

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

By the winds that scatter broadcast  
And those that lift and bear away heavy weights  
And those that flow with ease and gentleness  
And those that distribute and apportion by Command  
Verily that which ye are promised is true  
And verily Judgment and Justice must indeed come to pass.

AZAD

Issue No. 51

July 2011

## UK Management Committee members



The DBWS management committee. Left to right: Hanif, Haki, Aquil, Shakeel, Faisal and Abbas

The UK Dawoodi Bohra Welfare Society held its local and national AGMS in May and June. This was a year for elections. The results of the elections are as below.

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	Leicester	London	Birmingham	Main Society
President	Faisal Tayebjee	Abbas Vanat	Haki Kapasi	Shakeel Hirani
Vice-President				Haki Kapasi
Secretary	Murtaza Makda	Shakeel Hirani	Aquil Rajabali	Faisal Tayebjee
Treasurer	Munira Sulemanji	Mukhtar Jivanjee	Imtiaz Dungarwalla	Aquil Rajabali
Committee Member	Hanif Lokat	Jumana Vanat	Mumtaz Rajabali	Hanif Lokat
	Shirin Kapasi	Kulsum Jivanjee	Rehana Dungarwalla	Abbas Vanat
	Shamim Hathiari	Zarina Hirani	Nasreen Rajabali	
	Kutub Najmudin		Zulaika Rajabali	

## Amatulla swims like a fish for charity

**O**n the 25th of February 2011 I completed a 1 mile swim to raise money for A-CET (African children's education trust). I would like to say a big thank you to

everyone who supported me with my swim, I was very happy that so many family and friends sponsored me and encouraged me with their wonderful messages.



A-CET is a great charity that works with local organisations to support thousands of children with long-term scholarships and also supports the building of schools in rural areas where NO FEES are charged.

So far I have raised £1167 for A-CET and hope to raise more in the future. You can still sponsor me by going onto my Just Giving webpage and donating.

The reason I choose A-CET was that it is a charity that my school (Leicester High school for Girls) sponsors and last year we had a visit from Nurse Birhan Woldu who as a child was supported by ACET in Ethiopia and when I heard her speak I decided I would do something to help

If you would like to know more about A-CET then please visit their website [www.a-cet.org](http://www.a-cet.org)

Next Year I have promised to Run for them!

**Amatulla Sadikot**  
Leicester, UK  
[www.justgiving.com/Amatulla-Sadikot](http://www.justgiving.com/Amatulla-Sadikot)

# Arab awakening and Arab spring are here. Will there be ever a Bohra spring?

**Azad has received this email which has been edited.**

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 2011

To: news-views@lists.elistx.com

**S** Syedna and Kothar love outside praise. Praise and pictures with white people make them most happy. Bohras keep shouting and crying Mola Mola but they are pushed back and they must follow dress code, ID card, and salaam.

I wonder if these Ambani, Advani, police commissioner, Canadian Council, BJP MP Piyush Goyal, CM Shri Prithviraj Chavan, etc. begged for Deedar of Syedna or were they lobbied and encouraged for the photo opportunities? These political leaders receive heavy contributions from Kothar. Billions of Kothar money is invested in Ambani and other industries. A friend who was a hotel manager in Oberoi Mumbai once told me that if was to attend the shareholders' special session in Mumbai, he or she will find many Shahzadas present.

During 100th birthday celebration procession, only Bohras took part in processions and rallies, other Muslims and Hindus were conspicuously absent.

The Qur'an says "Qulu wa ashrahu wa la Tusrefoon" - eat and drink but do not become extravagant. The money spent on the 100th birthday extravaganza could have fed many hungry people around the world. Imams and Dais are supposed to set examples. No religious leaders of Islam celebrate his birthday save last two Bohra Dais and Aghakhani Imam. We never hear about birthday celebration of any Muslim king or President. Celebration of Prophet Birthday is recent, previously the day was celebrated as Bara Wafat because Prophet died also on the same day. We never celebrate Molana Ali's birthday with fanfare.

Anyway, the 100th birthday has proved to be great money making endeavor ever. Now



■ Mukesh Ambani



■ Shri L K Advani

without losing time, Syedna is on tour of foreign countries. Millions are being collected in visiting countries in Europe and the USA. Bohras have gotten tired of giving, they are given Qarz-e-Hasna for Syedna's salaam and expenses.

Bhaisahebs and Amils are actually part of the Kothar. They get 20% of whatever they collect in name of Syedna. Therefore, they cheer and exert Bohras in giving. However, they themselves don't give as if they do not need any Sawab or Sharaf. They internally understand the actual truth that this is all about money - religion, Imam Hussain's Matam, Darees etc. are just tools for exciting Bohras.

Once in discussions with Orange county Amil Miyasaheb Fakhruddin Barwaniwala told me that there was no Jannat. Yet in every Tashaud/Tahiyat he recited Jannata haqqun-Jannat is a truth. He was a big crook and a manipulator; yet he had lot of influence with Shahzadas.

Many religious leaders and charities refuse to accept tainted money such as stolen or embezzled money or money earned from haram trades. However, there is no moral compass when it comes to Bohra. Syedna, Shahzadas, Bhaisahebs, Amilsahebs, or Mullahs never refuse money whatever source it may have come from.

In 1940s the previous Dai, Molana Taher Saifuddin, used to go house to house, do qadam, and demand salaam. He came to my house in Dahod and demanded Rs. 300. My father said his monthly pay was paltry Rs. 50 and he didn't have any money. The Chamchas around shouted "Aapo nahi to mola naraz thai jase" then Syedna left our house. My father cried, my mother got frantic. She borrowed a little from relatives, added her own saving, and went next-door where Syedna had gone and offered her Rs. 300. My father was shocked, he died after sometime. Our family

had no money for his medical care. I was left without a father and my mother was widowed. No Syedna or Bhaisaheb ever came and helped us from the Zakat money that they



■ Bahrain Council

collected. I feel my terrible childhood could have been eased if Syedna had given what belonged to orphans and widows.

