

Corruption is the major assassin of meritocracy in the society and is so deeply rooted that eradication of it requires great struggle and sacrifice. Meritocracy represents a vision in which power and privilege would be allocated by individual merit, not by social origins.

Meritocracy referred to an idealized society where discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, gender, age, class is completely absent. Merit was the encompassing value, the basic and morally correct criteria for all social classifications, particularly in respect to socioeconomic standing and in public space. Corruption is the form of dishonest or criminal activities undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire illicit benefits. Corruption has become a part of our professional and educational lives where money is the new trend to walk towards a happy and luxurious life. Back in the days, when everyone was weighed for one's abilities and skills, everyone known for what they were and not for their currency. We all used to live in Bliss and harmony and were spending the few days of our lives in a respectable regime. Today's man is depressed and he doesn't know how to justify his skills. Children from upper class get upper class education, children from lower class get lower class education and children from middle class get middle class education. Privileged young people can perceive reachable goals and lofty aspirations because they tend to benefit from high expectations and support networks from the family. We have adapted ourselves in this wicked society. We can all put an end to this if we see corruption within us, you might sneer at that fact but there is rather small amount of perversion in all of us which we hide from the world. We cannot face ourselves being criticized. Everyone needs to be just in more

CORRUPTION IS THE EXTERMINATION OF MERITOCRACY

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hard work and efforts than deprive someone of one's right. Dreams don't come true by magic; it requires relentless struggle and sustained sacrifice which I believe no one wants to put it anymore. Everyone wants to be in spotlight but not a single soul wants to work for it.

A student belonging to a poor family will work day and night and will pass with flying colors but still not get job because a minister's son having social position will get that job by merely making a call. When such situations prevail, crime rates inflate. As the poor remains poor and the rich get richer. Deprivation among the poor makes them desperate and force them to earn money by illegal means. Pakistan is moving towards devastation. This all needs to be an end. We must follow meritocracy religiously and let not corruption take hold of it. When meritocracy tends to break down, it will perpetuate inequality. We want meritocracy but with strong affirmative values. We are busy in criticizing others and our country is facing a lot of mishaps. We have stopped dreaming for the betterment and prosperity of our country. It's not calamity to die with the dreams unfulfilled but it's calamity not to dream. We always look for shortcuts in our lives without knowing that shortcuts can prove to be the longest one. We are standing at the verge of destruction. We need to think hard for our country. Corruption has spoiled Pakistan.

This situation going to ruin the society completely and is resulting in increase in poverty, unemployment, hunger and is tarnished the image of the country by bringing immense miseries to its people. It is the responsibility of every individual to work jointly with the government institutions to make Pakistan a corruption-free country. Corruption will not prevail in the society until deserving people are given their rights.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

and ITS EFFECTS

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First time, I heard the word "Islamophobia" from Prime Minister in his beautiful speech which was delivered at UN General Assembly. Before this speech I knew a little bit about this word but not completely. When I searched about Islamophobia, I understood that being a Muslim we thoroughly know about Islamophobia and its impact on the Muslim society because it is a threat for Muslims of the West and we also have to set measures to stop this bigotry. In Oxford Dictionary the meaning of Phobia is an extreme or irrational fear of an exaggerated and aversion of something and according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it is an exaggerated, illogical fear of a particular object or class, situation of objects. So, Islamophobia can be defined as an exaggerated fear, unfounded hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes by media resulting in bias, discrimination and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life. In Runnymede A 20th-Anniversary Report "Islamophobia is still a challenge for us all". It is defined as any division, constraint towards or preference against, or exclusion, Muslims that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the economic, cultural political, social, or any other field of public life.

Here I am quoting some reports, which are indicating the threats of Islamophobia. A comprehensive report was issued in 2016 by CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations on Islamophobia) in America. The report is indicating that the person who values freedom of worship, equal protection and an absence of

religious tests for those seeking public office are exaggerated by the U.S. Islamophobia network's biased messaging. The report says that in U.S. there are more than seventy four groups which are identified as comprising the U.S. Islamophobia network. According to the report, the said groups are spending \$205 million to spread fear and hatred of Muslims. There are thirty-three other groups of U.S. Islamophobia network, which is called inner core whose primary objective is to promote hatred of, prejudice against, Islam and Muslims. Above said groups had accessed at least 205,838,077 within five years. There are forty-one additional groups whose fundamental objective does not appear to include promoting prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims but whose work on regular bases supports Islamophobic theme, which makes network's outer core. Florida and Tennessee have passed laws revising the way they approve textbooks for classroom use as a direct result of anti-Islam campaigns. There are a lot of incidents in which teachers merely informing students of the tenets of Islam's fundamental belief system generated backlash and allegations of attempts to teach students to become Muslims. Since 2009, every single year has more and more targeted incidents even 78 mosques were targeted in 2015 which were most incidents in a single year. It raises deep concern for Muslim-free business and anti-Islam demonstrations in America. There are at least two states advocates wrongly believe that introductory religious courses that teaching the five pillars of Islam is "propaganda".

Another report was issued by Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University, England,

Professor Gurchathen Sanghera, Edeinburgh Napier University, Scotland and Professor Kate Botteril, University of St Andrews, Scotland. The report was titled "Eight ways that Islamophobia Operates in Everyday Life". The report has indicated that the horror of Islam suffused to each Muslim's life. It is reported that Islamophobia increased in UK two hundred percent and seventy eight percent in U.S. It is pointed that men and women are not experiencing Islamophobia in the similar manner, particularly women if they are wearing a burka, headscarf and hijab. In 2015, sixty percent of Islamophobic happening took place against women among these incidents 75% sufferers were evidently women Muslim. A brown skin, beard or wearing Asian clothes Muslim men are more victims of Islamophobia than of rest Muslims. Islamophobia attacks are different in nature including physical assault, verbal abuse and threatening behavior. These attacks do not occur at a single place but it may experience in schools, colleges, neighborhood, public places and at airports. The intensity and nature of attacks vary for example the aggressive forms of physically Islamophobia consist of name-calling, taunting, outright extreme violence or individuals being made the subject of jokes in public as well as things like head scarfs being pulled off by fellow passengers on public transport. Government institutions are reproducing Islamophobia group for example Prevent strategy for schools in UK.

Through Gallup Polling Data on Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West a report was written by Joe Jenkins titled "Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West" was issued. This report has a great collection of facts but here I am mentioning a few but you must read this report because it explores the real picture of the west against Islam. This report says that there are a lot of Muslims who do not feel respect by other in the West. Momentous percentages of numerous Western countries contribute to these sentiments, indicating that in the West the societies of Muslim have no respect. Explicitly,

38% of United Kingdom, 48% of Canadians 52% of Americans says that the West don't respect Muslim societies. A small percentage of French, British, Italian, and German respondents agree. Similarly, the momentous magnitude of the German, British and French publics believe that different Muslim relationships and practices are threat for them. For instance, 39% of French 30% of British and 16% of Germans declare that wearing traditional head covering worn by Muslim women mostly called hijab is a threat to European culture. A parallel percentage relates Muslims with terror, as 34% of the British, 23% of Germans and 25% of the French say that Muslims are sympathetic to al Qaeda.

The extreme right-wing group 'Stop the Islamisation of Norway' (SION), attempted to burn the Quran during a protest in Norway's Kristiansand. This action sparked anger among Muslims and raised questions about rising far-right sentiments in Norway. The Scandinavian nation is well known for its prosperity, beautiful nature and generally moderate politics. There are more than 1660,000 Muslims living in Norway out of a population of five million. Norway has been accused of remaining silent and inactive against rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the country.

A few months ago, Greet Wilders a Dutch anti-Islam politician announced that there will be a competition about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cartoon at parliamentary office. The Party for Freedom (PVV), which has previously called for the Quran to be banned, said the contest had been approved by the country's counter-terrorism agency. Drawings will be judged by American cartoonist Bosch Fawstin, winner of a similar competition in Texas three years ago that was targeted by two Muslim gunmen.

In August, a gunman attacked a mosque 'inspired' by the New Zealand and El Paso anti-Muslim attacks. Two bystanders stopped the would-be gunman opening fire on worshippers in the city of Baerum. The populist Right Wing Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) entered parliament in alliance with the Conservative Party for the first time in 2013. The FrP was established in 1987 on an anti-Muslim and anti-

immigration platform.

Since 9/11, Islamophobia is increasing day by day but it augmented in occurrence during last decade. A little proportion of Muslim-American terrorism suspects are highlighted by Media coverage to national attention which creates great impression on the people living in America or worldwide. On the other occasion there are hundreds of violations done by others which are not highlighted by media. Being a Muslim we have to gather against Islamophobic

events and set measures internationally. We must strictly follow the Holy Quran and path of Holy Prophet (Sal Allaho Alai Hi wa Alehe wassalm). As Allama Iqbal said:

وہ معزز تھے زمانے میں مسلمان ہو کر
اور تم خوار ہوئے تارکِ قرآن ہو کر

PROUD TO BE A WOMAN ♀

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Woman is most beautiful and elegant creation of this universe. ALLAH has created woman to make the world understand the tender and noble emotions ...love, sincerity, loyalty, dignity, sensitivity, and sacrifice. ALLAH has bestowed this world with purity of love in the form of sister, with loyalty in the form of wife.

Nature made her in such a way that she is soft like butter and strong like iron at the same time, keeping in view the roles assigned to woman, ALLAH has bestowed her with numerous rights .She deserves love, respect, security and kindness from society .If we study Holy Quran,

we come to know that ALLAH has not left a single aspect of life where he blackmailing prevails about, the woman and people who are associated to her. Her rights are so important near ALLAH and his Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) that our Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

Have fear of ALLAH Almighty in case of woman and children who are dependent on you

The entire life of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) stands as example to his Ummah, regarding the treatment with woman. He advised his Ummah as:

And handle them with great care, they are just like bubbles of water

It makes me feel proud to be a woman of Muslim Ummah, though I am not given the status by my society, which has been granted to me by my religion. Domestic violence, Honour killing, forced marriages, blackmailing, exploitation in economic matter harassment at work place, low wages, gender discrimination, threats of security, deprivation of fundamental human rights and what not? But

despite of all these, I still hope for the best and until for my chance.



IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON SOCIETY

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Terrorism is defined as the use of violent action in order to achieve political goals or to force a government to act. Terrorism is a criminal act. It may include acts of exceptional and singular savagery. It is not a new phenomenon and acts of terror are age old, and have been broadly used as a technique in national and regional disputes.

The evil of terrorism is posing a very serious threat to the peace and prosperity of Pakistan. Since the decision by the Government of Pakistan to act as a frontline state in the War on Terror, the people of Pakistan have been paying its costs in terms of human lives, economic losses, social disruptions, political instability and psychological impacts.

Pakistan's choice to participate in the War on Terror has made it a target of the terrorist outfits and these terrorists took a very heavy toll in form of deaths and injuries inflicted on innocent Pakistani citizens in the last fifteen years. It gathered from various reports that since the decision to be a partner in 'war on terror', Pakistanis has suffered irreparable loss of twenty-two thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three (22,833) human lives during the period of 2006 to 2015, adversely affecting the whole society. Besides, around forty thousand (40,000) persons were injured or disabled due to terrorist attacks during the same period.

An international review by a London-based Institute for Ecof1,6mics and Peace has placed Pakistan at number three on the list of Global Terrorism Index. The report said Iraq was the nation hit hardest by terrorism, with two



thous and, four hundred and ninety-two (2,492) assaults that executed more than six thousand and three hundred (6,300) individuals. It was trailed by Afghanistan and Pakistan, with Nigeria and Syria in fourth and fifth place respectively.

Impact on Economy

It is estimated that the direct and indirect cost incurred during the last fourteen years, due to incidents of terrorism amounted to US\$ 118.31 billion that equivalents to Rs. 9869.16 billion. In present decade, Pakistan's industrial base witnessed closure of one-third of its factories. With the loss of jobs and the lack of foreign investment, domestic revenue collection also fell, pushing the country into a debt trap. Pakistan was thus forced to resort to the IMF to bail it out, to which the latter agreed but with stringent conditions, which has worsened the economic situation further.

The research also establishes that security-related expenditures would have been significantly lesser in case of no war on terror. It implies more funds could have been allocated for development of social sector. In the past years, terrorism forced Pakistan to designate a sizeable part of its valuable and rare assets to meet the resultant security challenges and to repair broken down infrastructure and to pay compensation packages to the affectees amid the last many years.

Tourism is an important sector of economy and has been a good source of revenues for Pakistan and especially for KPK, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. But the terrorism after 9/11 caused political instability and political instability and sense of insecurity repelled tourist flows to Pakistan. The rise of terrorist attacks proved to be a major hindrance as the number of foreign tourists declined significantly when certain western states took a decision to issue Negative Travel Advisories against Pakistan.

Political Impact

The soft image of Pakistan has been tarnished by the choice of Government of Pakistan to be a frontline state in the war on

terror. It is sad fact that despite Pakistan's numerous sacrifices for international peace and prosperity, it has been painted as a place of refuge for reproducing and protecting militants and terrorists in era of "new terrorism". It has been labelled sometimes as 'terrorists supermarket'. This sort of image alongside information about Pakistan's nuclear capabilities and declining domestic law and order situation has moved Pakistan towards the status of alleged failed state.

Despite the ground realities of Pakistan, the Western and Indian media campaign along with diplomatic efforts by India and United States painted the image of Pakistan as safe haven for terrorists involved in cross border acts of terrorism. The Developed World's perspective of Pakistan as a country that exports militants and terrorists to other countries has knocked the standing of Pakistan.

Social Impact

Pakistan's social sector growth in the past was hindered by the low priority assigned to development budgets by successive governments. The economic crisis of the 1990s in particular was a major stumbling block to social development. However, a larger



allocation for social sectors was expected when Pakistan engaged the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. However, unfortunately, priority in public expenditure has increasingly been shifted from social sectors towards defense and security since the Sept. 11, 2001{9/11} attacks. The upshot is a slowdown in the pace of social development with serious repercussions for the future welfare of the people.

A formidable test for policy makers in Pakistan has been the realization of sustainable socioeconomic development in Pakistan. The high growth periods experienced in the course of recent decades couldn't be changed over into important and sustainable advance in social sector.

Psychological Impact

The general mental effect of terrorist activities in the Pakistani society has not yet been measured and it is messed with as well. It is known to all that there are numerous survivors of suicide bombings and military operations and additionally relatives of persons who were killed or maimed in terrorist attacks in the previous fifteen years. Numerous kids and youngsters have been influenced either by being at the scene of an assault, by knowing somebody slaughtered or harmed by terrorists or watching realistic scenes of such acts on their TV channels.

All these influenced individuals must experience the ill effects of Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD) bringing on bad dreams, flashbacks, trouble in resting and social withdrawals. In the event that the state stays not able to give assurance to its subjects and obviously characterize these fanatics as adversaries of the State the issue will keep on persisting.

In view of foregoing facts about substantial losses imposed by terrorism, it is concluded that terrorism not only affects Pakistan's infrastructure, but it also affects its financial well-being and causes political instability and mental health problems in the society. Terrorism breeds instability and uncertainty in Pakistan.

In fact, the most significant effect of the war on terror on the Pakistani society has been that religious narrow mindedness and extremism has turned out to be widespread and it has seen popularization of a wide range of weapons. Military operations and drone attacks are exceptionally disdained and disliked. The circumstance turns out to be trickier as the greater part of the security forces, including police and rangers are busy in protecting the legislators and government establishments and are not accessible for the wellbeing of common man and public places. The general population grievances are more than that. The issue of missing persons still stays uncertain. This is the unpleasant burden of historical baggage that the present government is carrying.

It has been witnessed that as a result of war on terror, terrorist arrnles have emerged and, with the Islamic State, extremists are seizing and running territories. It is believed that it is not a war that is going to be fought or won with bullets. It is ideological, and will take time and patience, just like the Cold War took several decades.

It is imperative to understand that lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and in the region is necessary, among other factors, for further promoting sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. It is important to highlight that combating global terrorism is one of the toughest challenges the International Community has ever faced. Individual countries are not in position to meet this challenge. It implies that coordinated multilateral solutions are the sole viable response. It is true that we can have real chance of defeating this existential threat by building up a united front.

In a nutshell, terrorism is assuredly the number one challenge that Pakistan faces today and there is no quick fix for it. The sooner we comprehend the gravity of this evil and develop a national and international consensus on defeating terrorism and identifying the enemies of the State of Pakistan, it is better for peace and prosperity of Pakistan.



Edgar Allan Poe

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True! --nervous --very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses --not destroyed --not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthy --how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered in my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture --a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees --very gradually --I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded --with what caution --with what foresight --with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it --oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my

head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly --very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this, and then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously--oh, so cautiously --cautiously (for the hinges creaked) --I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights --every night just at midnight --but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his evil eye. Every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he has passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night, I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers --of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think



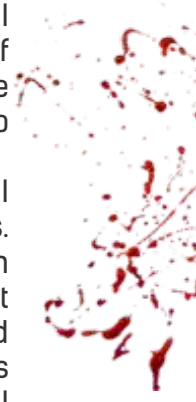
that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back --but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily. I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out --"Who's there?" I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; --just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently, I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief --oh, no! --it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself --"It is nothing but the wind in the chimney --it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or "It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp." Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel --although he neither saw nor heard --to feel the presence of my head

within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little --a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it --you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily --until, at length a simple dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye. It was open --wide, wide open --and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness --all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot and have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense? --now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eve. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! --do you mark me well I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me --the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once --once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled



sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye --not even his --could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out --no stain of any kind --no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all --ha! ha! When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock --still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart, --for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises. I smiled, --for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search --search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease.

They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: --It continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness --until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears. No doubt I now grew very pale; --but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased --and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound --much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath --and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly --more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men --but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed --I raved --I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder --louder --louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! --no, no! They heard! --they suspected! --they knew! --they were making a mockery of my horror!--this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now --again! --hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed! --tear up the planks! here, here! --It is the beating of his hideous heart!"

THE DISAPPEARING STAPLE BUCKWHEAT

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Gilgit-Baltistan is situated in the extreme north of the country and geographically surrounded by the mighty Karakoram, Himalaya, and Hindukush Mountain Ranges. The total area is 72,500 square kilometers with a population of over one million living in more than 831 villages with a population density of 12 persons per sq km. In general, climate of Gilgit Baltistan is subtropical to temperate with some features of the Mediterranean providing ideal conditions to short-season crops.

This region is not only blessed with exquisite sceneries and pleasant weather. It is also blessed with various resources such as delicious fruits, dry fruits, natural water resources, precious gems and stones and with distinct flora and fauna. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are directly or indirectly affiliated with agriculture. This area is mainly irrigated through a system of gravitational water channels emerging from the rivers, glaciers, seasonal streams and springs

Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench) is a specialty grain that was introduced in the Hudson Valley by early Dutch settlers and has a long history in New York State and in Asia. Buckwheat, a pseudo cereal has been grown on the soil of Gilgit-Baltistan from decades. It was eaten mainly to satiate the people's hunger and to get food energy. But after wheat cultivation is mainly eaten because of its taste, for variety in the menu, for its tradition and mostly combined with the knowledge about the importance of buckwheat food products for human health. It is the traditional food for many parts of Gilgit Baltistan but some villages have already left the production. However, the Buckwheat is regaining its popularity again due to its health

benefits. Historically, buckwheat was first domesticated and cultivated in South East Asia, and from there, it spread to Central Asia Tibet and then to other parts of the world through this route. Buckwheat provides food security to traditional poor resource farmers under subsistence farming but its cultivation and utilization in Pakistan are limited. Both Common and Tartary buckwheat are cultivated as a summer crop in valleys of Karakoram and Hindukush, Pakistan. In Gilgit Baltistan, buckwheat is cultivated as a summer crop in July and harvested in October, and also as an autumn crop in August and harvested in November. During 17th-19th century, it was a popular staple crop in this region whereas wheat was used occasionally. It is a special crop having short cropping season as it completes its life cycle in 80 days. Its versatile characters include drought tolerance, less or no fertilizer requirements and weed tolerance. Above all, it has some specific medicinal properties as it is used to alleviate diabetes mellitus, Hypercholesterolemia, and gallstones. It also provides a high source of amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

A major benefit of buckwheat compared to other grains is that it has a unique amino acid composition that gives it special biological activities. These include cholesterol-lowering effects, anti-hypertension effects and improving digestion. Carbohydrates are the main dietary component of buckwheat but it also contains protein, various minerals and antioxidants. It has also an important role in the beekeeping industry due to its transfer of pollen grains from the anther to the stigma of a different plant. During pollination, it brings genetically different types of pollen grains to the



The inflorescence of buckwheat plants in research field area



Local dishes of buckwheat commonly used in Gilgit Baltistan

stigma. It can fill a special need for the beekeepers when other nectar sources are scarce. The honey produced from buckwheat nectar is darker in color and highly flavored. So, it hikes up the productivity of buckwheat as well as honey production.

