Federal Tax Exempt entity and received donations from my colleagues in the APPNA and other friends. I am grateful for all the support received in helping to continue this work in the neglected and far flung areas of our mother land.

Article



M. Rafiq Jan, MD, FAAFP

M. Rafiq Jan, MD, FAAFP, Practices in New York. He also Heads the Jan Charitable Foundation

I was homesick, lost my sleep and appetite, and was so frightened that, if I had had money to go back, I would have gone back within the first 2 weeks.

Mind The Gaps: Know Your Generations Alphabet

Article



Anwar Sultana Sabiha Raza, MD

The author is a graduate of Sindh Medical College and is a pathologist at Loma Linda University in California.

Any foreigner visiting London may have been somewhat perplexed at seeing T shirts and other paraphernalia with the logo “Mind the Gap”, until they chanced to use the Underground transport system. The expression is a warning to train passengers to be wary of the platform gap when you enter and exit the tube or train.



This article is about a different gap – the generational kind. Do you know the generation you were born in effects your attitudes, beliefs, work, lifestyle and relationships? By studying the past 500 years generational historians have discovered a pattern; there are four generation types that are repeated during a human life-span or approximately every century. Each generation lasts on average 20 years or so, has its own sets of core values and shared interests,



somewhat determined by age, and is shaped by shared social and cultural events – each having its own defining moment(s).

Defining Moments

Here are some examples:

Partition, Pearl Harbor, stock market crash, wars, assassinations, civil rights, elections, man on the moon, Woodstock, Watergate, AIDS, Challenger disaster, Columbine shootings, September 11, tsunamis, earthquakes.

The list goes on. Each of us has vivid memories of where we were or what we were doing when the event happened or we first learned of it.

This is increasingly being diminished by access to technology, but more of that later.

Know who you are?

Which of the following groups do you belong to?

Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y?

Not sure?

Let us first get to know and understand the traits shared by most members of each generation. “Why”, you may ask. Generations have specific differences in work and communication styles, views regarding religion, authority and loyalty, attitudes about work-life balance, acceptance of change, diversity and comfort with technology. Understanding this population diversity both at home and at work helps each of us accept and communicate better with each other across the divides, leading to more harmonious and fruitful relationships.



The Generation ABCs



Traditionalists

- Born 1920s – mid 1940s, born before or during the World Wars
- Aka Matures, population fast declining
- Detail oriented, risk averse
- Adherence to rules: punctual, rarely miss work
- Believe that hard work and dedication leads to rewards
- Respect authority as they were raised in a paternalistic environment
- Good interpersonal skills, not self promoting
- Loyal (country, family, job). More likely to work for the same employer their entire life
- Value security, comfort, familiar activities and environments
- Less technologically adept
- May struggle with diversity
- Very formal
- Separate work and family
- Radio, black and white television
- Money: Save, pay cash
- Rotary phone

Baby Boomers

- Born mid 1940s – mid 1960s
- Raised in economic prosperity, optimism, opportunity, and progress
- “Me” generation
- Respect hierarchy, value loyalty
- One-third or more are grandparents
- On the brink of retirement, many plan to work past the age of sixty five
- Career-focused: value dedication to work and long hours (invented the 60-hour work week), “workaholics” (personify “burn-out”). Sense of who they are is deeply connected to their career achievements.
- Competitive, goal-oriented. Fought for gender and racial equality, environment issues
- May sacrifice personal life to achieve career goals
- Devoted, “Helicopter parents” – hover over children from the cradle, to school, to playground, to college campus, with unrealistically high expectations for their children
- “Sandwich generation” – caring for their aging parents or family members while supporting their own children (can also apply to Gen Xers)
- Somewhat formal
- Work comes first
- Color television
- Money: Buy now, pay later
- Touch tone phone



Sandwich Generation: Caught in the Middle



Generation X

- Born mid 1960s – mid 1970s
- First generation of “Latchkey” kids - greater time spent alone as higher percentage of both parents working, day-care and childhood divorce

- Best educated generation (a third obtaining bachelor's degree or higher)
- High levels of skepticism
- Independent and resourceful – definitely not “Slackers”
- Emotionally disconnected, prefer hands-off style, dislike being micro-managed
- Goal-oriented
- Technologically savvy
- Parallel thinkers, digest information rapidly
- Accepting of change, comfortable with diversity
- Nomadic, free agent approach to careers, loyal to principles not organizations
- Very different priorities from their parents
- Marry later
- Focus on themselves and their families, also “helicopter parents”, “female lions”
- Lifestyle is core concern: value free time, life balance, financial planning, avoiding broken homes
- “Want it now!” approach to life
- Work to live rather than live to work
- Casual and direct
- MTV, Sesame Street, Game Boy
- Money: Conservative, save, save, save
- Cell phone

Generation Y / Millennials

- Born 1977 – 1999
- Largest cohort since their Baby Boomer parents
- Close to parents (nurtured by “helicopter parents”). Often raised in dual income or single parent families
- Aka Generation Next, Nexters, Echo Boomers, “Trophy kids”
- Recent college graduates, many still in school
- More racially and ethnically diverse, global generation
- Religion is important
- Optimistic, with focus on personal success
- Civic minded - desire to improve life by volunteering and giving back
- Resemble traits of the Traditionalists
- Like to be in control – fiercely independent
- Work to deadlines, not to schedules
- Influence parental choices for major purchases and decisions
- Extremely technologically savvy, plugged-in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Impatient – exposed to technology from birth, access information 24/7
- Prefer to communicate through e-mail and text messaging
- Adept at multi-tasking
- Team-oriented: loyal, want to be involved and included
- Confident, have high self-esteem



- Attention craving: demand immediate feedback, constant guidance, frequent praise and reassurance (product of “helicopter parents”)
- Casual and direct, eager to please
- Value blending personal life into work, reject rigid confines – once their work day is over they’re outta there!
- The Web, Facebook, Twitter
- Money: earn to spend
- Skype, picture phone, instant messaging, E-mail (sorry, “so old school” for this generation!)



Cuspers

Cuspers are wedged between two generations, and have overlapping characteristics with the preceding or succeeding generation. They can foster understanding between the two generations.

What names are being given to the next cycle of generations?

Generation Z

- Born 1999 – 2009
- I Generation, Gen.Tech, the Internet Generation



Generation Alpha

- Born 2010 onwards

As you read the generic generational traits, you may recognize yourself, family members or colleagues. Be wary of stereotyping, as not all traits will apply to each member of a generation. Remember, generations are groups of people, but people are individuals. Succeeding generations may compliment or oppose and compensate for trends initiated by a dominant generation. Also, every generation says the same things about the other generations. “They don’t get it”; “They have it so much easier than we did”; “Kids these days do not know what hard work is”, “They are such dinosaurs” and “They think they are so smart!” Any of these phrases sound familiar?



Increasingly technology is creating the big divide among the generations. The “generation gap” is turning into a “generation lap” as the younger generations are powering ahead of adults on the technology track, “lapping” them in many areas of daily life. This is a unique period in history with family and work place roles changing. Parents and elders have traditionally been authority and knowledge figures. The technology savvy younger generations have changed these dynamics, garnering greater respect from parents and elders for their skills which are increasingly essential in modern-day life. How many of you have turned to the Generation Xers or Millennials for help with the latest computers, cameras, cars, phones, televisions etc? I know I have. Guess which generation I likely belong to? I would be lost without my kids’ help with some of these modern gadgets, and they know it!

With knowledge of the various generational backgrounds, it is easier to understand each other’s differences. Each

Increasingly technology is creating the big divide among the generations.

