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people in general but also with a sense of commitment for those who are not blessed with the joys of a perfect existence.

Hence, the dream of uniting the Muslims from Alaska to Arabia and from Guatemala to the Gulf will no longer be a theoretical aspiration since it can assume a practical dimension by the willingness of all the practicing Muslims to learn the different languages with the outlook of becoming ONE, colossal community, united on all fronts with the help of learning each other's languages and harboring in their hearts only the feeling of compassion and welfare of their fellow beings. An all-rounded effort to learn languages with a well-motivated goal can ensure an era of universal peace and progress, intra-active communication and a willingness to negotiate through dialogue rather than arms.

RESOURCES

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Ummah. The teaching and learning of more than one language fosters pupil's awareness of other languages. This helps to create an awareness of a cross-section of languages as well as about specific languages. Shaikh Abdullah Ibn Adul Azeez Bin Baaz observed in the context of learning languages, in "Etiquettes of Learning", The Muslim World League Journal vol. 32, 1425/August, "knowledge is a fardh (obligation). So beware of being in a state of ignorance. Ignorance destroys. It does not strengthen and it produces corruption, not reformation and correction" (page 33).

Learning languages is exciting because it connects us to a new group of people that was previously unknown to us. Language-enriched culture can be created in our homes through many methods. The possibilities are endless. The purpose of learning languages is to understand people. Worrying about passing tests or memorizing grammar and vocabulary is not the consideration. The reward is in the new ability you gain, and the new friendships you will make. As Lisa Chipongian has appropriately observed, "Increasingly, the American classroom is multiethnic, multiracial, and multilingual at all levels", (page, 213), so can the Muslim community become in order to popularize Islam and make it the world's most multifaceted faith in the world.

The fourth and final aim of the paper is to explore the aspect of serving that segment of society which is dependent on the phenomenon of gestureaided communication as in the case of the hearing impaired people, or the blind that are reliant on Braille. There is a great instructive value in these areas, not only for experts in the field, but also for people who cannot perform just with the existing, routine conventional language skills for the sake of communication, but require additional and exceptional guidance. However, in order to make a convincing case that the deaf, the mute, the blind, the autistic and physically and mentally slow children need to be specially attended to in order to give them a fair chance to survive in society, it is also important that some people should opt for learning to teach and communicate with such special cases. This aspect of learning will not only make the society more balanced, it will also impart to the people the true essence and spirit of sincerity, devotion and service to humanity. Not only will it bring about an all rounded upliftment of the entire humanity, it will also establish the Muslims as one of the most humanitarian communities of the world with a magnanimous outlook not only for the all acquisition of the different languages.

An important question is why should people want to learn more languages? Anyone who has a clear reason for learning a language will be more motivated to succeed. Some people want to understand the local community when they go on holiday abroad, while others discover that their job brings them in close contact with people from other countries. However, there are other reasons as well, for learning languages. In the job market, more and more companies are investing in their staff being trained in foreign languages, or are recruiting those entrants who demonstrate a variety of language skills. Learning more than one language can improve the career prospects of almost any contender. Bradford J. Hall observes "Learning a language can increase your self-confidence and help you speak more clearly - so it can help people to express themselves better in their own language. Speaking someone else's language helps us to understand that person's culture and their outlook on life: the more people who do this, the more we can break down the barriers that divide people" (page, 58).

Another contention of this paper is to focus on the fact that, apart from learning merely the common spoken languages it is also greatly advantageous to be proficient in electronic-learning as well. It is the need of the hour, a trend which is becoming popular, indispensable and effortless. Not only does this facet of learning impart flexibility, accessibility and convenience, those who acquire this expertise, can be of great advantage to the Muslim community. They can impart a very progressive impression about Islam and hence, not only can they cross platforms with others anywhere in the world through access to Web browser software and the Internet, they can converse through forums and work for the progression of Islam. Robert Bogue clarifies that Electronic-learning or, "E-learning can provide ease of update to current information. E-learning is also travel-time and cost saving. There are no travel costs for bringing remotely placed people of similar circumstances and experience to centralized e-boards from the desktop" (page, 94).