Despite its various characteristics, Buckwheat is considered as uncultivated and neglected crop world widely. In Gilgit-Baltistan, this crop has been neglected during the last few years and it has been threatened as an endangered species of Pakistan because of wheat as its competitor crop and due to the lack of attention of young farmers toward this crop. Government and NGO's are taking few steps for promotion of Buckwheat by growing different field trails in different districts as well as providing farmers with healthy seeds. They introduced an exotic variety from Canada to uplift interest of farmers by getting good yield to improve livelihood of farmers.

According to the latest updates, Researchers at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad have conducted experiments in Punjab to check its adaptability and proper crop season for enclosure in cropping pattern. However wheat and rice are the most demanding food grains and are the most important component of our daily diet.

Specifically, in Punjab, people are totally dependent on these two bowls of cereal. With the continuously increasing population, it became challenging for our farmers and agriculturists to fulfill its demand as its production is highly affected by biotic and abiotic stresses. Water scarcity during their growing seasons is considered as one of the main reasons in decline in the production. The other reason for decreasing wheat production is disease infestation. On the other hand, daily excessive consumption of rice and wheat can be responsible for health issues. It can result in an increase in weight and it is also recommended to avoid the usage of these cereals by diabetes patients. So, it is extremely important to add more crops like buckwheat as additional food crops in our diet which are having enormous health benefits

Under this scenario, Researchers should pay attention toward such crops which have been neglected due to any reason. Agriculture Research Departments should collaborate with different universities to motivate their research students toward demand-driven research and encourage them by providing them research opportunities.

THE SPHINX

Namrah Abid

B.Sc. (Hons.) HND

"Mom! Stay awake... please hold on". Patting her mother's face Salma cried hysterically.

"Can someone call the ambulance?" she asked. But there was no one except her and her mother in that empty room with mud walls so she continued to weep trying to keep her mother awake.

"Have some water" she tried to pour some drops of water into her mouth but failed.

"What will they do to you? What will you do when I am gone?" her mother's lips were quivering.

"Do not talk like this! You are not going anywhere. Just keep your eyes open and I will bring the doctor myself. All you need to do is trust for me." She put her mother's head on the ground and said in a determined tone though it was difficult to swallow her own words.

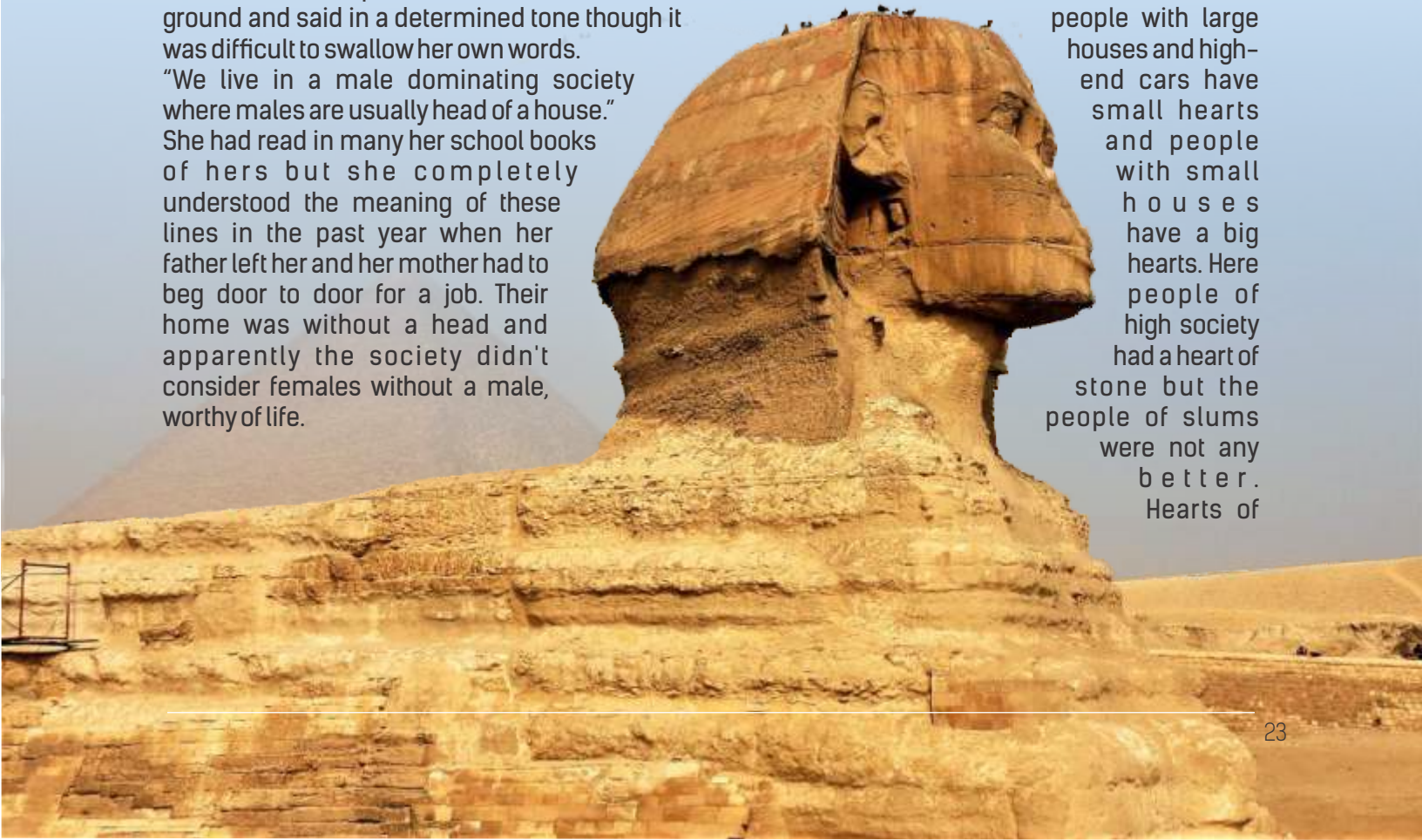
"We live in a male dominating society where males are usually head of a house."

She had read in many her school books of hers but she completely understood the meaning of these lines in the past year when her father left her and her mother had to beg door to door for a job. Their home was without a head and apparently the society didn't consider females without a male, worthy of life.

Even the neighbors and relatives who never used to leave their house abandoned them as it was a sin to meet a divorced woman. Whenever she set a foot outside, she was met with uncanny stares and a look of aversion on every face, eventually forcing her to be a prisoner in her own home. In our society, divorced women are seemingly evil and usually wrongdoers, so her master's degree could not land a job and she was compelled to go beg out in the streets. She had to drop out as her mother could neither feed her nor sent her to school in a respectful way.

They had to leave the posh area and inhabit in slums away from the city with no electricity and other basic necessities of

life. It is said that people with large houses and high-end cars have small hearts and people with small houses have a big hearts. Here people of high society had a heart of stone but the people of slums were not any better. Hearts of



these poor people had become so narrow that no ray of sympathy could ever pass and no tinge of kindness could ever exist. So these poor didn't try to help these destitute mother and daughter as well and they were left alone in this overcrowded earth.

All that was left for her was her mother and a bunch of books filled with fictional creatures, which her dad used to read her.

She was the sun to her mother's sky but soon this sky started to get covered by darks clouds of sufferings, and the thunders of pains given by society. Her mother felt like an albatross and wanted to leave this planet. The only reason she opened her eyes every morning was her daughter which she didn't want to leave in this wilderness and in the hands of cruel world. But the time had decided not to favor this poor mother and daughter in any case.

All these sufferings, anxieties, hardships and betrayals had affected her mother both mentally and physically. Soon she turned into a patient full of mental and physical problems. The woman of beauty, elegance and glory was now an old mold of shattered, broken and failed soul. The owner of house had come in the evening to ask for the rent and when her mother requested for some more time he burst into a tantrum and laid off his anger on the woman, surrendering her of consciousness.

She opened her eyes later but the chains of her breath seemed to be breaking and it was becoming more and more difficult for her to keep up with life.

So, Salma took a duppata on her head, and left the house. It was a dark moon. Nothing could be seen except the far off lights of the main road. She was always afraid of dark nights as darkness was the home to most evil creatures. She walked with a slow and steady gait. Hearing dogs barking off in some distance only added to the terror she was already feeling. Her heart skipped a beat but she had to save her mother's life so she continued to walk. At the corner of street some boys were talking loudly with their cigarettes lit up. She thought of asking help from them but their fierce gape already seemed like piercing her soul like an arrow stabbed in her heart. She thought of asking help from them but

there fierce gazes already seemed like penetrating her shawl and pierce her soul like an arrow stabbed in her heart. Their eyes had brightened up like a hunting lion thirsty for blood. She lowered her gaze trying to ignore them and increased her pace.

She was on the main road now. Streetlights were off for reasons unknown. Swarm of bees started to whine near her ears and fearing further retaliation, she swished her hand out of dupatta to make them go away. Different insects were making weird sounds as if they were warning her and asking her to go back. She closed her fist tightly and walked on with courage, or some might say stupidity at this point, she did not know nor cared. All she knew was that she just had to move forward. There was no turning back now.

To her awaited surprise, some men started coming out of the shadows and began screaming as if hell had frozen over.

"No! These are not men." She thought to herself, "They were animals disguised as men, perhaps were wolves! But how could they be were wolves as it was a dark night? Perhaps they were shape shifters or worse vampires." She gasped in silence as she lost the touch of reality itself. Her senses started to give up as trauma overcame her. She felt like her soul had left her body behind to stand still in a bickering state of shock.