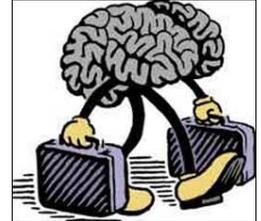
Many impoverished countries are reeling from loss of generation(s) . . .

generation's strengths can be used to advantage to create greater harmony. Connect with your own as well as other generations. Familiarize yourselves and your children with the history, classics, movies, and songs from other eras. Keep in touch with your relatives, young and old. Younger generations can learn to value the experience of the older generations, who in turn can benefit by embracing the technology and fresh perspectives of their younger counterparts.



Although the generational traits described above have largely been studied and researched by Western historians,

they can still to a large extent apply to immigrants as well as other regions of the World. Modifiers will be present in each generation type depending on the role of religion and strength of family ties within various ethnic groups. However, each successive immigrant generation takes on more and more of the adoptive nation's culture, norms and values.



In conclusion, let us pause to consider an entirely different generation gap(s). Many impoverished countries are reeling from loss of generation(s) through internal wars, disease, poverty as well as the "brain drain" of their young and talented citizens in search of better opportunities abroad. How many of us belong to the last group?!

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On Muslims and Islamic Centers in the USA

Article

Compared to European countries, Muslims were late arrivals in the US. Even as late as 1974, when I landed in NY, for all the five boroughs of the city, they had one mosque in Manhattan.

Weekly prayers were on Sundays. They were as much for service to God, as for maintenance of identity and culture.

International Islam had been on a precipitous downward path in science and technology and general literacy for the last six hundred years, because from a mercantile mode of production, they had reverted to an agricultural mode.

Muslims went into communal depression and let the Mullahs tell them that their sorry plight was due to non-conformance with the religion. Neither were aware that Muslims at their zenith, especially the ruling class had not been very compliant with the performance of religious rites.

International Islam had hardly unshackled itself from colonialism, when it suffered the humiliation of the 1967 defeat of the combined Arab armies at the hand of tiny Israel, and the greater humiliation, for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent at any rate, of a shattering defeat at the hands of arch-foe India and dismemberment of the country. The 1973 Suez war, after initial success, turned into abject failure.

But the immediate post-independence days were marked by a vibrant civil society, demanding freedom of expression, economic development and political activism among the workers and students. Nasser was triumphant in Egypt, Syria was in ferment, Algerians had brought France to the point of surrender, Soekarno in Indonesia had launched an industrialization and nationalization program, and Iraq had overthrown a parasitical monarchy.

But Muslim countries had a big handicap, they were under various degrees of feudal and monarchical (satrapies). They effectively curbed development of political consciousness.

The continuous defeats handed the field to the Mullahs again.

The level of regression can be imagined by the fate of that bastion of liberalism, Dow Medical College in Karachi, which had led the progressive movement of students at an All Pakistan level from 1950 on. It had two parties, the progressive National students Federation (NSF) and the conservative Young Medicos Organization (YMO), both multi ethnic

During a visit two decades later, I walked into the college, to be greeted by walls festooned with Mohajir, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pakhtoon, Baluchi and Jamiat banners.

Mid sixties saw a surge in immigration to North America. The country screened visa applicants; so only the educated or the rich investors could get in. For every Doctor, Scientist and Engineer the country allowed in, it saved \$500,000.00, it would have had to spend educating and training one of its own. And they did not even have to acknowledge the receipt of this aid!

Like expatriates all over the world Pakistanis had brought their social, cultural and religious norms and practices.

Generally speaking liberal-secular parents who were “cultural” Muslims had frank discussion with their children about the good and bad aspects of the culture they had inherited and the one they had been born into, had less social conflict. The zealots living in urban centers also had an easier time because they made their own world.

The conformists suffered the most. They could not impose their views forcefully and cannot accept unconventional behavior.

Pakistani children live in two different worlds. Their parents expect them to be obedient, insist that they work hard at their studies, go to bed at the prescribed time, avoid girls/boys, alcohol is taboo, drugs a direct route to hell.

In the higher grades in the school, biology takes over. They are in early youth with splashing hormones unrepressed by social norms. They want to go out on dates and do whatever that involves. At this point parents suffer further anguish of dichotomy. They are socialized to boys sowing their oats. Girls are a different kettle of fish.

Very few full blooded US born and brought up children would countenance an arranged marriage. Most are cognizant of the advantages of marrying in their own culture and religion. But it is not easy to click with a person with all the requisite qualifications. Parents would take a boy's “deviant” decision much more easily than they would a girl's. If a girl were from a particular linguistic group and the boy from another, the parents would be grieved. And the very heavens will fall if she were to choose a Christian or a Jewish boy or God forbid, a Hindu

The mix of living in two cultures, affluence, struggle to keep religious and cultural identity, had put the community on the defensive.

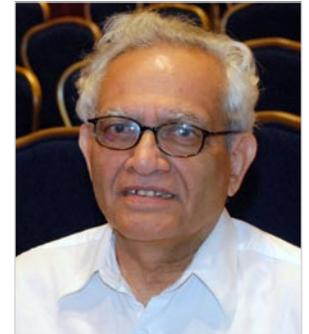
The contradictions frankly, unhinged some of them.

They try to fight the system by regressing ever more. They hire full time, generally half-baked Mullahs with poor command over English to give sermons, which are generally as far removed from the reality on ground as they can make it. As they grow, they try to have separate entrances into the Islamic centers for men and women, and segregation of the sexes during dinners and other functions.

Many of the members of the so called Islamic centers lead a schizophrenic life, devoutly reciting the Quran and praying during the day (Sunday) and having a nice time in bars and clubs in the evening. They would go berserk if their women flirted even mildly with another man, but have affairs on the “women under the right hand” facility.

Girls wear the Hijab at home and discard it on the college university campus. Some go even further, put on form revealing jeans and shirt, wit the hair covered carefully.

Expatriates and especially the children will spend their lives in this country. Their future is here. They have to assimilate in the society and adapt to local norms and if they really want to practice religion and culture at home, no body would or should stop them.



Syed Ehtisham MD

Dr. Ehtisham, a Dow graduate, is an Orthopedic surgeon, Blogger, NSF Member and Activist. He is also the author of *A Medical Doctor Examines Life On Three Continents*.

The conformists suffered the most. They could not impose their views forcefully and cannot accept unconventional behavior.

50th DMC Class of 1959 Reunion

Reunion

(L-R) (Sitting) Ghulam Jilani, Iltifat Alavi, Hamid R. Qureshi
(Standing) Batul T. Raza, Nafees Ahmed, Riaz Ahmed, Sadiq Hussain, Akhtar Raza, Syed Sayeed, Ghani Loya, Ali Tajdar Haidar, Khaleeq Khan, Kazim Shaikh



Urdu

ان میں سے بہت سے امریکہ آ کر تعلیم حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں اور وہی کامیابی حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں جو ہم سب نے کی۔ جو ایسا نہیں کر سکتے ان کے لئے APPNA زور و شور سے کام میں مصروف ہے اور ہم سب کو بڑھ چڑھ کر اس میں حصہ لینا چاہئے۔

میں اس موقع پر تمام APPNA ممبران کو یہ بھی مطلع کرتا چلوں کہ ہمارے ہر دلچیز شاعر فیض احمد فیض کی یاد میں لاہور میں فیض گھر کے نام سے ایک میوزیم اور لائبریری بنائی گئی ہے۔ اس کا مقصد ہے فیض کے عزائم اور خیالات، جن میں سے بہت سوں کا ذکر میں نے ابھی کیا ہے، کو آگے بڑھا یا جائے۔ فیض فاؤنڈیشن امریکہ کو بھی organize کر لیا گیا ہے اور عنقریب ہم اس پر بھی کام شروع کریں گے۔

