

SILK-E-HAYAAT

UMOOR KHAREJIYAH

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Pure, white, and humble as they are known to be, doves are a gorgeous sight. White doves lend a path to freedom; they are the universal symbol of peace, humanity, and love. These white beauties have struck a chord with humanity through their innocence, such that their peaceful image remains consistent across a plethora of races, religions, and cultures.

Similarly, the pigeon - a close cousin of the dove also represents harmonious living. Their famed reputation of settling with humans make them an integral part of any skyline.

This painting depicts the close-knit relation between the dove and humanity. The continuing skyline underneath the flying dove symbolizes the importance of living in harmony with everyone; a lesson that lies at the very heart of Umoor Kharejiah.

پرچم امن و امان کی شان ہے حب الوطن

“The flag of peace and concord flies high due to love for the country”

Harmony - Ingrained in the Blue-Print of the Universe

Article by: M. Murtaza Shk. Shabbir Bhai Kheraluwala , Masool ul Mozey (Dhamtari)

Early one morning, I was walking through the usually quiet streets of Dhamtari - Chhattisgarh, when I heard the strangely rhythmic drum of heavy-duty machinery. The hums grew louder as I advanced along the dusty road until finally, I saw them – a construction crew working together in an admirable tempo. Some were filling the mixer machine with raw materials, others seeing to it if the mixture was ready, and a line of people passing the mixture from the machine towards the slab. It was a splendid display of communication, division of roles, and teamwork.

Mesmerized by their performance, I thought to myself – how genuinely in sync these modest laborers were with each other. How each one of them knew exactly where he needed to be to keep the energy flowing. What would happen if just one person would fall out of line? It would probably disrupt the entire chain, and someone might even get hurt. Imagine if all men decided to not work together - it would be absolute chaos. Harmony builds; chaos destroys.

Harmony between people, between all living and non-living creation, manifests itself into something

beautiful. This is not only true for humans in society, but in nature as well. This harmony is the foundation upon which this universe has been built.

Take the solar system, for example. Celestial masses traversing the cosmos at unimaginable speeds in perfect harmony – also known as *Musica Universalis* or Music of the Heavenly Spheres. These bodies move with such harmony and consistency that it is possible to predict planetary positions for hundreds of years.

On earth, we see the same grassroots harmony in the most miniscule of creatures. Ants work together to procure food for their entire community and their queen. Bees work together to grow their hive and produce honey. Zebras have white and black stripes, not to provide camouflage against the grass, but to make it impossible for lions to single out an one against which to coordinate an attack. Singled out, they are vulnerable, together, they are secure. Even within our own body, harmony exists between the different organs right down to the cellular level, as they work together to achieve functions that are vital for the human body. It would appear that this harmony has been designed



Embodying the philosophy of 'Prefer for others what you prefer for yourself' by working together in Harmony.

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into the very blueprint of the universe.

The beauty of harmony is that it is not necessarily the conjunction of similar beings that forms it, but the natural flow created by the coming together of diverse beings. In the Oxford dictionary, music is described as – “the way in which different notes that are played or sung together combine to make a pleasing sound.” Every note may be different, but when they are played together they achieve a sum greater than its parts.

This message of the beauty in diversity is further illustrated by Syedna Taher Saifuddin ^{RA}. In an address, he explained that the beauty of a garden is enriched by the differing qualities of its residents. “On the one hand – the flow of streams while on the other the blooming of flowers; the beauty of the trees while on the other the serenity of the greenery.” Although the elements may be varied and diverse, they all come together to form a beautiful landscape. He then emphasized on the core values of harmony instructing that different communities should live together and strive for the educational and economic uplift of the country.

While the concept of living in harmony may be rooted all around us, it is still not always an easy task. Thus, the path towards harmony is enlightened through Rasulullah’s ^{SAW} famous instruction: Prefer for your Mumin brother what you prefer for yourself. Prefer for all people what you prefer for yourself. Prefer for all others (all of creation) what you prefer for yourselves.”

Rasulullah ^{SAW} through this Hadees Shareef in the simplest of ways has removed the concept of different. If each and everyone prefers for the other what they prefer for themselves then it puts them all on the same platform removing their differences and creating everlasting harmony.

Let us look through the windows of history as to how Awliyaullah ^{AS} have modeled these verses at every step, illuminating a path for us to achieve true harmony amongst all.