Before they grasped her, she started to run towards home

The bangles in her hands and anklet in her feet gave the summons to damnation as she dashed. The bats coming from opposite side screeched and scratched her face. She screamed but life wanted to make her experience a haunting story for the one last time. Leaves swished as were singing the songs of destruction and twigs with thorns stabbed her. Even the mud paddle in her street made her fall flat on her face. Her face was covered with mud as all the darkness of this dark moon was gathering inside her.

She was running when the voices of cats and dogs started to follow her. The voices interchanged themselves like Kludde. She felt like something was trying to possess her as she

couldn't get rid of the jingling sound that was coming from her feet. She was stepping each foot harder as she couldn't get rid of something that was continuously touching her feet.

She quickly entered the home, locked the door which was barely hanging there and threw the duppata which was trying to choke her. She ran to her mom and hugged weeping, "Save me! Please save me or the monsters will hunt me down." But wait it was not her mom anymore. It was the ice cold body that was murdered by some monster.

She sprung away shaking with fear. The voices of the wolves laughing and howling were becoming louder and nearer. The clock was ticking; "Times Up!" and the hollow eyes of her mother were staring at her. She closed her eyes and covered her ears with hands but some insects started to whine near her ears as were mourning. She swished her hand out of dupatta to make them go away. Different insects were making weird sounds as were warning. She opened her eyes again but there stood the shadow monster. No it didn't look like shadow of a person or animal but of an insect, larger than a human with wings wider than any bird's which were a feet long. She closed her fist tightly

as was trying to pump blood into her heart. She couldn't see his face but exactly knew what it was. It was a sphinx. She kept looking at the shadow in the kitchen that could come to room at any moment. She had given up. No questions arose in her mind about what was going on. She had accepted her fate. She was not even zoned out about her surroundings now, almost as if she was expecting this. Her heart was beating fast. Her body trembled as the creature began to speak, in words she could not understand. The words danced around in her mind and she swayed in resonance to their harmony.

The people broke the backdoor of the house when they heard the girl screaming as the neighbor had noticed his barking dog. A little girl also accompanied the crowd. When people were calling the police and covering both dead bodies, the little girl kept standing in the kitchen. She forced her father to come with her. He tried to explain her that this wasn't a good time but she dragged him to the kitchen and pointed on the insect sitting in front of the yellow bulb whose shadow was making an opaque drawing on the wall, asking "Daddy! Look at that sphinx. How cute it is. Please help me catch it so I can keep it in my box."

BRUTALLY HONEST

Shiffa Tahir

B.Sc. (Hons.) HND

The idea of being "brutally honest" is bullshit. Bull shit. If you take pride in bringing your friends down by pointing out flaws and deficiencies in them just to prove that you're a bigger person in that moment, then honestly you're just an awful person and you probably know that. Look out at the capitalist world. It crushes the soul of passion that resides in people and consumes all the excitement. The world is already doing enough to make everyone unbelievably hopeless and dejected and disconsolate. Friendships, however, are supposed to be about hyping your friends up till

the point they actually start believing in themselves again. Man, scream compliments and validation at people and eulogize the shit out of them, that's the only thing you should be doing. Leave the rest on the world for it will tear people apart. You're not superman if you're trying to 'protect' your friends from hurt because hurt is inevitable so might as well give them the little nudge they need in order to do what they believe in even if its not perfect till Knowing someone until they believes in you makes you go a long, LONG way- be that person for someone.



His hands were quivering as if they couldn't handle the weight of that letter. His eyelashes were shivering as if they wanted to hide this letter from his eyes. His mouth had dried up as if all the words had decided to leave him and tears were flowing out of his eyes as if they wanted to abandon him.

The world around him did not seem that indignant three hours ago. He was a famous journalist and the only son of a Civil Judge. He spent his life among elites and in elite areas, which were out of reach for any kind of sufferings and miseries.

In houses with heavy curtains and colorful carpets, everything seemed to match each other except her mother who seemed like a native of some other world. Her mother had been like this since he had started to observe the world. With only three pairs of Shalwar and Kameez in closet including the one on her body she was the symbol of simplicity, innocence, and dignity. Jewels and gold whose shine blind humans never captivated her and she was more content with the silver linings in her hair. In the word of mini skirts and sleeveless dresses she seemed to be a misfit with a large shawl on her head. He and his father tried to help her evolve with the time but she always used to end the debate saying, "I am fine the way I am until I have both pieces of my soul in front of my eyes."

No, she was not obdurate but only a person who liked to keep her values with herself. She traveled the world along with his father and had done her MBA as well. She had a heart that was an ocean of kindness, affection and never-ending love but at the same time as fragile as a butterfly's wing that got easily worried for others. She seemed to inherit her generosity from

Hatim Tai as she spent money on others all her life. Never did she spend a penny on herself but on the widow that lived in slums beside their colony or Rashida whose husband was a drug addict. She helped Amna to marry her daughters and taught Alia stitching who was born without legs. Every morning after Fajr, children from the nearby slums came to their house for learning Quran. Poor girls living in shacks came to her home to help with the household chores. She didn't only pay them but also taught them basic reading and writing skills.

She wasn't only kind to humans but also was the Mother Teresa to animals as well. Every injured cat, dog, and the bird was brought to her by the children. She not only used to do the dressing but also gave warm milk mixed with turmeric and painkiller to the animal. The injured animal used to be her guest until it got fit. She was fond of gardening and used to grow all vegetables at home. She not only used to water plants but also place the pots filled with water and grain on the roof.

She was pious but her busy schedule never let her ignore him. He was apple to her eye. She never hired any tutor or maid for him but always taught him books, recited him Quran and stayed awake with him herself when he was ill or studying. Every morning she used to wake him up with a kiss on forehead asking him to offer his prayer. Then she would wait for him with his breakfast ready and recite several supplications upon him accompanying him till the main gate to say him goodbye. She used to wrap up her work before he came and always met him with lunch on the table. In the evening she used to play badminton with him and watched the drama with him at night.

Time passed and his father left both of them alone. So she decided to bring another person into this home in the form of his bride. It was a love marriage and she was happy in his happiness. He had now become a successful journalist and people from higher positions used to visit his home. His wife was a working lady and most of her time was spent abroad. So she was the one on whom he had to rely to entertain his guests. She met his guests with the same love she used to meet with his childhood friends but not only the time had changed but also his rank and status. He started to feel embarrassed at first and then scolded her one day. He couldn't forget the shock and sadness he saw in those old and wrinkled eyes but it was the matter of his respect. After some months when her mother didn't stop to greet his friends and cook for them he admitted her to an old home. He knew that she would be happy there at it had a lot of people and she didn't need some specific care. He kept visiting her every week but

then these visits started to happen after every two to three months.

Three days before, the news of his mother's death had come from the old home as she had fallen sick there. Today the authority of the old home gave his mother's luggage back. It contained three dresses, a comb, a toothbrush, a mat, his picture, and an envelope. He was holding the letter in his envelope and it has dragged him off his feet. This letter was written to his mother by Rashida asking her to keep his son as she couldn't afford to take care of him. It seemed like the sky had fallen in on him. He wasn't the real son of his mother and still, she took care of him and sacrificed his nights for him for no reason. In return, he had admitted her to the old home just because she didn't match his status. The envelope that had been covering his mother's virtues had exposed his selfishness and cruelty.

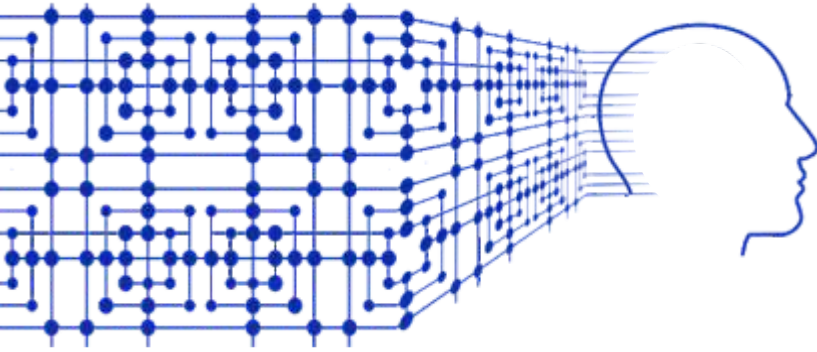
HUMANITY

Shiffa Tahir

B.Sc. (Hons.) HND

Oh my GOD!! Oh my GOD!!! What had happened to the world?? Human souls are dead.! Man, has forgotten to respect man. Isn't it true that world runs on the principle of give and take?. Then I am shocked and astonished on the foolish thinking of those violators who demand respect inspite of humiliating people. Terrible animals in the appearance of man are living on this planet. We are not anymore humans because we remain silent against violation. Violation begins where humanity ends. Some illiterates instead of being educated masters

break bones of innocent children just to make them learn the table of 2.Is it justice?? Is it humanity?? So a man having a degree is not educated until he has the ethics. Really, in my belief, if you need violence to enforce your ideas your ideas are worthless. In this world I see humans but no humanity. We deaf and dumb people remain silent against those injustices that are happening in Kashmir. Where is humanity?? If we dent take any step to save those innocent people than even are we able to be called humans?