یہ تنظیمیں اور اس طرح کی اور بہت سی تنظیمیں پاکستان کی فلاح اور ترقی چاہتی ہیں اور پاکستان کے عوام کے مسائل حل کرنے میں ہاتھ بٹانا چاہتی ہیں۔ اس جذبے اور محبت کے لئے میں APPNA کو خراج تحسین پیش کرتا ہوں۔ آخر میں صرف یہی بنا پائیدار ہے، نفرت، کدوت، دشمنی اور بغض کبھی اس پر فتح نہیں پاسکتے۔

وہ اٹوٹ محبت جو ہمیں اس دھرتی سے ہے جس نے ہمیں جنم دیا، ہماری پرورش کی اور ہمیں اس قابل بنایا کہ آج سارا امریکہ ہمارے گن گاتا ہے، اس کا عکس فیض کے ان اشعار میں نظر آتا ہے

جب گھلی تیری راہوں میں شام ستم
ہم چلے آئے لائے جہاں تک قدم
لب پہ حرف غزل، دل میں قندیل غم
اپنا غم تھا گواہی تیرے حسن کی
دیکھ قائم رہے اس گواہی پہ ہم

APPNA کے تمام افراد اس گواہی پر قائم ہیں اور یہی پاکستان کی عظمت کی سب سے بڑی دلیل ہے۔

اس کے تمام ممبران بڑھ چڑھ کر علمی، فلاحی اور دیگر عوامی خدمات کی کاموں میں حصہ لے رہے ہیں۔ یہ فلسفہ اور عمرانیات کا پہلا اصول ہے کہ کسی شخص کی جسمانی، مالی اور اقتصادی حالت اس کی سوچ اور دنیا کے بارے میں اس کے نقطہ نظر کو متاثر کرتی ہے۔ یہی حال اقوام کا بھی ہے۔ کچھ عرصہ پہلے میں اپنے کچھ امریکی طالب علم ڈاکٹروں کو یہ نقطہ سمجھانے کی کوشش کر رہا تھا۔ امریکہ اور اس کے باسی کیوں اتنے پر عزم ہیں؟ کیا وجہ ہے کہ انہوں نے کوئی ایسا پہاڑ نہیں دیکھا جسے وہ سر نہ کر سکتے ہوں؟ کوئی ایسا سمندر نہیں دیکھا جسے وہ پار نہ کر سکتے ہوں؟ علاوہ ازیں اور وجوہات کے، اس کی ایک بڑی وجہ یہ بھی ہے کہ یہ قوم کبھی شکست سے دوچار نہیں ہوئی اور نہ کبھی محکوم رہی ہے۔ ان کی قومی زندگی کے سب سے بڑے امتحان یعنی امریکی خانہ جنگی (Civil war) 1861-1865 کے دوران بھی امریکہ کے سب سے روشن خیال اور ترقی پسند طبقوں کا یقین پکا تھا کہ وہ حق کے لئے لڑ رہے ہیں اور آخر کو فتح انہی کی ہوگی۔ اس کی ایک مثال امریکہ کے عظیم صدر ابراہیم لنکن کی ہے جنہوں نے اس تاریک وقت میں امریکہ کی قیادت کی اور خانہ جنگی ہونے کی بڑی وجہ یعنی غلامی کے ناسور کو ختم کرنے کے لئے اپنی جان کی قربانی دے دی لیکن قوم کا ہواڑا نہیں ہونے دیا۔ اس کے برعکس، ہماری آبائی قوم کی کیا حالت ہے؟ سوائے چند ایک سالوں کے، اس بد نصیب قوم نے سوائے آمریت اور ڈنڈا راج کے، کچھ نہیں دیکھا۔ وہ قوم جو پہلے انگریزی سامراج کی غلام تھی اور اب پچھلے 63 برس، اپنے ہی امراء اور حکمرانوں کی غلام ہے۔ کسی بھی محکوم قوم کی طرح ان کی ذہنی کیفیت میں بھی مایوسی اور دقیا نویت نمایاں ہو گئی ہے۔ فیض نے یہ کیفیت اپنی نظم ”ہم لوگ“ میں بخوبی بیان کی ہے۔

دل کے ایوانوں میں لئے گل شدہ شمعوں کی قطار
نور خورشید سے سہمے ہوئے اکتائے ہوئے
مضحل ساعت امروز کی بے رنگی سے
یاد ماضی سے غمیں دہشت فردا سے نڈھال

اس کے برعکس، ہم سب لوگوں کی یہ خوش قسمتی ہے کہ ہمیں اس ملک میں آنا نصیب ہوا۔ امریکہ کا تحفہ ہم سب کے لئے ہماری تعلیم نہیں، ہمارا پیسہ یا شہرت بھی نہیں، سب سے نایاب تحفہ یہ یقین ہے کہ ہاں، ایک اور دنیا ممکن ہے۔ دنیا کی سب سے قوی بیٹریاں ہاتھ یا پاؤں پر نہیں، دماغ اور روح پر ہوتی ہیں۔ ہم لوگ اپنی محنت سے ان بیٹریوں کو چمکانا چور کر چکے ہیں اور اب یہی عزم پاکستان کے عوام کے لئے ہمارا سب سے قیمتی تحفہ ہے۔ ہم سب کو اقبال کا وہ شعر بخوبی یاد ہے جو آج پاکستان پر موزوں بیٹھتا ہے۔

نہیں ہے نا امید اقبال اپنی کشت ویران سے
ذرا غم ہو تو یہ مٹی بڑی زرخیز ہے سانی

آخر کو APPNA کے تمام تائبندہ ستاروں کو بھی اسی مٹی نے جنم دیا ہے۔ اگر APPNA کے ہزاروں ممبران اپنی مشترکہ محنت پاکستان کی خدمت میں لگائیں تو کیا کچھ نہیں ہو سکتا؟ اس میں کوئی شک نہیں کہ ہم پاکستان اور برصغیر کا علمی اور سماجی نقشہ مکمل طور پر بدل سکتے ہیں۔

APPNA MERIT اور دیگر کام اسی کاوش کا حصہ ہیں فیض نے ایک بار کہا تھا کہ فن کار کا کام مشاہدہ ہی نہیں، مجاہدہ یعنی جدوجہد بھی ہے۔ میرے نزدیک یہ بات ایک معاشرے کے ہر اس فرد پر عائد ہوتی ہے جو فکر معاش کی روزمرہ تکلیف سے قدرے آزاد ہے یعنی کوئی بھی ایسا شخص جس کی آمدنی اس کی روزمرہ ضروریات کے لئے کافی ہے۔ ظاہر ہے کہ ہم سب لوگ اس گنتی میں شامل ہیں۔ نہ صرف یہ کہ ہم اپنی محنت اور والدین کی دعاؤں کی بدولت معاشی اعتبار سے کامیاب ہیں بلکہ کئی اور لوگوں کو (امریکہ میں اور پاکستان میں) ہماری وجہ سے آمدنی اور خوشحالی حاصل ہے۔

اس لحاظ سے ہماری خوشی تو دگنی ہے ہی لیکن ذمہ داری بھی دوہری ہے۔ وہ سب لوگ جن کو اتنی کامیابی حاصل نہیں ہے، ہمارے نمائندگی چاہتے ہیں اور اپنی زندگی کے رخ کا تعین کرنے کے لئے ہماری طرف دیکھتے ہیں مجھے یاد ہے جب اپنے ننگ ایڈورڈ میڈیکل کالج کے زمانے میں امریکہ سے ہمارے سینئر کالج آتے تھے تو ہم سب لوگ لگتا تھا کہ گویا آسمانوں سے کوئی دیوتا ہمارے بیچ اتر آئے ہیں۔ آج بھی پاکستان کے نوجوان ہم سب کی طرف یونہی دیکھتے ہوں گے۔