It is said that when Maulana Ali ^{AS} went to the market with his servant to buy *qamees*, he bought not one,

but two. He then asked his servant to choose the one he liked and take it. The remaining was then kept by Maulana Ali ^{AS}.

Another instance comes to mind, when Moulatena Fatema ^{AS} gave her newly stitched *qamees* to a person in need, and kept her old one for herself. Rasulullah ^{SAW} has even instructed us to remove from the path of others what may harm them. These instances teach us that every person is worthy of our consideration and finding harmony with them should be an important component of our life.

The teachings of Awliyaullah ^{AS} have weaved the concept of harmonious living in our day to day lives. They have taught us that if we wish that the best quality goods are sold to us when we go to the market, then we should sell the same. That if we prefer that people not use profanity against us, then similarly we must refrain to use profanity against all. That if we desire to live peacefully, then we should embody that philosophy.

As a poet once said, “Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant” Let us move towards an even happier future by planting seeds of peace and harmony. Let us band together to realize the lofty vision of Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Aqa ^{TUS} for Umoor Kharejiyah: “*Tamam Muslimeen ane Ibadullah sathe Hili Mili ne Raho*” (Live harmoniously with everyone) and take a step towards making the world a more harmonious place.

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PROJECT RISE

A DAWOODI BOHRA INITIATIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Burhani Foundation, has actively undertaken initiatives like tree plantation drives to cleanup activities to wildlife conservation exercises.

The Bohra community has also joined forces with UN Champion of the Earth, Afroz Shah in implementing a water body cleanup movement titled 'Turning the Tide' against plastic pollution.



NUTRITION INITIATIVES

As an extension of the FMB initiative, food drives are conducted on a regular basis by community members across the world. Special foods are also provided to lactating mothers as well as educational sessions are conducted to ensure healthy growth and development in young children.



HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES

The community conducts free health camps at regular intervals in both urban and rural areas in which specialist doctors and medical practitioners from within the community volunteer their time and services to the cause.



WATER & SANITATION INITIATIVES

Under this initiative various projects are undertaken to bring fresh clean water to rural areas in India. These include the installation of hand pumps, implementation of rainwater harvesting and water reclamation practices.



Project Rise is an umbrella initiative by the worldwide Dawoodi Bohra community, it looks to the future and strives to enrich the lives of as many people as it can by establishing a legacy of philanthropy that will hopefully endure and inspire generations to come. As the name suggests, its core aim is to raise and elevate society's less fortunate in every aspect of life to such a level, that they too become empowered to do the same for others. It strives to foster a widespread culture of empathy, awareness and generosity which culminates in a society where no individual is neglected overlooked or marginalised.

Tasawur Fil Tasweer - What do you see in this photo?



They say a picture speaks a thousand words. Does this image converse with you on multiple levels? Submit any Tasawwuraat / Feelings that you have, and we will post them on our Instagram handle!

Link: <https://tasweer.paperform.co>

DID YOU KNOW?

Before Al Dai al Ajal Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin's ^{RA} visit to Germany in 1997, Khidmat Guzars went to Munich Airport to prepare for his arrival. They met with Mr Peter Trautmann, the president of Munich Airport. Before they started talking about the preparations, they showed a photograph of His Holiness to Mr Trautmann. Mr Trautmann was so moved by the photograph that he reassured the Khidmat Guzaars that every step would be taken for Syedna's convenience. VIP protocol was given and special cars were sent near the airplane to receive His Holiness. In appreciation for his courtesy, Syedna al Dai al Ajal ^{RA} bestowed him with a wrist watch. The next time when His Holiness visited Germany, Mr Trautmann, whilst receiving His Holiness, told him that I am wearing the wrist watch you had gifted me the last time you visited Germany.

A WORD FROM OUR READERS

Being a Bohra gives us a sense of immense pride. We Bohras though in small number have our unique identity in society. We are a business community, people dealing with us trust us. Our attire and our speech makes us stand out in the crowd. We are a close-knit community, if someone needs help they are assisted by community members. People recognize us Bhoras - as the followers of Syedna Saheb. Every Mumin should be proud of this identity and strive to protect it.