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Abdullah Baig

B.S. Information Technology

Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence, you may have heard this word somewhere where technology is discussed. This is a buzzword but many people don't really know its true meaning. Whenever you hear this word the first thing that comes to your mind are robots destroying Earth and mankind along with it. This has become a sort of stereotype because it is showcased in many movies, robots destroying mankind. The truth is far from this Artificial Intelligence, sometimes called machine intelligence, is the intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to natural intelligence displayed by humans. Meaning that machines using artificial intelligence become so intelligent that they mimic or try to mimic human behavior. They think like humans and solve problems like a normal human being would. The machine perceives its environment, collects data, analyzes it and then finally takes a specific course of action that has maximum probability of success to achieve its goals. Artificial Intelligence is also associated with functions of human minds such as learning and problem solving. Yes that's true, machines can learn too. Coding tells us that a computer does exactly as instructed. Not more, not less than what is instructed to it. Whatever we code, the computer executes it exactly, in the specified order. Here is where artificial intelligence comes into play. AI gives machines or robots the ability to learn like a normal human would. It is given many inputs and is told what is right and wrong. Through neural networks, it configures itself in such a way that it automatically learns what is right and wrong. So whenever a new input is given to it that it has not seen before, based on its past experiences it can differentiate it from wrong or

right. One basic example is of feeding an AI with many different pictures of cats. It constantly reads and analyzes those pictures and makes corresponding changes in its neural network. In a nutshell it learns how a cat looks like. Now whenever you give it a new picture of a cat, it automatically identifies it. Along with many myths AI has many uses that may impact greatly on the lives of humans. As machines don't need brakes and don't get tired like us humans do, AI robots can be seen replacing humans in factories. AI greatly reduces the chances of error occurring. This can be applied in various fields such as medical field where exact diagnosis is crucial or even on space exploration programs. We know that the slightest error in calculation of flight route of a rocket can result in a crash. With AI, precise measurements are almost always guaranteed. AI machines can replace humans in places where it's hazardous to work. These machines can be sent to any hazardous place to gather information or generally do work. They can perform difficult tasks and accurate work with greater responsibility without any sort of lag. Most importantly, they don't wear out easily like us humans do. With precise measurements, low lag and greater efficiency, AI can be seen replacing humans in many other fields as well. AI comes with risks too such as invasion of privacy, social manipulation, autonomous weapons and discrimination. Like all things, AI can be used for the greater good of mankind or for false purposes. I'd say that AI has capability to do more good for humans. It all comes down to how we use it and how many limitations we apply on it. We'll just have to wait for the future to see what new innovations AI brings upon us.

SORRY! I AM NOT SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU THIS

Namrah Abid

B.Sc. (Hons.) HND



Two types of kids are usually born in west. One type is of the kids for which the West is famous for, the kids who usually act ahead of time or you can say that they act ahead of their age, sometimes ahead enough to make others embarrassed. This type of kids tries to perform all the legal activities before eighteen and somehow learn to earn their own living. They leave their parents' house as soon as the clock ticks twelve and they turn eighteen, looking like a bird who has been freed from its cage.

The other type of kids is what writers refer to as "angels" or in Pakistan they are known as "mommy daddy kids". They are the actual symbol of innocence and purity, and you can see people comparing them with lambs, doves and cows as a gesture of appreciation. April fool is celebrated on these kids. They will believe you, get inspired from you easily and will keep saying you "Thank you" and "Sorry". They are kind enough to say "Thank you" to their murderer who freed them from this world and "Sorry" to their bully to whom they couldn't give enough money. This kind is the one who is forced to do all the dares and is actually jest for its companions. Parent's house is the nest which they would never leave unless kicked out.

Asmara was the fifteen years old British brown girl, basically a Pakistani born in the land of Britain who belonged to the second category of kids. Her parents decided after her matriculation to migrate back to Pakistan in order to keep her away from the first kind of kids. According to her grandmother, this was the only solution to treat her simple nature.

She was very happy in Pakistan as even the

month of December couldn't blur the sky. Every day when sunlight kissed her forehead, she felt merrier and called the sun her best friend. Little did she know about the atrocities of sun in summer.

She loved jokes which her Pakistani fellows created, ignoring the fact that most of them were on her. She was learning about Pakistan much faster than her family's expectations. She had started to take Lassi in breakfast and learned the art of sleeping through all her lectures with open eyes. She had successfully learned to wear duppata balancing it equally on both of her shoulders, did a braid without anyone's help, made her eyes look bigger using Olivia Kajal, and made her face look ten times brighter than her hands by wearing tons of make-up.

Her deep observation had made her appreciate the funny answers everyone did in response to the serious questions. She was amazed to see how quickly did the political debate turned into wrestling matches. She loved how everyone was always available to give free suggestions like, "Sister! Please pull up your dupatta", "Daughter! You shouldn't travel alone", "Use coconut oil to grow your hairs", and "Wear turmeric mask to glow like a princess", firming her belief in the right to speak.

The best phrase that had not only caught her attention but also had made a place in her heart was, "Sorry! I am not supposed to tell you this" which was usually accompanied by "but" and then some riddle or secret. Sorry sounded apologetic but it was still unclear to her that whether it was for the person listening or the

person about whom one was about to speak. Like Aunt Sara from across the street was giving a hint to her children in words, "Sorry kids! I am not supposed to tell you this but babies do not come from the sky", while pointing towards her belly all the time. Last Sunday not only did the waiter come to them with the best tip in words, "I am not supposed to tell you this but you can have two pizzas in the price of one by just buying our card" but also did the traffic warden help them by telling her father, "Sorry Sir! I am not supposed to tell you this but; since you are a nice guy you can pay me the fine here rather than going through the long way."

At times this phrase had disappointed her too, especially when her teacher refused to tell the important questions for exam, mom didn't tell her where they were going, or her father ignored her while discussing some important issues with a single phrase, "Sorry! I am not supposed to tell you this."

Butterflies kept flying in her abdomen every time she heard that phrase. Finally the day came, when she found an opportunity to manipulate this sentence for herself. So she went to her uncle's house and exclaimed with excitement, "Guys! I have good news for all of you."

Everyone at once started to stare her till she was forced to open her mouth again, "Sorry! I am not supposed to tell you this", she paused for a moment long enough for the frowns to appear on everyone's forehead, "but", she left the sentence unfinished enjoying the expression drawn on everyone's face.

"But", they all asked in unison.

"I can only give you a hint that something is coming to our house." She giggled.

"Is it the piano you were talking about?" Her cousin Alia made her best guess.

"I know! I know! It's Nintendo." Little Ali screamed with joy.

"No guys! Let me give you another hint. It would be lovely, little and living."

Her aunt who had listened to all this conversation gave a weird smile to her husband.

"Honey! When is it coming?" Aunt

Shamsa asked.

"I don't know", she confessed.

Asmara thought that her secret was still safe with her but it was her mistake. The news spread among the relatives and friends like fire spreads in the forest.

Aunt Shamsa called for an emergency meeting of the family friends and a huge surprise was prepared. Very next Sunday Aunt Shamsa came to their house taking her mom out for shopping.

She was puzzled when all her mother's female friends entered her house right after her mother left and stopped her from informing her mother. When she solicited the answer to what was happening, they told her, "Sorry! We are not supposed to tell you this."

When her mother returned, to her astonishment the dining hall was decorated and a lot of gifts were piled up in the centre. "Surprise!" they all cried.

"Umm! I thank you all for doing so much for me but may I ask what pushed you guys to prepare all this?" She asked looking confused.

"We all know everything. So when is the baby coming?" Aunt Shamsa interrogated.

"Baby?" Asmara and her mom inquired.

"Aw! Don't try to hide it from us. Asmara told us that good news was coming." Aunt Shamsa now looked serious.

"Asmara?" Her mother now turned towards her furiously.

"I didn't say that baby was coming. I meant little kittens that are born yesterday."

What happened with Asmara after this is another story but Sorry! I am not supposed to tell you this.



A RETROSPECTIVE

Zeeshan Abid

B.Sc. (Hons.) Biotechnology

About two years back I dreamt to become a debater and to speak in front of people and to make this dream possible I was in my room preparing for the first debate that I had to deliver in the meeting of the debating club next day at 1:00 PM. I prepared as much as I can, keeping in mind all the strategies my seniors told me. All night I was unable to sleep as I was in a great fear that how would I speak in front of people. What I forgot? If I pronounced any word in a wrong way and there was so many what if's in my mind. Well, the next day I went to University for my classes. 1st lecture over, second lecture over and then came one of the toughest lectures of my life because that was the last one before 1:00 PM the meeting time. I don't know when the teacher came into the room. I can remember that I was there in class but I was not there. If you ask me what was the lecture that day my answer will be I don't know. What I know is I just kept repeating the words I have to speak on the rostrum today and I just came back there in class for some time that was when my friend hit me with his elbow and I heard my name for attendance. After calling yes Sir, I started repeating the same words There was not even a single second when my heartbeat become normal and I just thought what if I got heart attack today. The lecture was over I came out and at that time my mind was full of many questions, what should I do now? should I attend the meeting today?. Do you know what in the last meeting my senior clearly said to me was "If you will not be there in the next meeting prepared I will never ask you to come again", what about the dream to become a debater?

what about to speak in front of many people?. Thinking all that, I started walking toward the meeting room. I stopped three or four times on my way but at last, I was there in the meeting room. My senior there just asked me about my preparation. After answering that yes, I am prepared and after receiving a word of good luck I sat down on my seat and started repeating the words what I was repeating from last three or four days. After two speakers my name was announced I stood up, on my way to rostrum I received a lot of good lucks and I don't know when the distance to rostrum was over and I was on the rostrum I maintained my posture as I was told, took permission and started speaking. what I felt there while speaking was something I never felt before everyone one was listening to me I saw deep smiles on their faces for me and at the last word they clapped for me a lot. I heard the words, well-done boy. I came back to my place I felt a strong kind of satisfaction like I have achieved something very big. At the end of the meeting, everyone greeted me with good words my senior was very happy they encouraged me motivated me so much.

I can never forget his words that "Mr. today you came out of all the students, stood there on the rostrum and spoke and you achieved a lot". And thereafter I represented my university at various platforms of Pakistan at various universities.

And yes, the rostrum is now a place where I feel so satisfied so relaxed. The first step was quite difficult but if it was not taken by me I will be there clapping somewhere sitting in the audience like many others.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

O. Henry

Selection by:
Usama Sarwar
 M.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. Extension

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas. There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating. While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad. In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young." The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good. Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard.

Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 2 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim. There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pierglass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art. Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length. Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy. So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a

cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet. On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street. The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 3 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu Where she stopped the sign read: "Mne. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie." "Will you buy my hair?" asked Della. "I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it." Down rippled the brown cascade. "Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand. "Give it to me quick," said Della. Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present. She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on



the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain. When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task. The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 4 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically. "If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?" At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops. Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying a little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty." The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves. Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval,

nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face. Della wriggled off the table and went for him. "Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas! The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 5 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you." "You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor. "Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?" Jim looked about the room curiously. "You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy. "You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?" Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on. Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table. "Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first." White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 6 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails,

necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat. For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone. But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!" And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!" Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit. "Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it." Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled. "Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on." The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry 7 Created for Lit2Go on the web at etc.usf.edu possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

BE NICE!