During 1960s I was working in Fort area in Mumbai and after office hours I used to go to Badri Mahel and watch the dramas going on there. Many Bohras will beg while doing salaam to Syedna crying their poverty and troubles. They Syedna would say "Sabar Karo Khuda Aapse" I always wondered why Syedna and Bhaisahebs themselves do not do Sabar, why do they demand more and more?

The same tactic of collection continues today even in USA. As a matter of Bohra core belief, Indian Dawat's jurisdiction is limited to Hind, Sindh, and Yemen. Molatena Hurrat al Malika's and the first Dai, Molana Zoeb's, mandate was for these three areas only. In the past, Dais did not perform Haj while on Gadi, because Hejaz was outside their mandated area. Claiming USA, Europe, and other countries is overstepping in the territory of some other Dai, whom we do not know - he may be in seclusion. It must be remembered that Fatimid Imams had sent many Dais in different parts of Middle East. Case in point, Sulemani Bohras who hold the same core beliefs as Dawoodi Bohras, their Dai never visit countries outside Hind, Sindh, and Yemen.

Firman like following are common. I feel it like a joke that Bohras build a mosque by spending millions, and then this Mosque is transferred to Syedna's name and Syedna charges huge salaam for accepting the gift. Syedna is sitting on tons of wealth, why does he need his followers whom he calls his children, must undergo debt for giving him gift? The following clearly says, unless Syedna is paid he will not inaugurate a mosque, though inaugurating mosque is a great Sawab.

#### Excerpts from Orange county Jamat email

As you all know there is a lot of chatter regarding Molana (TUS) visit for iftitah of our and other Masjid. We hope and pray that he visits our Jamat soon. We need to be ready for Molana (TUS) visit. As explained in the e-mails below which were sent to the Jamat earlier an Ikram fund has been established for Molana (TUS) visit with a unit of \$6,052.00 or more per family. This is a mandatory unit and each family should give their checks. Without money, it is difficult to plan. We all want Molana (TUS) to come to our Jamat. We need the collection without any delay.



#### Excerpts from Valley Jamat email

Prior to that, we need to prepare, not only to do Aqamaula TUS istiqbaal but also the hazaro mumineen who will come to LA on this occasion. As Janab Turab Bhaisaheb had stated prior to last Ramadan that the ikram fund unit is \$14,000 per family. We need everyone to start paying immediately so we can do shandaar preparations for this historical event. Please make the checks to Anjuman-e-Burhanned.

No transparent accounts are available about income and expenditure. Though Dawat Hadiya Trust USA is registered, there is no information about its auditors. The Commission's inquiry into Dawat-e-Hadiya UK, found impropriety and made them payback £365,000 (see article on right, Dawat-e-Hadiya investigation)

If Anjuman-e-Burhaneer is registered charity, why don't they publish any audited account?

**Asghar F Vasanwalla**

# Moulana Ali Sa

## Wealth or Knowledge? Which Is Better?

**M**oulana Ali once replied to a group of ten learned men who said, 'We seek your permission for our putting a question to you.'

Moulana Ali replied, 'You are at perfect liberty.'

They said, 'of knowledge and wealth, which is better and why. Please give a separate answer to each of us

Moulana Ali (AS) answered in ten parts:

1. Knowledge is the legacy of the Prophets; wealth is the inheritance of the Pharaohs. Therefore, knowledge is better than wealth

2. You are to guard your wealth but knowledge guards you. Therefore, knowledge is better.

3. A man of wealth has many enemies, while a man of knowledge has many friends. Hence, knowledge is better.

4. Knowledge is better because it increases with distribution, while wealth decreases by that act.

5. Knowledge is better because a learned man is apt to be generous while a wealthy person is apt to be miserly.

6. Knowledge is better because it cannot be stolen while wealth can be stolen.

7. Knowledge is better because time cannot harm knowledge but wealth rusts in course of time and wears away.

8. Knowledge is better because it is boundless while wealth is limited and you can keep account of it.

9. Knowledge is better because it illuminates the mind while wealth is apt to blacken it.

10. Knowledge is better because knowledge induced the humanity in our Prophet to say to GOD 'we worship thee as we are your servants,' while wealth engendered in Pharaoh and Nimrod the vanity which made them claim godhead.

Seek knowledge, peace and health will follow.

'When someone shares something of value with you and you benefit from it, you have a moral obligation to share it with others.'

Thanks to Ali Mazhar for sending this

# Alifia goes lyrical...

**T**he Once upon a Rhyme competition was a UK-wide competition to find talented young poets. Alifia Huseinbhai's poem, Street Life, was chosen to be included in the Once Upon a Rhyme book of poetry to be published soon. Congratulations Alifia, and well done for this great achievement. We reproduce Alifia's poem below.

The news was sent to Azad by Alifia's proud mum, Taslim Huseinbhai, UK.

#### Street Life!

The gangsters stand in the corner hoping not to get caught  
Looking at something expensive  
That they certainly have not bought.  
What is the use of violence and abuse?  
This is your life, you need to choose.  
The police are coming down the road  
Whilst the gangsters hide their stolen load.  
What is the use for violence and abuse?  
This is your life, you need to choose.  
We should be getting a good education at school  
Instead of thinking we are big and cool.  
We need peace in the world that is what we need  
Because this world doesn't need hatred and greed.  
So do good in your life the way you should  
Be mature and take off that hood.