This paper also focuses on one of the vital aspects already established in Islam that language must be taught as one of the signs of Allah (swt). Man has been endowed with the faculty of speech, being the highest of the creations of Allah (swt). It is the duty of man to develop language skills in order to acquire knowledge and communicate via language with the

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provides an interactive and meaningful approach to learning and personal development. Hence it cannot be denied that education and learning does eventually lead to the progress of the entire community, especially that of the Muslims.

This brings to focus the third aspect of my paper, which is about keeping in step with the up-to-date learning strategies of the modern era. It is difficult for the geographically dispersed people in keeping themselves updated about new enlightenment guidelines with the help of technology. Global awareness of the familiarity with some of the existing languages will help people to know that they can reap a richer harvest if they plant the seeds of education and training on fertile ground. Rosebery, Warren, Conant observe, that "the traditional path to mastery in the 3Rs (Reading Writing and Arithmetic) is a long and winding one, taking one through many isolated gardens and grottoes from which we may never have more than a partial view of the mountain" (page 64). However, a more comprehensive experience can be attained by learning newer languages. It can also encourage the revelation to the people about the knowledge of the intrinsic values of Islam, giving them a clearer picture of its aims. The aspect of learning newer languages can teach them the advantages of independent thinking as well as inter-active teamwork.

During the past century, and especially over the last ten years, multilingualism has been the subject of intense political debate. "In California", Krashen asserts, "where 25% of primary and high school students speak a language other than English as their native language, the debate has been particularly contentious. Important research demonstrates a link between balanced bilingualism — which involves becoming equally proficient in both languages, and cognitive gains — especially in terms of increased metalinguistic awareness" (page 205-206). For example, in many countries, it is quite normal for most people to be able to use three languages. In the European Union, people are well placed to take full advantage of European citizenship and of the single job market. Their linguistic skills are attractive to employers. At the same time, they are better equipped in being able to move between countries for educational, professional or other reasons. If other nations can aim to achieve so much on the commercial level, the Muslims can definitely accomplish much more on the spiritual level by being instrumental in spreading Islam through channelize the minds of those who want to follow Islam

On the general level, the ability of Muslims in speaking and writing to others through speeches, lessons, lectures, and writing, seminars, sermons, helps in persuading the listeners by addressing their minds through proof and evidence. They should also be able to arouse their passions, emotions, and feelings. Writings should both be eloquent and convincing, through sincere, sound and documented arguments. Education is related to the ennoblement of the spirit and the purification of the soul through faith. The minds and souls can thus be touched. Mosques, schools and other instructive associations, can play a pivotal role in re-shaping the physical and the psychological health as well as the social development and interaction between Muslims. It will also reflect positively on the realization of a spiritual education of Muslims and the formation of their character.

Banishing ignorance, increasing intellectual broad-mindedness and the creation of qualified, well learned people in Islamic cadres is the utmost goal of Muslims by opting to learn languages. The above mentioned achievements will have a lasting and beneficial influence, not only on the Muslim community, but also on the world at large. It will also facilitate in rectifying the outlook of Muslims towards society and helping them in eliminating many erroneous practices that have come to prevail as a art of social advancement and modernity.

Efforts to learn different languages can be geared towards the cultivating of our young people, and order to ensure righteous Muslim character in the generations to come. Through acquisition of languages, the Muslims can guide others in their thinking and at the same time, can create a world of their own understanding. Education, preparation, and qualification of the Ummah in learning different languages can be the key to future success, as observed by F. Genesee, "Language learning has a fundamental role to play in the process of cognitive and affective development. Language learning is a complex process. It involves interplay of oration and literacy skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, an integrated and interactive approach must be used in language learning" (page-102). It cannot be denied that communicative language teaching helps in promoting self-actualization, emotional stability, social sensitivity, respect and tolerance of self and others. It also leads to further reinforcement of personal development and inter-personal skills. Focus on learning of languages

of the fundamental truths of Islam. From the sacrifices of Sumayyah, the first lady to embrace Islam, to the collected Ahadeeth of Aisha, the beloved wife of prophet Mohammad, (pbuh), women have been instrumental in the process of assisting the flourishing and spreading of Islam" (page 47-48).