Noman Ahmad

B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. Sciences

Undoubtedly, "Be nice" is the slightest word, the depth behind the word was unknown to me when Tuesday afternoon, Dated: 10-Oct-2017 in fully crowded class room L-10, B.Sc. (Hons.) Agricultural Sciences (L-Section along with M sections) after attending the six lectures, the whole class was fully tired. We were waiting for our Entomology instructor for course Introductory Entomology (ENT -302) who would deliver module 2 and we don't know who will come. We arrived in class room L-10 earlier and all the students were making a noise when Dr. Abid Ali (Assistant Professor, Department of Entomology) entered into our class with good body language. After his appearance everybody in the class at once kept silent. After connecting his laptop with power point, he at first introduced himself and then he wrote his slogan as "Be Nice" on the white board. By seeing this, everyone had become amazed and thinking what will happen next? This question was going on in the minds of the more than both male and female 100 students.

Dr. Abid Ali broke the silence by saying that every student should have not to waste their time in spare things i.e. making a noise in the class. They should write down their lecture while teacher delivering, without making a noise. Be punctual, be regular, be tentative and don't be late in the class room, it only possible when you go for bed and wake up at right time. Study in library because libraries allow students to ask questions about the world and find the answers. Another wonderful thing is that once a student learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open. Don't trust seniors for negatives but try to experience but yourself, ~ responsible

for which you miss those faces like parents. Always respect parents and teachers because the depth of the love of parents for their children cannot be measured. It is like no other relationship. It exceeds concern for life itself. The love of a parent for a child is continuous and transcends heartbreak and disappointment. By doing this you will become a nice student. This thing inspired me a lot.

Dr. Abid Ali gave more explanation about the slogan "Be Nice" by saying that being nice is often easier said than done. Getting through the day can be hard enough without having to go out of your way to smile at strangers and say "please" and "thank you." Why do it? Do so because being nice makes people feel good and pave the way for good relationships! If that's not enough, consider that it also helps you get what you want. People will be more inclined to help you if you're nice to them. He said that when your friends look to you for advice or just to set the mood of a conversation, don't be negative or critical, keep looking for the positive in any given situation. Cheer them up. There are two sides to every situation: the positive side and the negative side. Nice people help others see the bright side of things.

Dr. Abid Ali said that listen when other people are talking to you. It isn't nice to just ignore other people's opinions and stories. Give them time to speak, just as you'd like them to give you time to speak if your positions were reversed. If you find that someone is becoming rude or pushy, never put your hands in your mouth or make a rude face. Politely wait for them to finish and change the topic, after they've

OCEAN OF _____ !

Khansa RANI

B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. Sciences

It was a dark cold night. The weather was stormy and dark huge clouds had covered the silvery moon. The cold breeze made the teeth chatter. It was so cold outside that nobody dared to come out except her. She! who was so fed up with her life, feeling very lonely in her room decided to take a walk along the sea shore to see the waves crushing the sea shells.

Tired with her long walk she sat on a cliff with her long hair flowing in the breeze. She looked at the sea deeply and thought something. Suddenly she stood up. She felt sad miserable with the ups and downs of her life. She was constantly haunted by the old past days of happiness the days of her spring. She could not hear to part with them and suddenly she wanted to die. She knew suicide was a sin but life itself is a sin when full of tragedies. The thought if she was drowned nobody would ever try to hurt her feeling in that haunting way, nobody would bother to remember her not even he, he who was everything to her, who was her life. As she thought of him she smiled satirically and tears started flowing down her face. She did not even care to wipe them for they were her tears of one who had been left to choose death! Death which is everybody's end.

The waves made a painful noise. The sea gulls jumping on and off the waves shrieked and yelled with sorrow or it seemed to her and she knew a storm was coming. She could not bear it any longer. She felt everything crying with her. Ocean of emotions, crushed feelings and unfulfilled wishes had brought her to her extreme. She was about to jump, when suddenly she heard a cry. It seemed to be him, she thought it was him for at such moments life

when she was run down by everything, he was the only person who gave her the hope of life. and not a few moments. "What are you upto?" he said rather surprised, "I am going to die-let me die." she answered with a voice full of anguish. "But why? this is not the proper weather for dying-its so cold," he replied smilingly. "I will drown myself in this water let me die "she stubborn did not want him to interfere Well if at all you want to die choose summer for in winter dead body would freeze in that cold water". "Let me die" she pleaded sobbing. He was worried, for he knew that she would not listen to him.

It was twelve in the night. the wind made a fearful noise, cold was at its extreme. The waves seemed to get angry, as if they wanted life-the life of that lonely girl. "Now look here. listen to me. Come, lets go and sit somewhere. I want to talk to you." he insisted. She, after quite a lot of arguing went with him. :hey sat together, she kept on crying. He smelled the flower which was smiling on his lapeis and said, "Do you know I too have come here to die"? She at once looked at him surprised and dazed. "That's right" he said smilingly. She cried but he went on, "you know I feel the water is too cold for me to die. it is very cold. so i have given up the idea, will you to?" No, No, No," she said in a low voice. she get up and went to the cliff again. "You have no right to stop me you. you, you are a stranger to me now, you never bothered to make me live. I do not believed you, you have betrayed me." While saying this she kept on moving towards the end of the cliff. He knew that she in a minute whould end her life. He did not how to stop her from that act of madness. "Listen" he went near her. Do you want any wish fulfilled before dying? "he

said in a low voice. "No, No, No, they all ended the day you went your way. and I did not stop you; now leave me alone I have nothing more to say. Let me die." It was like a fit of madness on her. He, after thinking a while said. "Well anyway, I have a wish before you die" she turned back. Tears had covered her face and she looked so very enchanting. "What?" she questioned him. "Put this flower in your hair." He took out the flower from his collar and went near her. "Should I? and he stood there looking at her wistfully. She could

bear death no more not even that faint pain. A sea gull come flying towards her and she getting seared of it caught his sleeve. He put the a flower in her hair and said in a taunting way "People are not that brave. but the way they act! She hid her face with her hands and cried in sobs. "You will make me mad" she said in her low voice. "You ale mad." he said in a triumphant way. She had committed suicide in a way. but in Ocean of emotions and feelings. She was drowned in his deep set eyes.

BE NICE!

continue page -----

discussed theirs. Being nice doesn't mean letting your-self get pushed around. If you're talking to a stranger who starts to make you uncomfortable, it's okay to excuse yourself and walk away.

He advised us it's not nice to believe that you are better than other people. You're an individual, but everybody has their struggles, and being nice to one another makes life better for everyone. Everybody is equal and when you talk about how great you are, you make others feel less valuable, always use your manners, say please and thank you. Be patient, caring, observant, and

considerate. Treat people with respect, even those you don't particularly want to get to know. Offer help and assistance when someone needs it. Don't forget to always say "Excuse me" instead of "MOVE!" when someone's in your way. People aren't like the ground that you can just spit on. They are living beings like you. If you are respectful to that person, that person will usually act the same way.

This outstanding lecture impressed me a lot. I think it's important to always keep professional and surround yourself with good people, work hard, and "Be Nice" to everyone.

EUREKA !

Noor ul Hira

B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. Sciences

Under vast dusky orange sky, she was crouched amid the crowd of kids beside a wretched wall of an old house. It was her turn now. Her hair ruffled on her forehead, eyes fastened on ground and lips tightened as if she was about to solve a secret of universe. Then her face turned bright and she wagged her finger and made a mark on dirt with a smile.

"She won again." Hina exclaimed who was sitting right beside her. It triggered a reaction and crowd dispersed with dismay on hanging on their faces as they knew it was bound to happen on daily basis.

"You are great. Teach me, you promised. You remember, Laiba?" Hina said frowning.

"Sure. But I have to go now." Laiba replied. Hina opened her mouth to say something but couldn't as a loud voice cursing at Laiba roared. All kids turned and giggled.

"I can only win this." she mumbled while picking three year old Hamza from ground whose hands were concealed with dirt. She ran towards the main door knowing what was next to come. Then hearing the sirens of police automobile remaining kids also vanished so did the sun.

"Are you done? How many times I have called you?" her mother yelled as she entered the main room where every wall and every face reeked gloominess. In a small room at the back of main room her elder sister was sitting and there was an adjacent tiny washroom and an area only designated as kitchen but almost empty.

Her father and eldest brother sat by the east wall, focused on cellphone. She hoped that today they will succeed to get some money. For her, her father who has been a vendor all his life and brother, aspiring to be an electrician are stuck to

that wall from many previous days and when some nights as they all pretended to sleep, she would hear her father's muffled cries and she would look up at the ceiling and would wish hard, only for money. Yesterday, when her brother announced the new number of deaths globally, caused by mysterious disease and how they have to stay long at home, it seemed as her father sank more into that wall.

"Laiba!" her mother shouted. "Go to Najma's house."

She knew this beforehand but her heart still sank, even it was her routine and the only role she was supposed to play. She moved towards her sister by crossing her mother who had stern face. She placed Hamza in her sister's lap.

I wish I was her. My elder sister is lucky. She don't have to go to our rich neighbors and beg for food in the name of sugar or flour, to obtain the leftovers that are just edible. Mother says it's not begging but I will never get used to the humiliation when they open their doors and stare with agitation. Or I should have been naïve as Hamza. Why it have to be me? She thought.

"Go. It will be dark soon. Take Amir with you." her mother said while moving mint colored plastic bowl towards her. "GO. You know that Hamza is hungry since last night." her mother said after reading her repulsive expressions. The bowl was shoved in her hands and she was pushed out. Amir left the wall and followed her. Her father's eyes followed her then he dropped his head heavy with contemplations.

As she crossed the threshold, she reminisced Hina's wide eyes while saying, "Promise me, you won't tell anyone. I think my father has gone mad. He says that virus should attack soon so

we can all die or we all have to die slow disrespectful death of hunger." At that time she didn't replied because she knew that Hina was unaware that her father was humiliated while trying to avail ration for his family and was filmed to be a spectacle and how her own father was fine with being stubbornly hungry than being a spectacle. Today she also wished for end.