**Alifia Huseinbhat (10)**  
St William's RC Primary School, Bradford

# Dawat E Hadiya investigation

## Introduction

1. This report is a statement of the results of an inquiry under Section 8 of the Charities Act 1993 ("the Act").

2. Dawat-e-Hadiyah Trust (United Kingdom) ("the Charity") was registered as a charity on 2nd July 1986. Its stated objects are "to carry out such purposes for the relief of poverty and the advancement of education or religion or otherwise for the benefit of mankind anywhere in the world as the Dai al-Mutlaq shall from time to time determine." His Holiness Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, is the fifty-second incumbent in the office of the Dai al-Mutlaq. The Dai al-Mutlaq is the supreme head of Dawat-e-Hadiyah who promotes and fosters the interests of the Dawoodi Bohra Community. The Charity's turnover is in the region of £2M.

## Issue 3

**In March 2001, the Commission became concerned that the charity had failed to submit the Charity's annual returns and accounts since 1995 despite a number of attempts by the Commission to obtain these documents.**

## Issue 4

**The 1996 annual accounts were submitted in March 2001 and the 1997 annual accounts in June 2001. Review of these raised concerns about the large number of payments to persons related to the sole trustee, the Dai al-Mutlaq, and the Nominees. The Nominees are appointed by the Dai al-Mutlaq to administer the affairs of the Charity as de facto trustees. There are six Nominees of whom four are the sons of the Dai al-Mutlaq. As a result the Commission instituted an inquiry under section 8 of the Act on the 4th July 2001 with the aims to: obtain up to date and accurate accounts and annual returns; determine the Nominees reasons for not complying with their statutory obligations with regard to the submission of annual returns and accounts; and investigate the connected person payments.**

## Findings 5.

A series of payments had been made by the Charity to persons related and connected to the sole trustee, the Dai al-Mutlaq and the Nominees.

6. Whilst the Charity provided full details and explanations for all connected person payments, the Commission considered that restitution was necessary **because the payments had been made in breach of trust**. This was because, in determining whether the payments should be made, **the personal interests of the Nominees were in conflict with their fiduciary duty as trustees of the Charity**.

## Outcomes 7

The Nominees have given the Commission full co-operation throughout the course of the Inquiry. The Nominees accepted that restitution was required and without delay paid back to the Charity some £365,000, which represented the vast majority of the sum requested. The Nominees made a case that the remainder of the payments were made in good faith in furtherance of the objects of the Charity and that it was therefore unnecessary to make restitution in respect of these payments. The Commission established that these payments did not conflict with the Nominees fiduciary duties and in view of this, restitution of the remaining amount was not required.

8. The accounts and annual returns for 1998, 1999 and 2000 were submitted in May 2002. The Nominees explained that accounts had been delayed due to concentrating all of their efforts on the extensive building project of the Northolt Mosque complex.

9. Commission officers scrutinized the accounts for 1998, 1999 and 2000 on receipt to ensure that they comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting and Reporting by Charities (the 1995 SORP). The Nominees agreed that in future the audited accounts of the Charity would be submitted to the Commission on an annual basis in accordance with the statutory requirements.

10. The Inquiry was closed on the 5th September 2002.

## Wider Lessons 11.

Trustees of charities with an annual income or expenditure of over £10,000 are required, under Part VI of the Charities Act 1993, to submit their accounts, an annual report and an annual return to the Commission within ten months of the end of their financial year. Trustees of charities with an income of less than £10,000 are obliged to produce accounts within this time scale, but are not required to send them to the Commission.

12. Persons who, without reasonable excuse, persistently fail to comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 1993 to supply accounts and annual returns may be guilty of a criminal offence and may on conviction be fined by the courts.

13. The Commission will investigate any causes for concern that are identified during its monitoring of a charity's annual return and accounts.

14. A charity is entitled to the objective judgement of its trustees, exercised solely in the interests of the charity, and unaffected by the prospect of any personal advantage to themselves. The law requires charity trustees not to place themselves in a position where their duty to the charity might conflict with their own interests, that is, where they may have an incentive to neglect their duties as trustees. Moreover, a charity trustee is not permitted to profit from that position (unless he or she is expressly authorised to do so). A trustee who benefits from a position of trust without the necessary authority is liable to repay the benefit which he or she has received.

15. If a charity wishes to pay one of its trustees, the organisation needs to establish whether or not the charity's governing document contains a power to do so. If the governing document does not contain a power to pay trustees, the trustees must first approach the Commission for authority.

Dawat-e-Hadiyah Trust  
(United Kingdom)Registered  
Charity No. 294807  
[www.dawoodi-bohras.com/forum](http://www.dawoodi-bohras.com/forum)

# Syedna's 100th birthday celebration cost

Najwa-e-Shukr for Aqa Moula tus Historic Centenary Milad visit to London You are receiving this email because you are registered as a member of Anjuman-e-Burhani (London). Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser. Najwa-e-Shukr for Aqa Moula tus Historic Centenary Milad visit to London

Salaam-e-Jameel, London Jamat has resolved that on the occasion of the historic Centenary Milad visit of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (tus) to London, ALL Momineen should get the sharaf of offering Najwa-e-Shukr to Aqa Moula (tus). Therefore, EACH FAMILY MUST COMPULSARILY arz a minimum of one unit of a £1,000 (or more) for najwa-e-shukr. Today 16th April 2011 by 8:00 pm you are required to Submit your cash or cheques (payable to H.H. VISIT) Collect your najwa-e-shukr card allocated on a sequential basis from the Jamaat office Collect milad-e-meavi tashrif (Hadiya) from Aqa Moula (tus) from Janab A Sent from my BlackBerry® wireless device