Unfortunately, in the present context, the Islamic revival has not been pursued by women with the same fervor as in the times of the prophet. Limited efforts by women to propagate Islam are one area that needs more concentration and planning for the enhancement of the Islamic ideals. According to recent data, updated by Abdul Lateef M. Al-Hassan and Sumayyah Bint Joan, in al-Jumu'ah magazine there are more women accepting Islam, than any other group (Al-Jumu'ah Magazine, Women and Misconceptions about Islam, page- 21). The same can be said of Canada, England and many other places. A recent survey conducted by Al Jumu'ah magazine in the Dominican Republic, showed that about 75% of those who accepted Islam among the natives were women. Because of this, there is a tremendous need for Muslim women to participate in the field of learning languages to serve the Ummah. "The role of converting to Islam does not stop at the pronunciation of the Shahada," Dr. Abdul Lateef Al-Hassan said in Al-Jumu'ah Magazine, "Women are needed to help other women come to Islam, and are needed to instruct them after they become Muslims" (page-1). The reasons why women's participation is important are various and diverse. Women have the innate ability to communicate strongly what they believe to be true in their hearts. Dr. Hassan also points out that, "Women are also generally stronger in terms of verbal abilities and emotionality"(page-2). Women can be instrumental in helping those who lack willpower and a sense of direction, and therefore need assistance to give strength and motivation to their cause.

The contribution of the Muslim women in the field of serving the Ummah by learning languages strengthens the social, moral and the psychological aspects of their roles as propagators of Islam, as it explores those areas where their effectiveness supersedes in certain aspects. It is sad that this role is grossly overlooked and underestimated. The women can play an important role in serving the Ummah. The first wife of the Prophet (pbuh), Khadija's comfort, help, and support, offers the greatest proof of the vital importance of this role. It is important that women, who understand their role, start educating themselves by enjoying their rights to educate and

our knowledge will increase to endless limits. Learning a language can be a strong unifying force; in fact, cultural anthropologists consider language to be the strongest factor, binding people. As Ameenah Abu and Bilal Philips, observes, "Anywhere a Muslim travels, for instance-whether to China, Jordan, Pakistan, or America--the phrase "Assalamo-Alaikum" and its response, "Wa-Alaikum-Assalamo" are universal, constant, and consistent among Muslims. Learning any singular language is not only a way of identifying with other Muslims, it is in fact, a way of bonding them in the same way the code of a particular association marks and joins its members. Few realize, that even this simple phrase, has unified Muslims throughout the world for over fourteen centuries through a common language" (page, 17).

At the same time, it is recommendable for the Muslims to have knowledge of more than one language, because it will help us to reach beyond geographical limitations – to the hearts and minds of people by conveying to them the word of Allah, (swt) in the language they have been familiar with all their lives. However, if we can only speak only one particular language, like - English, Turkish, or Japanese, then we may be easily divided and conquered by those who have more powerful access over languages. Our differences become magnified if we cannot understand each other. The more Muslims we can reach through acquisition of different languages, the firmer the fellowship becomes. An ability to exchange views on Islam and Muslims in different languages will, again, help in dispelling the misinformation circulating around and it will portray Muslims all over the world as being organized and proactive. Although learning any new language can be difficult and frustrating, the mastery of communicating in a variety of languages is not without its rewards from Allah (swt).

However, an unfortunate reality is that on most occasions we have failed to absorb and utilize the energies of women, and have failed to adjust their plans and programs in a way that would incorporate women as core assets in training women to learn languages for serving the Ummah. The media, and some other regressive elements of today's ultra-modern society, have had major impacts on the psyche of Muslim women. As Muzaffar Haleem, and Betty Batul Bowman, state, "This psychic crippling has kept many women away from being part of the mission" (page-32). They continue to observe, "from the very beginning, women have played vital roles in the propagation

degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge. (Marmaduke Pickthall (1970). The Meaning of the Glorious Koran)

The first source of referring to the status of learning and acquiring knowledge in Islam, is the Glorious Qur'an - as we understand from the verses above on the subject of knowledge. The second source is the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Here are a few of the Prophet's sayings on the subject of knowledge:

- "Upon a person whom Allah (swt) desires good, He bestows the knowledge of faith." (from the hadith collections of Bukhari, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Tirmidi, and Muslim Volume 3).
- "A person who follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah (swt) will make easy the passage to Paradise for him." (from the collection of Muslim, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin, Sahih Al-Bukhari, and Tirmidi, Muslim-Volume 5).
- "A Muslim is never satiated in his quest for good (knowledge) till it ends in Paradise." (from the collection of Tirmidhi, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Tirmidi, and Muslim- Volume 8).