She strolled, took a turn then another while stealing gazes at purplish-blue sky while Amir followed quietly. Then, she reached the enchanted world where houses have bright and delightful faces. She felt herself like a stain on an exquisite canvas. She knocked on a familiar door and prayed that Najma's daughter wouldn't open the door because she always gave her scornful gazes. Amir was standing at the corner near an electric pole, glaring at her as he always been since his birth. Gratefully, door opened and it was Najma's husband who recognized her instantly and she also recognized the familiar wave of expressions which lead from distress to recognition. "Come in." Like a ritual, she followed him and then he told her to stop and wait in garage. She would just stand and stare. "Laiba is here." his voice echoed in house. A similar call that beggar was here and her heart crumbled. She hoped that today Najma would not come out to ask her anything and would simply shove leftovers in her hands and she would leave politely. She didn't wanted to break there, not right beside a shiny car and dreaded that ultimate shame. Door opened along with the flood of nice light and fragrances, Najma came holding two plastic bags that contained last night's leftovers. She smiled at Najma. She got out thinking about her impudence to always smile brightly when those people gave her a slightest attention. She walked towards Amir and hissed, "We shouldn't have been born in first place." Amir stood in shock for a moment then he shrugged and moved forward and took plastic bags and bowl from her.

"Let's go back from our long old route." Amir murmured taking a turn. She didn't replied and thought of hungry creatures sitting and waiting in tiny box, her home then she just followed him

with lowered head and grim face. After some moments, they were standing before a house with aesthetic façade, slumbering in deep stillness as it has been barren for centuries. Her head was still dropped. "Look." Amir whispered. As her sight swam across the face of that building, she ultimately knew where she was and all the memories came running towards her as have been desperately hiding and waiting. Tears slowly slipped on her cheeks. "Always remember to look at the sky. It is always there for you." "You are such an intelligent girl." "You can do so much." "There are limitless words waiting for you." "Never stop believing and growing." "You will go to places, better and warm." All kind words, advices and predictions said by her favorite person and teacher, Amna came to embrace her tightly. Amna tutored passionately almost every kid of area for free and four years ago she left for abroad after her marriage. Before she left she came to her house and tell her father about his daughter's abilities but somehow they all forgot. But today she found again her long lost self.

"You can do anything, if you are alive. Remember! Mam Amna was so much proud of you. We believe in you." Amir spoke in low tone. She looked at his brother's thin face and then smiled at all the twinkling stars on sky and said with teary eyes, "Brother, this my eureka moment." He giggled. "E-eureka. This must be from those difficult words that Mam Amna taught you." She nodded with a bright smile. They returned home and there were bags of ration in front of their main door and there was no human or camera. They informed their parents. That night they all eat and slept well and she looked at stars and whispered to herself. "Let's never lost this eureka moment, this hope."

EMPTY LIBRARIES

Sana Ahmad

M.Sc. (Hons.) Biochemistry

A reader can live a thousand lives in a lifetime. Good books are powerful enough to leave their readers enchanted, lost in the land of some parallel dimension where unchained imagination is the painter. Enlightening the minds with shimmering horizons of knowledge, adventure, entertainment and language, books furnish the person with every possible facet of life. Not to mention, one cannot easily break through the spell, for it builds up a network connecting different hearts and minds_ a chain of enigmatic relationship.

Every generation has seen literary legends rising as phoenix, mesmerizing the public with some indecipherable charm, engraving their names on the infinite stretches of literature and becoming immortal in the scrolls of history. Different eras have their signature personalities ruling on their promised lands. Our forefathers were no different_ devoting their time to different literary sources, in spite of the limited resources they used to have. Unfortunately, the tradition of reading, specifically in our motherland, is as endangered as some rare breed in diminishing habitat. The magic of books is sieved from the air, the fairy dust and the glow, both are nowhere in sight, the smell of new book has been dominated by other alluring fragrances, while the senses of the audience have faded with time. What went wrong in all the hassle? When did such immature insouciance instilled in our lifestyle? Is it really a loss? What actually changed? Is it too late to turn back?

Ratio of libraries to population is allegedly imbalanced because of several causes including less education budget, follies without proper maintenance, scarce demand from the public side and evolving trend. Moreover, the bitter reality is that much fewer libraries are far too deserted in comparison to the studying population. Hardly 10% of the population goes to athenaeum, that too in exam season. Youth has

labeled the libraries as sleeping bunks and gossip spots. It's quite evident that governing authority wastes the space and money without much productivity and efficiency.

Pervasive internet technology and educational scenarios have also affected the public use of libraries. Technology has definitely letup the paper consumers as internet has provided the people with limitless treasure of e-books which saves the effort of going to the library and is financially economical. But it has its own cons_ Social media. Time, which was invested in the books earlier, is used to plot a fabricated social media avatar. Generation drenched in the elixir of electronic devices, finding rays of hope and utopia of aimless satisfaction, is not an edifying sight. It won't be wrong to say that an avalanche of technology came under the mask of development and swallowed the young, growing brains. But, is it enough reason for our vacant libraries? Because in the court of adjudication, Internet technology can never be convicted as an excuse_ youth form all over the world has much eased access to the network and yet they have kept the fire of literary passion burning inside them. Even more excruciating detail is the changed thinking scenario about literature. People are ignorant enough to use two antonyms in one sentence_ A Good Book and Boring.

"A gadget of our past; dead and buried, foregone and forgotten" is how they define book-reading and what a pity it is! A society deprived of literature_ chained innovations, thwarted imagination and handcuffed creativity is all we have got. If this is not what we call loss, then I wonder what it is? Slumbered can be awoken but how can we stir those who have mastered the art of sleeping with open eyes, is indeed the real question which can't be left unanswered.

Nobel Prize Laureates 2020

Nobel Prize in Physics



Andrea Ghez

Born: 1965, New York, NY, USA

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery of a supermassive compact object at the centre of our galaxy."



Reinhard Genzel

Born: 24 March 1952, Bad Homburg vor der Höhe, Germany

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery of a supermassive compact object at the centre of our galaxy."

Work:

Using the world's largest telescopes, Genzel and Ghez developed methods to see through the huge clouds of interstellar gas and dust to the centre of the Milky Way. Stretching the limits of technology, they refined new techniques to compensate for distortions caused by the Earth's atmosphere, building unique instruments and committing themselves to long-term research. Their pioneering work has given us the most convincing evidence yet of a supermassive black hole at the centre of the Milky Way.



Roger Penrose

Born: 1931, Colchester, United Kingdom

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery that black hole formation is a robust prediction of the general theory of relativity."

Work:

In January 1965, ten years after Einstein's death, Roger Penrose proved that black holes really can form and described them in detail; at their heart, black holes hide a singularity in which all the known laws of nature cease. His groundbreaking article is still regarded as the most important contribution to the general theory of relativity since Einstein.

Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology



Charles M. Rice

Born: 1952, Sacramento, CA, USA

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus."



Michael Houghton

Born: United Kingdom

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus."



Harvey J. Alter

Born: 1935, New York, NY, USA

Prize motivation:

"for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus."

Work:

Thanks to their discovery, highly sensitive blood tests for the virus are now available and these have essentially eliminated post-transfusion hepatitis in many parts of the world, greatly improving global health. Their discovery also allowed the rapid development of antiviral drugs directed at hepatitis C. For the first time in history, the disease can now be cured, raising hopes of eradicating Hepatitis C virus from the world population.

Nobel Prize in Chemistry



Emmanuelle Charpentier

Born: 11 December 1968, Juvisy-sur-Orge, France

Prize motivation:

"for the development of a method for genome editing."



Jennifer A. Doudna

Born: 19 February 1964, Washington, DC, USA

Prize motivation:

"for the development of a method for genome editing."

Work:

Since Charpentier and Doudna discovered the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors in 2012 their use has exploded. This tool has contributed to many important discoveries in basic research, and plant researchers have been able to develop crops that withstand mould, pests and drought. In medicine, clinical trials of new cancer therapies are underway, and the dream of being able to cure inherited diseases is about to come true. These genetic scissors have taken the life sciences into a new epoch and, in many ways, are bringing the greatest benefit to humankind.

Nobel Prize in literature



Louise Glück

Born: 1943, New York, NY, USA

Prize motivation:

"for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal."

The Nobel Peace Prize



World Food Programme (WFP)

Prize motivation:

"for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict."

Work:

The World Food Programme plays a key role in multilateral cooperation on making food security an instrument of peace, and has made a strong contribution towards mobilising UN Member States to combat the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict. The organisation contributes daily to advancing the fraternity of nations referred to in Alfred Nobel's will. As the UN's largest specialised agency, the World Food Programme is a modern version of the peace congresses that the Nobel Peace Prize is intended to promote.

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel



Robert B. Wilson

Born: 1937, Geneva, NE, USA

Prize motivation:

"for improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats."



Paul R. Milgrom

Born: 20 April 1948, Detroit, MI, USA

Prize motivation:

"for improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats."

Work:

Over time, societies have allocated ever more complex objects among users, such as landing slots and radio frequencies. In response, Milgrom and Wilson invented new formats for auctioning off many interrelated objects simultaneously, on behalf of a seller motivated by broad societal benefit rather than maximal revenue. In 1994, the US authorities first used one of their auction formats to sell radio frequencies to telecom operators. Since then, many other countries have followed suit.



Unsung Heros of Pakistan

Bilal Anjum

B.Sc. (Hons.) PBG



Moosa Feroz

A 13 Years young boy, wins the 1st position at the International Mathematics Competition against more than 15 lac students who participated online, from 100 different countries of the world, and achieved a gold medal.



Ayesha Farooq

The sky was never the limit for 26-year-old Ayesha Farooq who created history by becoming the first woman assigned to one of Pakistan's front line fighter squadrons. Hailing from Bahawalpur, she is one of the 19 women who have achieved the rank of pilot in the Pakistan Air Force over the last decade. There are five other female fighter pilots but they have yet to take the final tests to qualify for combat.



Sarmad Tariq

A swimming accident at the age of 15 left Sarmad Tariq paralysed and confined to a wheelchair. Today, he is a professional and personal success story and an inspiration for people with disabilities. He represented Pakistan in the ING New York City Marathon in 2005 and finished with a medal. His dream is to inculcate a positive attitude in people and help them lead a fulfilling life.



Mir Zafar Ali

is an Oscar-winning movie visual effects curator who has given life to characters such as Venom in Spider Man 3 as well as several other Hollywood flicks such as X-Men and The Mummy. He won an Oscar for Best Visual Effects in 2007 for his immaculate work in the movie The Golden Compass.



Ali Rehan

is the co-founder and CEO of Eyedeus Labs, a tech start-up by Pakistani students that developed an innovative mobile application which caught the eye of major tech giants such as Google, Samsung, Huawei and LG.