See the jamaat message below. It was announced that each of the sheikhs in the jamaat would be allocated a number of families who they will have to chase for the money and visit them personally if necessary. The reactions of the bohras vary. There are many families who can afford it and are happy to give. Their attitude is that they are happy to be shamil in syedna's milad celebrations, and that it is because of giving money

that we are blessed with syedna's visit. Others are not happy but they are giving because they must stay in the jamaat and if they don't give then they will not be issued kadambosi cards and they will be chased by jamaat for the money even after syedna leaves. Of course many families will not pay at all. These are the ones who genuinely cannot afford it and also those who are lucky enough to have ties to the jamaat which are weak, so they don't care if they are chased, they will just not pay and don't care about the consequences. The 1,000 pounds is just the tip of the iceberg. Many prominent families are being pressured to give more (1,000 per adult) and also the rich ones are being pressured to join the Welcome Committee, for ten thousand pounds each.

London Jamaat has resolved that on the occasion of the historic Centenary Milad visit of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (tus) to London, ALL mumineen should get the sharaf of offering Najwa-e-Shukr to Aqa Moula (tus). Therefore, EACH FAMILY MUST COMPULSARILY arz a minimum of one unit of a £1,000 (or more) for najwa-e-shukr.

Today 16th April 2011 by 8:00 pm you are required to

- Submit your cash or cheques (payable to H.H. VISIT)
- Collect your najwa-e-shukr card allocated on a sequential basis from the Jamaat office
- Collect milad-e-meavi tashrif (Hadiya) from Aqa Moula (tus) from Janab Aamil Saheb

## Attempt to destroy Holy Grave aroused anger in entire Udaipur

**I**n Udaipur's local Bohra kabristan (graveyard) the holy grave of Sheikh Ahmed Ali Rajnagarwala (one of the teacher of Honorable Sayeedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb) and the adjoining grave were trashed by unknown people. They not only destroyed the holy shrine but also challenged the sentiments of the believers especially the Dawoodi Bohra Jamaat (Bohra Youth).



This shameless incident happened on 13th March 2011. On getting the information about this shameless act a large sum of people collected on the spot. By watching the spot it can be sensed that this act was done intentionally to hurt the sentiment of the people as well as it interrupted the religious harmony, integrity and peace of this beautiful city. The graveyard is one of the oldest and consists of thousands and thousands of grave on which the person life history is engraved in Urdu/Arabic script. By this it can be said that the person or a group of persons who did this job may know their targets and were good in Urdu/Arabic too. An F.I.R was logged by Mr. Khurshed Ali Rajnagarwala in Surajpole Police Station against the unknown people. A.S.P.(city) Tejraj Singh, Surajpole Police Station Head and other official visited the place. In the old times too, attempt were made to destroy this holy grave.

### Mujtaba R.G.

From udaipurblog.com  
Thanks to Sharifa Luqmani and Elyas Sardarwalla for sending this

# Innocent mistake turned into a horrible story

**AZAD has received the email below, outlining a disturbing story of how an innocent mistake turned into a horrible story.**

## **Baadus Salaame Jameel**

Given below is the story of the current bloodbath that is taking place in Khambhat. The roots of this story goes back nearly two years ago.

## **Genesis: Two Years ago**

On a lazy afternoon, in the by lanes of our Mohalla, near Masjid, a group of youngsters are playing a game of gully cricket. As it normally happened, the batsmen hit the ball and it landed in the masjid compound. Seeing this all the youngsters immediately split and ran away, since the khaadim of masjid, like always, was expected to scream and shout.

On the coaxing of some of his friends, one mumin youngster gathered the courage to collect the ball, and while he was attempting this, the Khaadim trapped and caught him. But, this was no ordinary afternoon. And what was about to follow was something more dastardly in nature. The Khaadim, who is always at the mercy of Jamaat Aayaan members, was in a mood to teach the trapped youngster a lesson of lifetime.

He started mercilessly thrashing the mumin youngster who was caught in his trap. In the hallowed grounds of our masjid, a karbala like situation was unfolding. The Khaadim, out to impress his masters, like shimar in Karbala, had beaten the youngster so badly, that the mumin youngster's neck was broken. He screamed for help, but no one came. The beating continued.

The badly beaten body of this mumin youngster was lying in the compound and when his friends came to see him, they found him unconscious. They picked him up and rushed him to hospital, where it was revealed that he has gone into coma with multiple fractures. The son of a poor locksmith, who was barely managing his living means and whom the entire Khambhaat Jamaat knew was living hand to mouth, was left with his only son in hospital with mounting bills. The entire medical cost for recovery of this lad has run upto Rs 2.25 lakhs, which includes operation in Ahmedabad.

The friends of youngsters were not going to keep things lying down. They forced the then Janaab Aamil Saheb to call for a meeting of Jamaat members and with them most of the youngsters were also present in the meeting. Two members of Aayaanul Jamaat for whom the Khaadim was a stooge and served them like their personal servant and assistant, were against the prospect of firing this khaadim and took offence to the

fact that the youngsters were objecting for a "very small issue" in their opinion.

But the youngsters were extremely forceful and saw to it that the Khaadim was fired. For the two Aayanul Jamaat members this was a personal loss of face, and not adl. They were not even concerned what happened to the poor locksmith's son.

## **The Follow Up:**

As it happens in a small town with any small jamaat, where Mumineen's children have studied in madrassa, friendships happen. Much in the same vein, the young members of jamaat, which included boys and girls had also developed friendship. In the age of mobiles and internet, friendships extend to such fora like facebook, orkut etc.