جہان نوہور ہا ہے پیدا

ازڈاکٹر علی ہاشمی (ارکنساس)

خلل پذیر بود ہر بنا کہ می بینی

بجز بنائے محبت کہ خالی از خلل است (حافظ شیرازی)

ہر بنا (بنیاد) میں خلل ہے میں نے دیکھا سوائے محبت کی بنا کے جو خلل سے خالی ہے سینکڑوں سال پہلے جب حافظ نے یہ الفاظ لکھے تھے تو ان کا اشارہ عشق حقیقی کی طرف تھا، یعنی وہ عشق جو دنیوی اور مادی تھا قنق سے ماورا ہے۔ صوفیائے کرام اور فلاسفوں کے نزدیک اس کائنات کی ہر شے اپنے خالق کی طرف کھچ رہی ہے اور اس کے دیدار کے لئے بیتاب ہے۔ ان کو یہ بھی یقین تھا کہ اس کائنات کی ہر شے کا حسن بشمول انسانی حسن کے، خالق حقیقی کے حسن کا ہی ایک عکس ہے۔ حافظ نے بھی اپنے شعر میں اسی طرف اشارہ کیا ہے۔

چند ہفتے پہلے APPNA کا رسالہ میری نظر سے گزرا اور اسی عشق کی جھلک مجھے اس میں بھی نظر آئی۔ ایک صفحے پر APPNA کے بہت سے ممبران کی تصاویر تھیں اور اس کے ساتھ ان پیسوں کا ذکر تھا جو ان خواتین و حضرات نے پاکستان میں مستحق طلباء اور طالبات کے لئے مختص کئے ہیں۔ میرا تعلق کیونکہ ایک شاعر خاندان سے ہے، اس لئے ہر موقع کے لئے کوئی موزوں شعر یا قطعہ تلاش کرنا میرا مشغلہ ہے۔ اس موقع پر مجھے جناب افتخار عارف کا وہ شعر یاد آیا۔

عذاب یہ بھی کسی اور پر نہیں آیا

تمام عمر چلے اور گھر نہیں آیا

ہم سب لوگ جنھوں نے اپنی خوشی سے، کسی مجبوری کے بغیر اپنے آپ کو ”ملک بدر“ کر رکھا ہے، ہماری کیفیت بھی وہی ہے جو افتخار عارف نے بیان کی ہے۔ گو کہ APPNA کے تمام معزز ممبران اپنے اپنے شعبوں میں نمایاں ہیں، امریکہ کے ہسپتالوں اور طبی مراکز میں ہمارا لوہا مانا جاتا ہے اور کسی کسی دن تو یہ لگتا ہے کہ ہم سب پاکستان اور اسلام کے سفیر ہیں، پھر بھی اس پاک سرزمین کی یاد ہمیں چین نہیں لینے دیتی۔ ہم پاکستان کے ٹی وی چینل دیکھتے ہیں۔ وہاں کے کھانے کھاتے ہیں، وہاں جا کر اپنے عزیز واقارب سے ملتے ہیں اور ان کی مالی امداد کرتے ہیں لیکن پھر بھی دل میں ایک چھین رہتی ہے خاص کر آج کل جب پاکستان، افغانستان اور آس پاس کے علاقوں میں قتل و عارت کا بازار گرم ہے، ہمارا یہ دکھ اور بڑھ گیا ہے۔ اس وقت ہمارے وطن عزیز کی حالت وہ ہو گئی ہے جو علامہ اقبال نے اپنی خوبصورت نظم جبریل والیسیس میں بیان کی جب جبریل والیسیس سے سوال کرتے ہیں۔

جبریل: ہمدام دیرینہ کیسا ہے جہاں رنگ و بو

الیسیس: سوز و ساز و درد و داغ و جستجو آرزو

الیسیس کا جواب پاکستان پر عبینہ لاگو ہوتا ہے۔ ان تاریک وقتوں میں APPNA اور ہمارے معزز ممبران کی کوشش اندھیرے کو کونسنے کے بجائے ایک شمع روشن کرنے کی ہے۔

چند روز پہلے مجھے ایک e-mail کے ذریعے یہ بھی معلوم ہوا۔ کہ APPNA نے APPNA MERIT کے نام سے ایک پروگرام شروع کیا ہے جس کے ذریعے پاکستان کے تمام میڈیکل کالجوں میں APPNA کے ممبران اپنی تعلیمی اور فنی خدمات فراہم کریں گے یقیناً یہ اسی بات کی دلیل ہے کہ پاکستان کا مستقبل روشن تھا اور رہے گا۔ پاکستان کی سیاسی اور سماجی ہلچل سے ناواقف میرے امریکی دوست اکثر خوف اور فکر کا اظہار کرتے ہیں، خاص کر جب میں وہاں جانے کی بات کرتا ہوں۔ APPNA کے بیشتر ممبران اس تجربے سے گزر چکے ہوں گے۔ میرا نقطہ نظر اس بارے میں ذرا مختلف ہے۔ نفسیات کا طالب علم ہونے کے ناطے مجھے آج کل کی ہلچل پاکستان کی Teenage میں نظر آتی ہے۔ جو خواتین و حضرات والدین ہیں وہ اس کشمکش سے بخوبی واقف ہوں گے۔ بہر حال یہ تلاطم یہ طوفان اور ہلچل کس چیز کا پیش خیمہ ہیں یہ تو وقت ہی بتائے گا۔ اس بات سے البتہ کسی کو انکار نہیں ہو سکتا کہ وہ دھرتی جس نے APPNA کے اتنے ہزاروں تابناک ستاروں کو جنم دیا ہے، ادا ہے اور اسے اپنے بیٹوں اور بیٹیوں کی پہلے سے بھی زیادہ ضرورت ہے۔ ان حالات میں یہ بات بہت خوش آئند ہے کہ APPNA اور

غزل

ڈاکٹر سید منصور حسین، لاہور پاکستان

طویل تھی شبِ فراق، دل لگن سے چور تھا
تو پاس تھا خیال میں، مگر نظر سے دور تھا

ملا اُداسِ شام میں، حسینِ ہمسفر مجھے
ہوا وفا سے حادثہ، گو دل یہ بے قصور تھا

معاف تجھ سے ہو سکی نہ لغزشِ خطا مری
میں التجا نہ کر سکا، کہ پیکرِ غرور تھا

گزر گئی ہے زندگی، بدل گیا ہے وقت بھی
سکون مل گیا اُسے جو عشقِ نا صبور تھا

مگر اے پیرِ میکدہ سوال میرا تجھ سے ہے
وہ وارداتِ شوق تھی یا ذہن کا فتور تھا

مجھے یقین ہے آج بھی کہ اس مقام و وقت میں
ہمارے دل کی دھڑکنوں میں رابطہ ضرور تھا

غزل

ہناء خان

ہم کو کیا روکیں گی کس کام کی دیواریں ہیں
دل کے چاروں طرف اس نام کی دیواریں ہیں

کتنی دیواریں گراؤ گے ذرا سوچو تو
ہر جگہ قسمتِ ناکام کی دیواریں ہیں

پاؤں میں گہنہ روایات کی زنجیریں ہیں
جا بجا گردشِ ایام کی دیواریں ہیں

ہم سے دیوانوں کا کیا کام بنے دنیا میں
یاں پہ آغاز کی انجام کی دیواریں ہیں

دل سسکتا ہے کہ اک لمحہ اظہار ملے
یاں کہیں صبح کہیں شام کی دیواریں ہیں

اب تو کشمیر سی جنت میں بھی جانا مشکل
راہ میں متحدہ اقوام کی دیواریں ہیں

ہم ہناء رحمتِ سفر باندھ نہیں پائیں گے
راستے میں کئی اوہام کی دیواریں ہیں

میں پڑ گئے کہ ہمارے ملک میں ایسا کیوں ممکن نہیں اور اس کے لئے کیا صورت اختیار کی جائے۔ واضح رہے کہ برطانیہ میں یہ نظام محض دولت کی وجہ نہیں بلکہ اشتراکی اور اخلاقی شعور کی وجہ سے ممکن ہوا۔