Hatim Shk Mohsin Bhai Kanchwala - Chandrapur

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, we delivered food packages and pizzas to homeless shelters to support them in difficult times. The hospitals and the homeless shelters were very appreciative of our contributions and sent their thanks to our community members for their help. We also informed them that if they needed anything else - our Dawoodi Bohra community was willing to help them in any way we can! We are now hoping that we can do more in the future to help with other projects and do more to help vulnerable people in the society.

Anwar Lukmanji - Birmingham

GLIMPSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AAMCHI MUMBAI CYCLE RALLY

A cycle rally comprising of 35 teams named Aamchi Mumbai Cycle Rally was hosted. The rally aimed to promote awareness for Plastic Recycling and Reuse. Members of the BMC as well as the Cycling Mayor of Mumbai were invited in which all of them were happy to participate. Overall, it was a successful programme and the efforts of the Umoor Kharejiyah Committee and Umoor al-Sehhat Committee were commendable.



Marol

Calgary



CANADA DAY

The Dawoodi Bohras of Calgary found a most unique and memorable way to celebrate Canada Day on July 1st 2020. This year, the first ever virtual and National Canada Day celebration took place. Mumineen in Calgary partnered with neighbors from six other cities and hosted a live, virtual Canada Day Flag hoisting ceremony. The cities connected over a zoom call, and also had in attendance honorable guests from each city.

A PRODUCTIVE DAY AT THE BEACH

For the 13th consecutive year, community members in Dubai (as part of the Project Rise initiative) participated in the 'Clean up the World' campaign organized by the Dubai municipality to raise environmental awareness and inspire collective action. The drive was conducted around Al Mamzar beach as well as the Naif locality in Deira.



Dubai

GLIMPSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Tanga



THE SEARCH FOR WATER

For the students and teachers of Pongwe Primary School, water is a scarce commodity and one which they require with great urgency. Close to 50 school children suffer from albinism and require baths 3 times a day to ensure epidermal health. Members of the Dawoodi Bohra community in Tanga, mobilized efforts to dig a borehole in the school's precincts. Six attempts had been previously made to no avail. However, when digging began, water was found at a depth of 110 meters.

APPRECIATING FRONTLINE WORKERS

On the auspicious *Miqat* of the *Milaad* of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin ^{RA}, we hosted a program to commemorate the frontline workers for COVID relief. We invited members from the local government, social workers, and prominent guests to felicitate and show gratitude for their efforts.



Taloda

Secunderabad



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

A Government School was identified in Trimulgherry area where the majority of students come from underprivileged section of the society. A programme module was created to connect to the little children, teaching them life changing skills about incorporating reading and writing habits in this world of technology. They were also taught on how to instil confidence in their persona. In the end, 255 sets of Note books were distributed among the students as a token.

Why Public Relations Matter



Dr. Mustafa Izzuddin PhD, LSE

Senior International Affairs Analyst with Solaris Strategies Singapore,
Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore and Visiting Professor at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

Throughout the past decade, I have found the practice of public relations to be a call for service and a call to action. As coordinator of public relations (umoor kharejiyah) for the Singapore Dawoodi Bohra Jamaat, the responsibility has been immense but impact significant and gratifying as a critical gatekeeper and benevolent interlocutor to preserve the identity, culture and cohesion of our diasporic community in Singapore. Such an undertaking is aligned with, and is guided by, the teachings of our 53rd Dai Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Saheb who has religiously underscored the importance of strengthening our social compact and fabric as a Dawoodi Bohra community. Serving as an intermediary between the internal (within our Jamaat) and the external (outside the Jamaat) is by no means an easy task and much of it was learning by experience and driven by the passion and motivation to help others before self. Critically reflecting on my journey thus far, the joy of helping others and smiles witnessed on the faces of all those being helped have made it worth my while.

As a pracademic (an academic and active practitioner simultaneously), I would depict public relations as both an art and a science. As a scholar, I believe it is imperative to conceptualise public relations and contextualise accordingly to harmonise with local knowledge and befit the domestic environment. Putting public relations into practice is equally vital, because it is through application that we can see the true value of public relations and the benefits it heralds for the community. Being outward-looking and forward-looking are integral traits of public relations to project our community as inclusive, moderate, accommodative, socially-integrated and economically dynamic. Hosting events in our Burhani Masjid to welcome external visitors including university students and distinguished guests like Ministers and other public intellectuals, promoting interfaith dialogue and intercultural engagement, exhibiting philanthropy, strengthening linkages with the wider Malay/Muslim community, and conversing with ambassadors through courtesy calls are all pertinent cases in point.