In the above cricket story, some of these youngsters were friends with the daughter of the same Aayanul jamaat who were not in favour of loosing their stooge, the Khaadim. With passage of time, he called upon his daughter to cut off the friendship with these fellows. And as every obedient child is expected to act, she did what she was told to do.

The youngsters; who were net savvy, and also members of the Taheri Cultural Centre (TCC), an Aqa Moula TUS approved youth centre, did what most youngsters would do in today's time. They used the computers of TCC from where, they made a new facebook profile and got in touch with the lady.

They also found out ways and means to extract her new mobile number by accessing facebook from a mobile phone. This was to prove a costly mistake, which many children do, and an opportunity for the girl's father to exact revenge for his two year old face loss.

The father having come to know what has transpired, got his act together. He filed an FIR with cybercrime unit in Anand and initiated proceedings against the three youngsters. Additionally, using the stature of his position in the jamaat, he started using the jamaat to pressurize the youngsters, their family, their friends and even their friends families.

They have gone so far as to bring a halt to all TCC activities and are trying their best to get this Aqa Moula TUS approved centre's closure, website included, for which there is a misaal.

## **The Current Situation:**

The two Aayanul Jamaat members, through the Jamaat office and using their influence in the society at large, have made the youngsters; in the middle of their exams; faced with a dire

situation. The following threats have been made to them, their friends and their families:

- 1] The Police have informed that they will take a bribe of Rupees Four Lakhs to take back the FIR.
- 2] The Youngsters, their friends and families in the middle of their exams are made to attend police stations and hearings.
- 3] The Jamaat have threatened them they should submit a written apology and during one of the upcoming miqat majlis, they will have to publicly accept their mistake and apologise.
- 4] If they fail to do so all their razas will be stopped.
- 5] Raza from Aqa Moula will be stopped in toto.
- 6] The whole matter will be reported in local media in such a way that they will be publicly humiliated.
- 7] One of the Aayanul Jamaat\*, has gone to the extent of saying that Khambhaat will be made into second Udaipur [Khambhat ne biju Udaipur banavi desu].
- 8] The two Aayan's have boasted, "No one will be able to save you from us" [tamne koi hamara si bachavi saksay nahi].

As of today the written apology has been given to Janaab Aamil Saheb

A bribe of Rupees Two lakhs has also been collected and given to police, who are still demanding the remaining amount of two lakhs.

## **Conclusion:**

In Tanbehul Ghafelin, Syedna Hatim RA quotes Moula Ali saying that, "If I were to see a mumin committing a mistake, I will throw a "chaddar" on him." Which means that a mumin's mistake is not to be publicized and should be covered up, though, in privacy we should call them, reprimand them if need be, and help them to do a tauba and in turning them to be a new leaf.

So is the current action of the Aayanul Jamaat members of Khambhaat justified?

## **The Main Players**

Aayanul Jamaat Member: Juzer Chashmawala [Father of the girl] & \*Moiz Barafwala [Moiz Barafwala is the person who made the Udaipur quote]. Affected Youngsters : Hamza Petladwala, Mustafa Jiddawala & Burhanuddin Khambati

Request: Sahebo and Mumineen, who are reading this letter are requested to kindly get in touch with Janaab Aamil Saheb of Khambhat and prevail upon him, and request him to help resolve this issue amicably, since he is Aqa Moula TUS's numaaeinda and as such has raza to do rehmat on all the affected parties.

**From a well-wisher**

# Arif completes Tough Guy Challenge 2011

I wanted to share an interesting achievement with you. My brother Arif successfully completed the Tough Guy Challenge on Sunday 30TH January. Tough Guy is the world's safest, most dangerous taste of mental and physical pain, fear and endurance.

It is an event run only on the last Sunday in January in the West Midlands where contestants from all over the world come together to take on the challenge. Tough Guy is an 8 mile off road all terrain course that tests your fear of heights, tight spaces, fire, water and electricity.

A particular favourite as a spectator was to see competitors on all fours tackle 50 feet of razor sharp wire charged with electricity. All this is before they've sprinted through blazing flames and swam in sub zero icy water!

As a rule all contestants must sign a death disclaimer before being allowed to enter the competition. There were St

Johns Ambulances parked everywhere to assist with emergencies, accidents and hypothermia.

This year there were over 5000 thrill seekers including ex Iraq/Afghanistan soldiers, army cadets and keen sportsmen who hoped to make it to the finish line of which only 3220 managed to complete. My brother finished 469TH with a time of 2 hrs 2 mins. The winner was a German guy whose time was 1hr 11 mins.

Arif has already summited Kilimanjaro; night dived in the Red Sea, swam with sharks and parachuted out of an airplane for charity and commented when back home 'nothing comes close to the unique experience of Tough Guy.'

Despite having suffered from hypothermia after the event he will be taking on Mount Elbrus next year.

Inshallah.  
By **Shafiq Rampuri**, London, UK

## A very expensive visit

AZAD received an email from Spartanburgh about the cost of a visit from an Amilsaheb. We reproduce it below.

Our Amilsaheb is coming to your area, please judge for yourself. See below for lagaat comparison.

### Jumath Lagat

	Toronto, Canada	Houston, TX	Spartanburg, SC
Misaq	\$110	\$152	\$552
Aqiqa	\$110	\$52	\$252
Nikaah	\$352	\$252	\$1552

Our jamaat consists mainly of regular salaried people. One of family member's son is getting married, but aamil saheb requested \$1552 from the groom's family and the bride's family three months before the wedding. This money was supposed to stay in Spartanburg's Jamaat, but instead he took it and put into Atlanta's Jamaat. Lagaat is supposed to be given to the jamaat at the time of marriage ceremony only by the groom's father. Aamil saheb has nothing to do with the lagaat. From a Bohra in Spartanburg.