۱۹۷۱ء میں ادیب سرجری کی اعلیٰ ڈگریاں لندن اور ایڈنبرا سے حاصل کر کے پاکستان لوٹے۔ سول ہسپتال کراچی میں اسٹینٹ پروفیسر کی جگہ ملی اور ایک آٹھ بستر کا یورالوجی وارڈ ان کی نگرانی میں رہا۔ پورے ہسپتال میں جگہ جگہ گندگی رہتی مگر ان کا وارڈ ہمیشہ صاف ستھرا رہتا اور کھیاں عنقا ہوتیں۔ ان کے ساتھی ڈاکٹر طفر کرتے کہ ہرٹی جھاڑوا چھا صاف کرتی ہے، دیکھیں یہ کب تک چلتا ہے۔ ادیب ہمیشہ سے اپنی ذہن کے پکے تھے۔ ہر قسم کی رکاوٹوں اور دل شکن باتوں کے باوجود ادیب کبھی بھی مایوس نہ ہوئے اور ان کی لگا تار کاوشوں کے کارن ایک دن ان کا خواب شرمندہ تعبیر ہوا اور یہ ادارہ وجود میں آیا جو اب ایک پانچ سو بستر کا ہسپتال ہے جہاں سارے مریضوں کا علاج مفت ہوتا ہے اور ہر سال ساڑھے چھ لاکھ مریض مستفید ہوتے ہیں۔ جدید آلات سے آراستہ لبارٹری، ایکس رے، سرطان کا علاج، کالج آف نرسنگ، اسکول آف ٹیکنالوجی، مریضوں کیلئے باز آباد کاری (Rehab) سب کچھ موجود ہیں۔ اب تک ۲۹۰۰ گرووں کے ٹرانسپلانٹ ہو چکے ہیں۔ یہاں تعلیمی سرگرمیاں، بشمول بین الاقوامی سمینار ہوتی ہیں۔ ۳۵ فی صد خرچ حکومت دیتی ہے اور بقیہ لوگوں کے عطیات سے WHO اور دنیا کے مشہور یورالوجی کے ڈاکٹروں نے ادیب کی خدمات اور اس ہسپتال کو سراہا ہے۔ باہر سے جو ڈاکٹر آتے ہیں اس ہسپتال کو دیکھ کر انگشت بہ دندان رہتے ہیں خاص طور پر ان کو جب یہ علم ہوتا ہے کہ کسی مریض سے ایک پائی بھی نہیں لی جاتی ہے جب کہ خود ان کے ملکوں میں بہت کچھ مریض کو اپنی جیب سے دینا پڑتا ہے۔

یہ سب کیسے ممکن ہوا اور اس کیلئے ادیب نے کتنی قربانیاں دیں اور دے رہے ہیں یہ بہت کم لوگوں کو معلوم ہے۔ اول بات یہ کہ پاکستان میں کوئی بھی بڑا ڈاکٹر ہو تو اس کی زبردست پرائیوٹ پریکٹس ہوتی ہے، عالی شان مکان اور ہر قسم کے ٹھاٹھاٹ ہوتے ہیں۔ ادیب نے کچھ دن پرائیوٹ پریکٹس کر کے چھوڑ دی اور پورا وقت ہسپتال کیلئے وقف کر دیا۔ انگلستان سے جب لوٹے تو ایک چھوٹے کرایہ کے مکان میں رہتے تھے۔ کچھ سال بعد یاروں نے سوچا کہ روشنی دینے والے کو بھی ایک دیا چاہیے اپنے گھر کیلئے، نار تھ ناظم آباد میں ان کیلئے ایک چھوٹا مکان بنا دیا جس میں وہ گذشتہ ۳۵ سال سے مقیم ہیں اور کبھی کلفٹن یا ڈیفینس میں ایک ارم نما عمارت بنانے کی ہوس نہیں کی۔ ایک بار میں نے ادیب سے اس تضاد کا ذکر کیا کہ ایک طرف تو تم اتنی مہابھارت سے چند جانیں بچاتے ہو اور دھڑ آئے دن پاکستان میں تمہاری آنکھوں کے سامنے کئی سو لوگ لقمہ اجل ہو جاتے ہیں تو ادیب نے کہا پاکستان کے حالات پر تو میرا کوئی زور نہیں ہے میرے بس میں جو ہے وہ میں کر رہا ہوں۔ ایک جاپانی کی مثال دی جو سال کی گرم ریت پر سمندر سے بہہ کر جو مچھلیاں آگئیں تھیں ان میں سے جن کی جان ابھی باقی تھی ایک ایک کر کے واپس سمندر میں پھینک رہا تھا۔ ایک راگبیر نے کہا تم اپنا کیوں وقت گنوار ہے ہو سینکڑوں تو مر چکی ہیں۔ جاپانی نے کہا جو جی سکتی ہیں کم از کم وہ توجی لیں۔ ادیب نے کہا بس میں بھی یہی کر رہا ہوں۔

یہی ادیب کا کردار اور شخصیت ہے جس کی بدولت متعدد اعزازات سے ان کی کجین تاباں اور درخشاں ہے اور پوری دنیا میں قدر شناسی ہے۔ خصوصی اعزازات بھی ان میں شامل ہیں۔ ہلال امتیاز پاکستان سے لیکر یورپ اور امریکہ کی اسناد ادیب کی خدمات کا اعتراف کرتی ہیں۔

۲۰۰۲ء میں ادیب Acute Pancreatitis کا شکار ہوئے اور اتنے شدید بیمار ہوئے کہ نہ سچنے کی امید کم نظر آنے لگی۔ کراچی کی ساری مسجدوں میں ان کیلئے دعائیں مانگی گئیں۔ اللہ نے دعا قبول کی اور پھر صحت بخش دی اور اتنی کہ بقول مشتاق یوسفی کہ بڑھاپا اب شباب پر ہے ۷۵ سال کی عمر میں بھی صبح ساڑھے سات بجے گھر سے نکلتے ہیں اور آدھی رات تک ہسپتال میں کام کرتے ہیں۔ باہر کانفرنسوں میں جانے کا بھی سلسلہ رہتا ہے۔ کالج میں جب تھے تو بال آدھے سفید تھے اب پورے سفید ہو گئے ہیں تو کوئی تعجب نہیں ہے۔ اتنی گونا گوں مصروفیتوں کے بعد بھی ادیب کا ادبی ذوق اور بذلہ سنجی برقرار ہے۔ آپ تھوڑا سا وقت نکال کر ایس آئی یوٹی کی ویب سائٹ www.situt.org & siutna.org ضرور دیکھیں۔ ابھی پاکستان میں انسانی اعضاء کے خرید و فروخت کے خلاف جو بل منظور ہوا ہے یہ بھی ادیب کی انتھک کاوشوں کا نتیجہ ہے۔