It must be a calling and is a lot of hard work to conduct public relations fruitfully. It must be done with the right motivation and positive attitude without anticipating anything in return or being entitled to a quid pro quo as a form of reciprocity. Public Relations is also not for the faint-hearted and needs an abundance of grit, courage and perseverance. While admittedly challenging and even fatiguing, it is a categorical imperative to be honest, impartial, firm and principled for one to exhibit sound and decisive leadership in public relations.

Requiring an intellectual bent and being knowledgeable about domestic and international affairs are also cornerstones of exhibiting effective public or civic diplomacy. That I am a specialist of international relations as an academician

has been beneficial in this regard. As I have learnt over time in surmounting obstacles and mediating conflicts, the right temperament by keeping a cool head coupled with grace and humility alongside empathy are sine qua non for a consummate public relations practitioner. It is useful to think of public relations as the heartbeat of our community, serving as a fulcrum to make everything else tick and engender a calm, peaceful, safe and secure environment so as to keep us close-knit and integrated in heterogeneity.

Doing well in public relations also relies on cultivating relationships and earning respect. Having connections is one thing but sustaining relationships is another and far more crucial for public relations. Managing public relations for our community holistically necessitates being active contributors not just within but also outside our community at the societal and national levels. Ensuring our community is better known and respected by others, including political leaders is a continuous process and endeavour for a public relations practitioner. Putting into practice the belief of being both a good Muslim and good citizen of the country we reside in has won us plaudits as a model community worthy of emulation and has struck a chord with almost everyone.

Despite being small in size from a country that is the smallest in the Far East, the Singapore Dawoodi Bohras have shown during Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Saheb's visit in 2018 that they can achieve the unimaginable. At the heart of this accomplishment was the prominence of public relations before, during and after Syedna's visit. It was a personal pinnacle for me as a public relations practitioner when I was accorded the privilege to be the first to receive Syedna at the VIP airport complex, given that it had been 18 years since a Dai had visited Singapore. I was told that we helped pave the way to inspire Dawoodi Bohras from other countries in the region of Southeast Asia within the wider Indo-Pacific to follow suit in welcoming Syedna to their shores and which has taken place subsequently with resounding success. As someone who is proficient in regional affairs and a staunch believer in 'gotong-royong' (mutual cooperation by members of a community to achieve a common goal), I am in perpetuum at the service of our Dawoodi Bohra brethren in the other Southeast Asian countries to proffer my expertise, and who are themselves doing phenomenal work in public relations.

Public Relations is also collectively about inspiration, mentorship and teamwork. We need to inspire others around us and mentor the younger generation of Dawoodi Bohras to take on the mantle of public relations and to prove their mettle. The Dawoodi Bohra millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z must be given the space and freedom to ask questions, express sentiments, explore fresh ideas and implement them upon benefiting from wise guidance and mentorship. Listening attentively to the younger generation, believing in them and giving them a stake and chance will bode well for the sustainable development of our community. The role of young and technologically-savvy Dawoodi Bohras will be instrumental as digital pace-setters as we continue to make headway in digitising public relations, as has been evident during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although it was important I carved my own identity, imprint and way of doing things, I have benefited from the wisdom of good mentors, so I feel it is incumbent on me to pass on the baton when the time is right and provide mentorship in the same way I was very fortunate enough to have as a neophyte. The symbiotic and cooperative relationship between experienced mentors and younger mentees will help make public relations for our community not only advantageous in the short to medium term but also sustainable in the long run.

Significantly, Public Relations is about a 'We' not an 'I' so assembling a team who shares your vision and work ethic is essential to make great strides for the benefit of our community, including for us in Singapore. It is a collective responsibility to enhance the domestic nucleus of our community through the practice of public relations. I would certainly encourage anyone in our community who has a genuine interest in public relations to pursue it for the right reasons, be inquisitive, and educate themselves about this undertaking. Above all else, as has been my guiding principle based on a saying by Albert Einstein, only a life lived in the service of others is a life worthwhile. This is true about public relations as it is for the life we choose to live in this world.