## Keeper of Time

In fond and loving memory of the Late **Saifuddin Mohamadali Marzban sahib** (1913 – 2011)

The late Saifuddin Marzban was a staunch reformist and President of DBWS for a number of years. We will miss him and wish that Allah grant them strength as they come to terms with their loss. Below is a poem dedicated to his memory from his granddaughter Sakina and her husband, Zafer.

*The keeper of time has no longer need for time!  
Oh, gone are the days that shone with his chimes  
No more "Bring me a gadget, PC, or just a hammer"  
But an empty, silent room; too small less his clamour  
They say he lived a long life of cheer and challenge  
His path criss-crossing great deeds and daring  
An inventor, entrepreneur, doctor and engineer ...  
Surely a chum even Leonardo would endear  
But this humble gentleman, one we proudly called friend  
Touched us with his rhyme on luckiest day to this end  
His simple deed endearing him forever  
A sweet blessing! We shall always favour  
So when we bade him farewell these last days  
Folks, they were indeed heart-rending ways  
But be sure his [heart] was in a place of delight –  
For he was with his sweetheart he loved for life  
Eternity, Space or Time: no longer objects of divine  
Triumphant stay only ways of love,  
friendship and kind  
Folks, the keeper of time has no need for time  
For he is with his maker: the master of all time.*  
**Sakina & Zafer**

On behalf of:  
Fatema, Maqbool  
& Hamida,  
Kamal & Mariya,  
Salma & Saifuddin,  
Ali & Yasmeen,  
Ayub & Fazeela,  
Shoaib & Nafisa,  
Zulfi & Mobeen,  
Farzana & Khan,  
Rukhsana & Sarfaraz,  
Siraj & Tanha, Shakil  
& Sakina, Rubina,  
Riaz, Imran, Zehra,  
Hussain, Murtaza,  
Hani, Zahir, Zimraan,  
Cymah, Faisal,  
Kalisa, Zaeem, Rayaan,  
Hassan, Sofiya.



# The Iron Grasp of the High Priest

Dawoodi Bohras have always been known for their business gene. But few know they are being choked by a tyrannical and all-powerful religious head. **ANUMEHA YADAV** reports how every attempt to rein him in is crushed

**T**HE BOHRA Muslims have always been read through a dominant stereotype: their capacity for business. That's probably one reason why even chief minister Narendra Modi has found it convenient to reach out to them as part of his PR measures to improve his scoreboard with Muslims in Gujarat. But few Indians would know that the Dawoodi Bohras have been living with — and fighting — deeply suffocating customs under the regime of their spiritual head, the 100-year old Syedna Mohamed Burhanuddin.

This story is not a new one. Three decades ago, the Janata Party-led government in Gujarat allowed the Nathwani Commission, set up by then PM Morarji Desai, to examine complaints of civil rights violations by the Syedna. But even after





1979, when the commission published its findings, the priest and his family have continued to wield overwhelming power over the community through the threats of *baraat* (community boycott), of denying *ruqo chitthi* (a letter obtained from the Syedna at a hefty sum so that the dead may enter heaven) and seven kinds of taxes arbitrarily levied on all, including foetuses.

This February, when the Syedna turned 100, one of his seven sons, Huzefa Mohiuddin, walked in for the celebrations in Ahmedabad with Chief Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leaders Vijay Rupani, Asit Vohra and Jayanti Barot. Inside the brightly-lit hall, Mohiuddin praised governance in 'vibrant Gujarat'. Modi related anecdotes about his closeness with the Syedna over the years. Cell phone cameras clicked.

Jointly holding the knife, Modi and Mohiuddin cut a cake to chants of Allah-o-Akbar, and congratulated each other.

Modi's attempts to appear more palatable to minorities by playing footsie with this sect are fairly recent. But those Bohras, who have been trying to resist the Syedna's chokehold over their civil rights, say they have for decades witnessed their priest grow more powerful with covert support from various state and Central governments and corporate giants. Political expediency takes precedence over reform. (See pictures on next page)

Dawoodi Bohras are predominantly traders concentrated in western India — Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra — and Madhya Pradesh. The men wear distinctive white-and-gold caps while the women

◉ **Blind faith** The Syedna, at 100 years, commands a large following that keeps the faith — mostly out of fear

wear colourful burqas called *rida*.

They believe their Imam represents the Prophet on earth and that their 21st Imam had to go into exile in the 12th century. The Syedna, appointed hereditarily since the present Syedna's grandfather's time, is supposed to be the spiritual representative in the Imam's absence.

Udaipur has been a centre of reformist struggle since the early 1970s, when a section of Bohras defied the Syedna's choice of candidates to nominate their own candidates in civic elections. In Bohrwadi, Udaipur, sitting in the reformist Dawoodi Bohra Youth Association office, Zehra

Naaz, in her mid-40s, describes how the Syedna's men attacked a Moharram *majlis* (assembly) at Moiyadpura mosque in 1975. "They pushed me from the second floor. I was 14," she recalls. Her spine was damaged so badly that she could not stand up for two years, having to drop out of school. Now, when the call for the *namaz* is heard at the mosque at 2 pm, the reformists are confined to a small enclosure.

The Syedna, who claims ownership over the minds and bodies of his followers as well as all communal property, staked claim to the mosque, the largest of eight in the city, in an Udaipur civil court in 1984. When a violent clash broke out during Ramzan in 2004, the administration divided the prayer hall. Reformists got a small portion behind iron bars.