یہ میری دلی آرزو ہے کہ خدا کرے پاکستان میں ہر شعبہ طب میں ایک ادیب رضوی پیدا ہو۔

سفید بالوں والا فرشتہ

ڈاکٹر احمد سعید ہیوٹن

صاحب ایمان کی بات یہ ہے کہ میں نے آج تک کوئی فرشتہ نہیں دیکھا اور نہ ہی میرے کسی جاننے والے نے۔ فرشتوں کا ذکر بچپن سے مولوی صاحب کی زبانی سنتے آئے ہیں اور صحیفہ آسمانی میں بھی ذکر ہے۔ فرشتوں کو عام طور پر اچھا سمجھا جاتا ہے سوائے اُس ایک مُوذی کے جس نے سجدہ کرنے سے انکار کیا۔ مگر فرشتوں کی شکایت کرنے والے بھی گذرے ہیں۔ غالب نے یوں کہا:

پکڑے جاتے ہیں فرشتوں کے لکھے پر ناحق

آدمی کوئی ہمارا دمِ تحریر بھی تھا

خیر میں اس اُلجھن میں پڑنا نہیں چاہتا، اللہ انسانوں اور فرشتوں، دونوں کو بہتر سمجھتا ہے۔

یہاں فرشتہ سے میری مراد اُس لفظ سے ہے جو اردو ادب میں زیر استعمال ہے اور جس کے لغوی معنی نیک ہونے کے ہیں، جیسے 'فرشتہ صفت'، 'فرشتہ سیرت'، یا جب کوئی کسی کی مشکل میں کام آجائے تو کہتے اُس نے فرشتہ کا کام کیا۔ تو اس لحاظ سے ذکر مقصود ہے ایک شخص کا جس کا اسم گرامی پروفیسر ڈاکٹر سید ادیب الحسن رضوی ہے اور جو پاکستان کے ایک بے مثال ادارہ 'سندھ انسٹیٹیوٹ آف یو آر لوجی اینڈ ٹرانسپلائٹیشن' کے خالق اور کرتا دھرتا ہیں۔

ڈاکٹر ادیب کی پیدائش یوپی کی مردم خیز زمین میں ایک چھوٹے سے گاؤں، گلن پور نزد جون پور کے ایک متوسط گھرانے میں ہوئی۔ والد سید محمد حسین رضوی انجینئر تھے۔ چار بھائی اور چار بہنیں تھیں۔ اہلیہ محترمہ ڈاکٹر باجرہ فیملی پریکٹس کرتی ہیں۔ فرزند اکبر عرفان سرجن ہیں اور دختر نیک اختر لمبا بھی ڈاکٹر ہیں۔

ڈاکٹر ادیب سے راقم الحروف کی پہلی ملاقات ۱۹۵۹ء میں ہوئی جب وہ لیاقت میڈیکل کالج سے منتقل ہو کر ڈاؤ میڈیکل کالج ایم بی بی ایس کے آخری سال میں آئے اور میرے ہم جماعت ہوئے۔ ادیب نے میڈیکل کالج سے پہلے ڈی جے سائنس کالج کراچی میں تعلیم حاصل کی تھی۔ ڈاؤ میڈیکل کالج میں ان کے کافی پرانے ساتھی پھر سے مل گئے۔ میں ۱۹۵۴ء میں ہندوستان سے پاکستان آیا تھا اس لئے مجھے ادیب کے ماضی اور ڈی جے کالج کی زندگی کے بارے میں ذاتی طور پر کوئی علم نہیں تھا مگر اور لوگ جو ان کے قصے سناتے تھے وہ میں بہت دلچسپی سے سنتا تھا۔ اس پر ایک کتاب لکھی جاسکتی ہے۔ اس زمانے میں کراچی کے طلباء اور عوام میں ایک انقلابی گروپ سرگرم تھا جو فیض احمد فیض، سجاد حیدر، مخدوم محی الدین جیسی شخصیتوں سے بہت متاثر تھا اور ان کو احساس ہو چلا تھا کہ ہم نے ایک طوق غلامی تو اتار دیا مگر ایک دوسرا طوق انتہائی سلیقہ سے ہمارے گلے ڈالا جا رہا ہے۔ کوکا کولا، بڑی بڑی امریکن گاڑیاں، امریکی بشرٹ اور راک اینڈ رول ڈانس کارواج اعلیٰ طبقہ میں زور پکڑ رہا تھا۔ انقلابیوں نے اس روپوش آمریت کے خلاف آواز اٹھائی۔ بااقتدار لوگ چونکہ پک چکے تھے اس لئے جو بھی سماجی بہبود یا غریبوں کے حقوق کی بات کرتا اسے سرخ سویرے کے حامی ہونے کے الزام میں دھر لیا جاتا، اس گروپ میں ہمارے نوجوان دوست ادیب رضوی بھی شامل تھے۔ جوانی کا جوش تھا، ہر ہڑتال میں جلسہ جلوس میں حصہ لینا، پولیس الاٹھی چارج کا نشانہ بننا حتیٰ کہ سرکاری کونج فنس میں کچھ دن قیام کرنا بھی ان کے لیے گوارا تھا مگر ادیب نے کبھی کسی بیزید کی بیعت نہیں کی، نہ کسی کے آگے سر جھکا یا اور نہ کبھی حق سے پیچھے ہٹے۔ ادیب کی پوری شخصیت کی جھلک فیض احمد فیض کے ان دو اشعار میں ملتی ہے۔

عاجزی سیکھی، غریبوں کی حمایت سیکھی

یاس و حرمان کے، دُکھ درد کے معنی سیکھے

زیر دستوں کے مصائب کو سمجھنا سیکھا

سرد آہوں کے، رُخ زرد کے معنی سیکھے

میں ۱۹۶۱ء میں انگلستان چلا آیا۔ میرے آنے کے کچھ عرصہ بعد ادیب بھی آگئے۔ ادیب انگلستان کے قومی نظام صحت سے بہت متاثر ہوئے۔ کہنے کو برطانیہ بھی ایک سرمایہ دار ملک ہے مگر وہاں اشتراکیت بھی بہت ہے۔ غریبوں، معذور لوگوں اور اور عمر رسیدہ افراد کیلئے کافی سہولتیں میسر ہیں۔ بے روزگاروں کو بھی ہر ہفتہ حکومت خرچہ کے پیسے دیتی ہے حتیٰ کہ ان لوگوں کو بھی جو وہاں کے باشندے نہیں ہیں یہ تمام سہولتیں میسر ہیں۔ یہ سب اچھی باتیں ہمارے مذہب اسلام میں بھی ہیں مگر عملی طور پر ہم ان سب سے بہت دور ہیں۔ جب ہم شروع میں انگلستان آئے تو ہمارے دماغ میں پاکستان میں جو عام مریضوں سے سلوک ہوتا تھا اس کی یادیں تازہ تھیں۔ روز جناح اور رسول ہسپتال میں چھ سو سات سو مریضوں کا جھگھٹا ہوتا تھا۔ بس دیکھا کہ ہر کسی کو اس کے سماجی درجہ سے قطع نظر اسی توجہ اور عزت سے علاج ملتا ہے تو ہماری آنکھیں کھل گئیں۔ تب سے ادیب سوچ