Asim Khwaja

is the first professor of Pakistani descent who has been employed by the Harvard University's prestigious John F Kennedy School of Government. His research centered on issues such as finance, education and political economy among other areas has been featured in prominent publications including The Economist, New York Times, Washington Post, International Herald Tribune, Al Jazeera, CNN and BBC.



Maria Toorpakai Wazir

It is very difficult to nurture your love for a sport if you are born as a girl in South Waziristan. But Maria Toorpakai Wazir defied all odds by training and competing as a boy in Peshawar until she could not hide her gender any longer. Today she is Pakistan's top female squash player and is ranked 54th in the world.



Dr Naveed Imam Syed

is a globally acclaimed scientist of Pakistani origin and head of the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy at the University of Calgary's Hotchkiss Brain Institute in Canada. He is the first scientist to connect brain cells to a silicon chip which has paved way for progress in artificial intelligence computing.



Namira Salim

is the first Pakistani to travel into space and has been recognised as the first Pakistani astronaut by the government of Pakistan in 2006. She is also a peace activist and was awarded with the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz in 2011.

Ardent Heart
Enthusiastic Thought

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TIME IS A DRIFTER

Usman Aslam

But I didn't know
It was all that I had
When i knew it was gone

Leaving me in an abyss
It was the darkest of the nights
All i was aware of was your name
The only and the most precious thing

I screamed it at the top of my lungs
I screamed it till my heart bled
Weary footed, heavy hearted, drenched in gloom
I wandered down the memory lane



THE COLD EARTH AND THE RESTLESS SEA

Sana Ahmad

The cold earth and the restless sea
Were now under the spell of the light
Through the window it even woke me
Hushing all kept up by the cold night

Little did it know, it broke me
I was all alone, that it did discover
For now I didn't want to be set free
I wished to be bound forever to my lover

The one who had given the world to me
Had now made me weary of living
Against the conspiring grass a lone tree
We were no longer a we and there was no misgiving

MY INAMORATA

Usama Sarwar

The blanket of night wrapped from pole to pole
With the bright moon the only hole

Leaning back into the chair I wondered
Why was the symbol of beauty looking
plundered

When I pondered the mystery got unravelled
It was still the same but it was me, baffled

But this time there was no perplexity
The moon was now in a state of enmity

For my heart it was just a persona grata
Which couldn't be compared to thee, my
inamorata

How your hair fluttered in harmony
For my eyes there could be no better melody

How your smile changed my world, splendidly
And the angels wept out of jealousy

The beauty your eyes held there could be no
better creativity
It made an infidel like me drop his convictions
instantly

As metal is drawn to magnet, your smile had
me captivated

Your eyes are shots of aged whiskey which had
me intoxicated

Everything which was once beautiful was now a
misery
There's nothing in the Universe which can now
be compared to thee

FLAGS SPROUT FROM EVERYWHERE

Sana Ahmad

Flags sprout from everywhere
It has become a weed in this fertile land

From a coldblooded murderers hands
Or from the gore on the roadside

Little bodies are wrapped in flags
Which are green and white no more

Red, blue, black and orange
They come in colours never seen before

From radicals to fanatics
From leftists to rightists

From sane to absolute radicals
Everyone has joined this new game

I cannot see any nook or cranny
Without a flag announcing its agenda

Yet I see humanity in a hullabaloo
Trying to find the wisdom in each flag

FOR THOSE WHO WONDER

Usama Sarwar

For those who wonder
 What made us part ways
 On a planet far far away
 In another universe
 Where the clouds are silver
 The hue is pinkish
 Where there are fields
 Of roses and tulips
 All unplucked
 Where an orchestra plays
 Our favourite song
 The flowers sway in rhythm
 The hum carried miles and miles
 By the air, making it twirl
 Where dew is like diamonds
 Cut to perfection
 Where even the sun is careful
 And the moon even brighter
 Where the nature itself is the perfumer
 Its olfactory compositions nonpareil
 Where the seas are turquoise
 And skies the best of blue
 And far in the horizon where they meet
 All they do is make love
 And it is where we too belong
 When all is over
 We will go there
 To finish our dance
 What were the times like
 When you were complete
 When you had the filter
 Childish and innocent

Through which you scanned the horizons
 What it was like to dream then
 What were the lullabies like
 What were the sunsets like
 How your soul burnt like
 What set you ablaze
 What was it like
 Before they poured your energy
 Leaving you empty
 Left Sadness echoing in you
 Tell me, Tell me
 All I want is to make you complete

Within Us

Sasha Gohar

Within us and around us, constellations
 Millions of light years away a star died

 Like a snow flake which fell on water
 Here I felt a chill in my spine

 I started growing cold, went numb
 As seen it was the farthest from the moon

 Tomorrow night my moon will still be there
 But the star, my imprint wouldn't be

 As if it never was there unlike my moon
 And lovers will make promises under it

METAMORPHOSIS

Sana Ahmad

She is the moon to rough tides of my sea
It aches for I feel the pull but lack the touch

How my heart is broken with the crash of each wave
It sends chills for it cannot be heard in the deafening sound

You have stars all around and you love each one
And how it aches to be the immortal sea always looking up

You chose to gape at illusions millions of miles away
When the desirous was right beneath you all this time

If I ever want to be anything, all I ever want is to be yours
If I say I love you that means I have counted all of your scars

WHEN I LOOKED BACK INTO THE PAST

Usama Noor

When I looked back into the past
There was this star which had all the light amassed

It had me spellbound in a jiffy
It was my beloved without any iffy

The light you cast had me blinded
With a lasting image of you to be forever astounded

Floating on the slow but winding streams of love
Eventually we have met hushing the mourning dove

Ancient or new I have heard all the love chronicles
Piercing the darkness of time, ours is no less comical

You are always on my mind and in my heart
How my gaze is still anchored in your eyes with everything else at halt

THE LOST PARADISE OF KASHMIR

Usman Aslam

From one epoch to the other there is nothing but misery
Where human shield is the only defense in front of artillery

I hear a woman asking a cloud to drape her loved one
For he was brutally butchered by a pellet gun

All I do is write, write for me brethren and I write in blood
As the technologies of death engulf the lost paradise like a flood

The Jhelum crashes against the rocks wailing in pain
For in it the cheap Kashmiri blood drains

It was once heavens reflection on earth
Where now mothers regret after giving birth

This is where I heard the term half widow
For she knows not if her husband is in a mass grave in a beautiful meadow

The valley lays in a siege laid by the butchers and time
The horrors of which make it difficult for me to write a rhyme

We are counting each encounter and every gang rape
For when we rise, for you there will be no escape

It won't come cheap but it won't take much longer
For what doesn't kill you makes you stronger

O Lost paradise of Kashmir the day isn't far
When you will be free of all this bloodshed and war

I AM THE KNIGHT, THE ONE READY TO FIGHT FOR LOVE

Usman Aslam

I am the knight, the one ready to fight for love
 I wanna take you with me and soar high like a dove
 The universe conspired for a reason
 Its time I confess its the right season
 You are my lady, all I want is to serve you forever
 Always to be by your side and to leave you never
 Your eyes always seem to hold the map for the road of my life
 I still remember the first gaze as it tore me apart like a knife
 What I felt for you I had never felt that ever before
 Now I know its love and its turning more and more
 Here I propose a toast to forever
 That this endeavour doesn't end whatever
 Amazing, beautiful, pretty you are my melody
 To meet you and to love you forever is my destiny
 I want to hold and caress your heart showing you how to fly
 I am here now and will make you wave the hard times goodbye
 Let me narrate you the poems i wrote for you my grace
 Stroking your hair till you fall asleep in my embrace
 Let me kiss you and let you know, what true love is
 It will make a butterfly like you sail the winds
 I am so sure that our destiny made our lives intertwined
 We are the precious diamonds both of us longed to find
 My precious my beautiful my unicorn its time we come out of the past
 We gotta relish the days because we have met long last



I GOTTA MAN UP AND GIVE IT A SHOT

Bilal Anjum

I gotta man up and give it a shot
 Without thinking will I succeed or not

I had to make a move
 I am a gentleman is what I gotta prove

It really was love without a doubt
 I had read so much about

She surely was perfect, the best
 Was so cute and elegantly dressed

I always thought, I am nothing but a mess
 You made me exquisite, with such finesse

How you made me smile
 Making my life worthwhile

You are much more than you could know
 Making me forget my every woe

If I had a wish bound to come true it would be
 What I feel for you, you feel the same for me
 Right here right now and to you I make this vow
 I will cherish you till the end of times starting
 from now
 Holding your hand with pride
 With you always by my side
 Going down the lane of life aging with grace
 All I can imagine is you and me in an embrace
 Its life all I got is hope.....someday
 You get everything and be happy I pray

TONIGHT, I AM NOT A SONNETIST

Usama Sarwar

Tonight, I am not a sonnetist
 For if I was
 I would have veiled you in the sonnet
 For tonight I neither am an acrostic
 For if I was
 You would have known
 What you are to me
 What am I then?
 The silence that was hushed
 by the noise of this life
 The turn you never took
 The book you never read
 The memory you forgot
 The risk you never took
 The blockbuster you never saw
 The love you almost had
 The month aiming for the moon
 I am the weed found in the field
 Which is beyond the idea of right doing and
 wrong doing
 I am your inner voice
 Which you never heard
 I am a tasteless version
 Of your favourite food
 I am the sadder version
 Of your favourite song
 For tonight I am nothing
 For tonight I am me

I WON'T BE WRONG IF I DEEM

Sasha Gohar

I won't be wrong if I deem
It is all a dream with in a dream

All my life I was on the lookout for a way
At last it has come, the very day

Let the aeroplanes loose and make them
scribble in the sky
Yes she is the one my dragon fly

Why does it take me so much time
To write for you a mere rhyme

I want to open up my heart
To show you that you are in every part

There was this vestige of thoughts I once had
You blew life into them making me mad

Stars are wanted no more put them out
You are a thousand times enough without a
doubt

All the grief there was and is yet to follow
The first laugh of yours did swallow
Can I be your knight protecting you from every
harm?
Your smile works all the time like a magic
charm

Whenever I wanted an ear to bend
It was you till the very end
My North my South my East and West
My working week my Sunday rest
Knowing and believing you are the one
You will always be the one.