"The Syedna insists that all mosques and communal property be vested in him rather than waqf boards. Last September,

through an RTI, we found that he and his coterie submitted a forged certificate in 2000 to the municipal corporation to get permits for new properties," says Yusuf Ali RG, a reformist whose father defied the Syedna. The family has been socially boycotted on the Syedna's orders since.

Reformists say the Syedna runs a parallel autocratic government. All Dawoodi Bohras, including those in the US, UK, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, Thailand and the Gulf, must pay taxes to the Syedna but cannot ask what is done with the money. They need the Syedna's permission to establish charities, start a school, marry, even to bury their dead. "The priest charges ₹2-10 lakh for permission for burial in Bohra cemeteries even when the land is leased from the municipal corporation. The Bohras cannot have what the Constitution allows them because we need the Syedna's permission for everything," says

laws similar to those which govern other Muslim trusts such as the Dargah Khwaja Sahab Act. Norman Contractor, a Dawoodi Bohra businessman and reformist who died in 1983, alleged that the Syedna and his family were embezzling charity funds. Reformists requested the Central government to probe financial details of two trusts headed by the Syedna — Dawat-e-Hadiya and the Syedna Taher Saifuddin Memorial Foundation — in 1977, alleging the priest was investing in industries that followers were then forced to buy shares in.

"In private, income tax authorities told us they cannot investigate this, given the pressure from higher authorities," says Saifuddin Insaf, general secretary of the Dawoodi Bohras' Central Board.

The government stayed silent even when the Tanzanian government expelled the Syedna for his alleged complicity in transferring money out of that country in



## Bohras need the Syedna's permission to start a school, a charity, marry, even bury their dead

🕒 **Appeasing the gods** (from left) Anil Ambani, Mukesh Ambani, Prithviraj Chavan, top cops, LK Advani and Narendra Modi pay obeisance to the Syedna. This deals a further blow to reformists' attempts to bring transparency and democracy

Asghar Ali Engineer, a Mumbai-based reformer, who says he accepts the institution of the Syedna, but is fighting for civil rights.

Taxes and control of finances of charities or trusts form the financial basis of the Syedna's empire. The 1979 commission, led by retired judges NP Nathwani and VM Tarkunde, pointed out, "All trust properties of the community are at the Syedna's disposal, whether he is legally the sole trustee or not. Thus, he can take decisions as to the application of the income of any trust for such purposes as he considers charitable. Any person challenging his decision has to face the consequences."

**T**HE COMMISSION's estimate was that trusts the Syedna controlled in Maharashtra alone were worth ₹50 crore. It recommended that these trusts be regulated by

1967, and nine years later when Sheikh Abdul Qayum Kaderbhoy, the Bohra priest in Sri Lanka, was caught smuggling jewels in his robes by the Sri Lankan government.

In fact, 1967 was when the present Syedna imposed a new Constitution on the community. He took over all secular powers vested in local panchayat-like councils, the *jamaat*. On reaching puberty, a child must take *misaq*, an oath of allegiance to the Syedna. With this oath, he signs off all his rights — religious and secular — and agrees that if he disobeys the Syedna, he will have to divorce his spouse, or give up his property, and be cut off from the community as the Syedna wills. This oath was originally a way to assert one's loyalty for the Ismailis, who were part of an underground movement against the Abbasid Empire. Ironically, a custom that originated

during a reform movement has become a tool in the hands of a theocracy.

A glimpse into how the Syedna operates his empire is possible from a UK government inquiry into the Dawat-e-Hadiya trust, of which he is the sole trustee. In July 2001, Charity Commission UK began investigating this public trust with an annual turnover of £2 million (approximately ₹15 crore). The commission found that of six nominees appointed to administer the trust, four were Syedna's sons. It ordered them to pay ₹3 crore back to the trust because the Syedna and the nominees had made payments to themselves, violating their fiduciary responsibilities.

Besides money from taxes and public trusts, the Syedna and his appointees charge money to make appearances. A follower must pay a minimum of ₹5,000 to apply to see the Syedna at his Mumbai-residence Shaify Mahal in Malabar Hill,

Kanga, then India's ambassador to Yemen, to make an example of what happens if the theocracy is not obeyed," says professor JS Bandukwala, a prominent social activist and physicist at MS University, Vadodara.

**D**AWOODI BOHRA localities resound with stories of being threatened, ostracised, beaten and in some instances even being driven to suicide. "My siblings, my relatives, neighbours, everyone stopped talking to me. Some Bohras even tried to burn the house I lived in with my aged mother," says Zehra Cyclewallah, who lived under police protection in Surat for 14 years after going to court against the Syedna.

Cyclewallah invited the priest's wrath when she refused to step down as manager of a cooperative bank that the Syedna first inaugurated and then several years later tried to shut down with a fatwa, accusing it of charging interest. The priest and his

education is a purely religious matter... one is inclined to think that the position of an excommunicated person becomes that of an untouchable," he remarked. Reformists' appealed for a review of the verdict but a hearing has been pending for 15 years.

The Syedna, who is the wealthiest of all Muslim clergy, has used his ties with Muslim leaders to serve his own ends, resisting any government scrutiny by raising the bogey of interference in minority culture. In cities with a history of reform within the community such as Udaipur, reformists' numbers have dwindled. Even former leaders such as Ghulam Hussain, a former president of reformist Bohra Youth Association, have had to apologise and seek refuge with the Syedna.

"If they don't obey the Syedna, they are not Dawoodi Bohras. Our trusts are run as per India's laws," says Quresh Ragib, the Syedna's public relations officer.



where he lives with 300-odd members of his family. A mail circulated prior to Syedna's visit to California in May asked every household to pay \$14,000 (₹5.6 lakh) for the Syedna's youngest son to inaugurate a mosque in Los Angeles.