امید ہیں کہ قائدین اس ورثے پر بجا طور پر فخر کے سکیں گے۔ دیگر اہم پروگراموں میں قومی یوم صحت کا ملک گیر پیمانے پر انعقاد "اپنا" کو دیگر تنظیموں سے ممتاز کرنے اور اس سے بڑھ کر اس ملک کی خدمت کرنے کی جانب ایک اہم پیش رفت ہے۔ امید ہے کہ یہ دن اس ملک کے نظام صحت میں ہماری من حیث الجماعت شمولیت کے زینے پر پہلا قدم ہوگا۔

اس کا بیڑہ خصوصاً خازن صاحب کی ایک متوازن بجٹ، ذیلی تنظیموں (alumni & chapters) کے کھاتوں کی پڑتال اور اسراف پر قابو پانے کی جانب توجہ لائق تھیں ہے۔ یہ چیزیں شاید چکا چونڈ نہ رکھتی ہوں مگر تنظیمی صحت کو برقرار رکھنے کے لیے لازم ہیں۔

"اپنا" میرٹ کے پاکستان میں جاری پروگرام، متاثرین سوات کے امدادی پروگرام کی تکمیل اور علامہ اقبال میڈیکل کالج لاہور کے ڈاکٹروں اور میڈیا کے مابین تنازعے میں "اپنا" کی بروقت اخلاقی مدد، پاکستان میں تنظیم کی جانب سے کئے گئے قابل قدر اقدامات ہیں۔

اپنے قائدین کی تادم تحریر سامنے آنے والی کارکردگی کے حوالے سے ہم سمجھتے ہیں کہ پیمانہ ابھی آدھا لبریز ہے۔ ڈاکٹر زلیف منیر، ان کی کا بیڑہ اور "اپنا" کے ارکان یقیناً اتنے باصلاحیت ہیں کہ وہ آئندہ ششماہی میں نہ صرف ہمیں درپیش امور پر مزید تندی سے کام کر سکتے ہیں بلکہ اپنے عہدے کی میعاد ختم ہونے سے قبل بیشتر مسائل پر کما حقہ قابو پاسکتے ہیں۔

ہوں گی اور آنے والے چھ ماہ میں او با ما پالیسی کے حوالے سے ہنگامی بنیادوں پر کام ہوگا۔ ہم نے وقت کی آواز پر اگر لبیک نہ کہا تو آئندہ عشرے میں ہم صرف خود کو مورد الزام ٹھہرا سکیں گے۔

جہاں کا بیڑہ کی کارکردگی کا تنقیدی احاطہ لازم ہے وہیں یہ بھی فرض ہے جو کامیابیاں اس قیادت، خصوصاً صدر صاحبہ، کے حصے میں آئیں ہیں اس پر انہیں فرائض کو مبارکباد دی جائے۔

گزشتہ کئی سال سے ارکان، امیدوار اور قیادت انتخابی اصلاحات کا مطالبہ کرتے چلے آ رہے تھے۔ ان جامع اصلاحات کا نفاذ اور انہی کے تحت ۲۰۱۰ء کے انتخابات کا انعقاد ایک انتہائی احسن قدم ہے جس کے لیے ہم عہدیداران کو ہدیہ تہنیت پیش کرتے ہیں۔ یقیناً دیر آید، درست آید۔

اکیسویں صدی میں رسل و رسائل فیس بک اور ٹویٹر کے مرحلے میں داخل ہو چکے ہیں اور یہ امر انصاف سے عاری ہوگا اگر "اپنا" کو تنہا ایک مکمل نظام اطلاعات (Communication Portal) دینے میں ڈاکٹر زلیف منیر کی خدمات کا اعتراف نہ کیا جائے۔ صدر صاحبہ نے جس کام کا بیڑہ آگزٹیشن سال اٹھایا تھا وہ انہوں نے "اپنا" کی ویب سائٹ کی صورت میں پورا کر دکھایا ہے۔ وہ بلا شرکت غیرے خراج تحسین کی مستحق ہیں ایک ایسے نظام کی تخلیق کے لیے جو آنے والے دنوں میں تنظیم کا اثاثہ ہوگا۔

موجودہ دور میں نئی نسل کے لیے ایک ایسا پروگرام "Youth Initiative" کا اجراء کیا گیا ہے جو ہمارے بچوں کو تعلیمی اور پیشہ ورانہ رہنمائی فراہم کرے گا اور ہم پُر

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ایسوسی ایشن آف فزیشنز آف پاکستانی ڈسینٹ آف نارٹھ امریکہ

اپنا اردو میگزین

جلد سالانہ: ۱۲ شماره: ۱

مدیر: ڈاکٹر محمد تقی

پیش گفتار

عزیزان گرامی،

چند ماہ قبل جب برادر محترم سلیم چودھری کا مشفقانہ حکم ملا کہ تم اپنا کی مجلس ادارت میں شامل ہو جاؤ اور شعبہ اردو کی دیکھ ریکھ کرو تو ناگاہ پیشہ آباء کی محبت جاگ اٹھی جو نہ ڈاکٹری نہ سپہ گری بلکہ صحافت تھا۔ ابھی خیال نقوش اور لیل و نہار کی جانب گیا ہی تھا کہ مجلس اشاعت کے فلک ہفتقم سے صدر محترم سید ندیم احسن صاحب کا حکم نازل ہوا جس میں تعدد و اوراق کے بارے میں کڑی تنبیہ اور پیٹ پر پتھر باندھنے کا اذن دیا گیا تھا۔ مندی کے اس دور میں طباعت و اشاعت کے افزوں ہوتے اخراجات کے سبب رسالے کے صفحات گھٹا دیئے گئے تھے:

حیف در چشم زدن صحبت یار آخر شد

سیر گل نہ دیدہ ایم فصل بہار آخر شد

پس جو سوکھے سہمے چند ورتے حاضر ہیں ان کا دم غنیمت سمجھیں اور تھوڑا لکھو کو بہت جانے۔ اپنی نگارشات کو جو آپ نے جگر خون کر کے لکھی تھیں، چراغ رخ زیبالے کر بھی ڈھونڈنے کی کوشش مت کیجئے گا:

یہ نزانے تجھے ممکن ہے خرابوں میں ملیں

مگر یہ مجلس آپ کی کاوش کے لیے مشکور ہے اور کوشش جاری ہے کہ آپ کے نظم و نثر کو انٹرنیٹ کے کم خرچ بالائین ذریعے سے قارئین تک پہنچا دیا جائے۔ اگر یہ وعدہ وفا نہ ہوا تو سمجھئے کہ آں دفتر کا گوارا خورد اور محشر، یعنی جزل باڈی میٹنگ میں صدر مجلس ادارت کے دامن گیر ہو جائیے گا۔

تفصیل برطرف کہ صدر مجلس، مدیر اعلیٰ اور اراکین مجلس میرے مدد و معاون ہیں۔ جو خوبیاں مجلہ میں ہیں وہ انہیں کے طفیل ہیں۔ جہاں کوئی کوتاہی ہوئی ہے اس کے لیے خادم کو دوش دیجئے کہ ان مدد و جین نے اسے کام کرنے کی آزادی دے رکھی ہے۔

ایک اعتراف پشاور کے اخبار The Statesman کے مدیر، مجی و محترمی جناب افضل بخاری کی عنایات کا بھی کہ انہوں نے خاص نوازش کی اور کیپوٹنگ کے بارے سے فدوی کوسب دوش کروا دیا اور قدم بہ قدم دستگیری بھی کی۔

"اپنا" کے عہدیداروں کا شکر یہ بھی لازم ہے کہ نہ مساعد حالات کے باوجود انہوں نے اردو کی موجودگی کو رسالے میں یقینی بنایا۔ شماره حاضر ہے اور:

اب تو جاتے ہیں میکدے سے میر پھر ملیں گے اگر خدا لایا

محمد تقی

زبانِ خلق

اداریہ

شمالی امریکہ میں مقیم پاکستانی نژاد ڈاکٹروں کی تنظیم "اپنا"۔ اس نام میں موجود تین کوائف یعنی امریکہ، پاکستان اور شعبہ طب سے وابستگی اس مثلث کے تین رکن ہیں جو ادارہ نویس کے قلم کے گرد ایک حصار کی مانند قائم ہے۔ یہ تینوں اس بات کی متقاضی ہے کہ اس کے اندر رونما ہونے والے حالات اور "اپنا" پر ان کے اثرات اور ایسے نئے حقائق کی روشنی میں تنظیم کے کردار کو جانچا جائے۔ یہاں پر بیانِ حسنِ طبیعت کی نہیں بلکہ صرف گزارشِ احوالِ واقعی کی گنجائش ہے۔

ہماری تنظیم کا طرہ امتیاز اس کا جمہوری ڈھانچہ اور اس کے نتیجے میں منتخب ہونے والے عہدیدار ہیں جو امریکہ، پاکستان اور طب کے میدانوں میں ہماری نمائندگی اور رہنمائی کرتے ہیں۔ یہی جمہوری فکر جو "اپنا" کے وجود کا جوہر ہے، تنظیم کے ارکان و قائدین کو قدم بہ قدم اپنا محاسبہ کرنے کا پابند کرتی ہے۔

۲۰۱۰ عیسوی امریکہ میں ڈاکٹروں کے لیے بلا مبالغہ تلام کا سال ہے۔ ناممکن ہے کہ ہم میں سے کوئی بھی صدر براک اوباما کی ہیلتھ کیئر ریفرم پالیسی سے متاثر ہوئے بغیر رہ سکے۔ یہ وہ سرکاری قدم ہے جس کا تعلق براہ راست ارکان کے روزگار سے ہے۔ لہذا ہم اس بات پر اصرار کریں کہ ہمارے قائدین صدر اوباما کی ہیلتھ کیئر پالیسی کی بابت تنظیم کے لیے ایک مربوط لائحہ عمل مرتب کریں۔

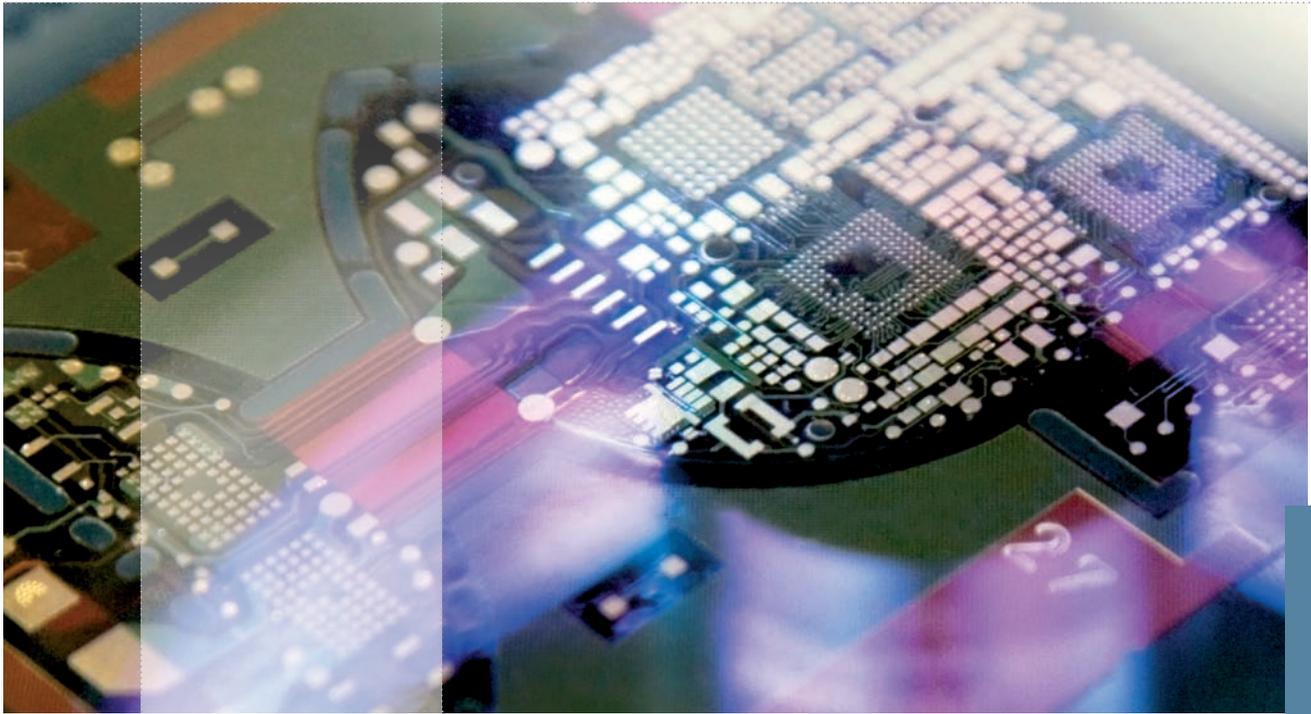
"اپنا" کے کچھ ارکان کی واشنگٹن ڈی سی میں ہونے والے "March for

"Health Reform" میں شمولیت، جیسے کا بینہ کی حمایت حاصل تھی یا میڈیا میں قیادت کے تبصرے، اچھی کاوشیں تھیں۔ مگر ملکی سطح پر بطور تنظیم، صحت پالیسی پر ہماری نمائندگی ابھی اس بھر پور طریقے سے نہیں ہوئی جو ہزاروں ڈاکٹروں کی نمائندگی کے دعوے کے شایان شان ہو۔ صدر اوباما نے ستمبر ۲۰۰۹ء میں اپنی ہیلتھ کیئر پالیسی کا عندیہ دیا تھا اور پھر اس سال مارچ میں اس قانون پر دستخط کیے۔ اور یہی عرصہ "اپنا" میں انتقالِ اقتدار کا وقت تھا۔ گمان غالب ہے کہ تغیر کے ان لمحات میں دوسرے مسائل کی وجہ سے ہم اس اہم سلسلے میں نسبتاً کم پیش رفت کر سکے۔ چاہیے تھا کہ "اپنا" کے سابق صدر، براک اوباما کے ستمبر ۲۰۰۹ء کے اعلان کے فوراً بعد ترجیحی بنیاد پر اس معاملے سے نمٹنے کے لیے ایک ٹاسک فورس تشکیل دیتے تاکہ نئی صدر کو زمام کار تھامتے ہی فی الفور ان تمام مسائل کا سامنا کرنے میں آسانی ہوتی۔ یہ امر واقعہ ہے کہ نئی قیادت کو تنظیمی امور پر قابو پانے میں کچھ وقت ضرور لگتا ہے لہذا سابق صدر کی دوراندیشی اس صورت میں مدد و معاون ہوتی۔ مگر گزشتہ راصلوات آئندہ را احتیاط۔ اب مزید کسی پس و پیش کے بغیر قائدین و ارکان کو اس معاملے پر کام میں جٹ جانا ہوگا۔

ہم یہ امید رکھتے ہیں کہ یہ سطور صد اب صحرا نہیں بلکہ قائدین کے لیے جرس کی آواز ثابت

“Quality is never an accident.
It is always the result of
intelligent effort.”

John Ruskin
English social thinker



About the image:
Printed circuit board
used as a component in
BIOTRONIK ICDs, which
detect life-threatening cardiac
arrhythmias and deliver
therapy to restore normal
heart rate and rhythm.

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