The Bohra situation is not a remnant of archaic despotism, it was exacerbated by the greater affluence that came with economic liberalisation. The threat of social boycott is powerful because the community, estimated to be a little over a million, is fairly insular, often choosing to marry and do business within the community.

"A few years after I returned from the US after completing my PhD, they declared a *baraat* against me for not wearing the Dawoodi Bohra dress. They asked Muslim civic organisations I was active in to expel me. They tried to target my cousin Ismail

coterie had similarly tried to shut down Bombay Mercantile Cooperative Bank in Mumbai in 1982. The chairman of the bank, Hoseini Doctor, had then accused the priestly family of trying to gain control of the bank by forcing Bohra employees in the bank to resign or face a social boycott.

Recognising that social boycott is a weapon to deprive Dawoodi Bohras of their constitutional rights, the Bombay State Legislature had passed the Prevention of Excommunication Act in 1948. The Bombay High Court upheld the law but in 1961, a four-member Bench of the Supreme Court accepted the Syedna's contention that excommunication on religious ground was his prerogative. In a dissenting judgment, then Chief Justice Sinha expressed his discomfort with the judgment. "I am not satisfied that the right to excommuni-

Engineer, who led the movement despite six incidents of physical attacks, including a stabbing attempt in 1976, reels off a list of the high and mighty to whom he appealed to end the Syedna's chokehold. "Indira Gandhi, Zail Singh, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, VP Singh, Rajiv Gandhi. I stopped trying after Narasimha Rao," he says. He acknowledges that the underground movement is dead. "Hundreds used to collect in secret meetings in Ahmedabad, Indore, Kolkata. Now 10-15 people turn up. They say they are sympathisers but the fear of punishment is too great," he says.

If the movement is completely snuffed out, what do the reformists ultimately lose? "The freedom to do what our conscience says, to live with dignity," he says.

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# Whispers...

## by Afroze Rajabali, Birmingham

Now you all know the election gossip, lets peel back another layer and really get our hands at the ready with more happy news to clap about!...

## She's finally flapped into 30!

Using the 1920's as her guise, Zuleka Rajabali, Birmingham has hit the 30! We celebrated, dressed up, danced and ate cake just as they would have in the roaring 20's! Husband and wife looked just the part with hats, guns and black bobs, and although a double celebration, Aquil Rajabali still has a couple of months to go! Phewww! ;) Lots of love, hugs and jugs of luck for the year ahead... Mum, Dad and Frozy xxx

## Turning 60

Congratulations to our Mohammedkaka/mama on this 60th birthday. We wish him a wonderful year of celebrations – we certainly enjoyed the family birthday party – thank you Masuma and Seamus! With lots of love from all the whole family (Kapasi, Rampuri, Patwa, Harrison).

## Baby bombs!

It seems that 2 years on many of our yummy mummies are hosting round two or three of baby fever! With lots of newbie's expected to make an appearance in the next few months, it's exciting times ahead! Just wanted to send out a hug and a hi5 to all those LOVELY LADYS and hope the next couple of months blissfully relaxing!

## Stork delivery!

Mubarak Mubarak to Nazreen and Zoeb Kapadia, Leicester, on the birth of another little pink bundle back in March. She's a yummy little thing and a carbon copy of her two sisters. Amelia Kapadia, welcome to the world and hope your stay so far has been spiffing...!

## Congratulations! It's a boy!

Sakina and Zoher Bharmal, Peterborough, now have a charming family of four with the new baby boy, Faizan Bharmal. Along with a gorgeous name, this little boy is quite a prince!

## Let's see it Sparkle!

Congratulations to Saleem Rajulawala, Southend-on-Sea and Alifia Abdulhusein, Sheffield who got engaged (mashallah), in May this year. Heartiest Mubarak to both families and good luck with all the wedding planning!

## On top of the World!

Wowzer! Hanifa, Asgar and Shenaz Dungarwalla, Peterborough completed their trek up Mount Everest back in March, and all in Aid of the British Heart Foundation charity. Certainly a triumph and no mean feat...Congratulations on your mountainous achievement! Didn't they do well?!

## Quiet Please: Examination in Progress

Sssshh! They're all revising! Just thought I'd whisper through a Good Luck young ones for all those of you who are revising hard, don't forget your breaks and fresh air! For those of you who have finished hibernating and are free from time limits and hand strain, you have the summer to relax, unwind and take the supermarket world by storm as I hear a lot of them a hiring! ;)

## Here's to good health!

Saleh Bhai Tajbhai, Nottingham has made a remarkable recovery (Alhamd-ul-lillah) after recently being very unwell. We wish him good health for years to come.

'Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God, and value it next to a good conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of; a blessing that money cannot buy,'  
Isaak Walton

## 25 years of Reformism

The Association of Progressive Dawoodi Bohras of Ontario, Canada, is celebrating 25 years of its formation with a gathering in July.

Congratulations for turning this milestone, and we wish you continued success and good wishes in the struggle of the Reform Movement.

## Musjid on a grand scale

Take a peep...Bohras in Houston seem to be embarking on a masjid-building project which looks amazing. Take a peep at the initial drawings on  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urR006h\\_lxc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urR006h_lxc).  
Hopefully pockets are deep enough to sustain this project...

**Azad wishes Ramazam Mubarak to all its readers. We hope you have a peaceful and blessed month of fasting**

For UK local and national news visit  
**[www.dawoodi-bohras.org.uk](http://www.dawoodi-bohras.org.uk)**

Visit the Dawoodi Bohra Reformist website for news and views on Reformist activities: **<http://www.dawoodi-bohras.com>**



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