Interestingly enough centuries later, the post-modern educators acknowledged the importance of learning to write and store information, which is described by Professor Carl Sagan in his book Cosmos, "Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time, proof that humans can work magic." (page, 21). Language learning is something that everyone can do - and do it throughout their lifetime - you are never too old or too young to learn a language! Our ethos is the belief, shared with many, that learning foreign languages and experiencing different cultures can only facilitate the understanding between the peoples. Learning a language is not just learning grammar and vocabulary. It is learning new sounds, expressions, and ways of seeing things; it is learning how to function in another culture, how to know a new community from the insideout.

Once we learn different languages, our access to information about Islam multiplies in non-Arabic languages. If we are able to read these materials,

(reported by Adrian Hare, English and Islam, page-102.)

There are plenty of references to knowledge and the pursuit of learning in the Glorious Qur'an. The general impression they have on the reader is that the possessor of knowledge or wisdom has been given an extra-ordinary gift, and that the quest of knowledge is something that should be perceived actively by everyone. Here are a few verses on the subject:

[Al-Alaq: 1-5] Read! In the name of your Lord who created - Created the human from something, which clings. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful - He who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught the human that which he knew not. (Marmaduke Pickthall (1970). The Meaning of the Glorious Koran)

These five verses make up the first passage revealed from the Glorious Qur'an to humankind through the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is interesting that of all the things which Allah chose to begin His revelation with, is related to the actions of learning reading and writing. Further evidence on the great emphasis laid by Allah (swt) on the aspect of learning as being a fortunate act of selective providential favor can be gleaned from the following verses:

[Al-Baqarqh: 269] He [Allah] grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted indeed receives a benefit overflowing. But none will grasp the Message except men of understanding. (Marmaduke Pickthall (1970). The Meaning of the Glorious Koran)

[Taha: 114] High above all is Allah, the King, the Truth. Do not be in haste with the Qur'an before its revelation to you is completed, but say, "O my Sustainer! Increase my knowledge." (Marmaduke Pickthall (1970). The Meaning of the Glorious Koran)

There are also references in the Glorious Qur'an describing the value [in the sight of Allah (swt)] of a knowledgeable person as opposed to an ignorant person. They are not equal:

[Al-Zumar: 9] ...Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that remember (Allah's Message). (Marmaduke Pickthall (1970). The Meaning of the Glorious Koran)

[Al-Mujaadalah: 11] ...Allah will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and

achieving the universality of Islam binds all Muslims collectively to attempt to have a good command of at least some of the leading languages in the world. In other words, the Muslims should draw closer collectively to spread and propagate Islam all over the world, which cannot be achieved without learning the languages of those whom we invite to Islam. In addition, Islam never forbade learning others' languages. Rather as Othman Abdulaziz Altwaijri comments, "Islam has always urged Muslims to learn others' languages, as they are the means of communication among people and the means of spreading the word of Islam all over the world" (9).

Though Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was an Arab and the Glorious Ouran, revealed to him was in Arabic, the message of Islam is universal, and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent to guide all humankind to the right path. In the Holy Ouran, Allah (swt) said, "that he may be a warner to the peoples" (Al-Furgan: 1). Almighty Allah says: "We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples" (Al-Anbiya': 107) and "Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all" (Al-A'raf: 158). There must have been a means of communication between the Prophet and the peoples of other languages to enable him to convey the message of Islam to them. To illustrate the point, let it be remembered that the Prophet had several Companions who knew languages such as those of Persia. Rome, and Ethiopia; it was sufficient for him that they could translate from and into these languages. Yet, the Prophet did not have a Companion who knew the Syriac language that was used by the Jews in writing. Therefore, he ordered the scholar, Zayd ibn Thabit Al-Ansari, who was a scribe of the Revelation, to learn how to read and write Syriac so that he (that is, the Prophet) could dispense with the Jews who used to write his letters in Syriac. Zayd is reported to have said, "I learned that language and had so impressive a command of it that I used to write the Prophet's letters to them (in Syriac) and read him their letters" (as reported in Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi). Furthermore, many Muslims during the rise of the Islamic civilization were keen on learning other languages and translating to and from them. An Arab poet says in this regard:

The more languages you know the more useful you are. Languages help in relieving misfortune. Be keen on learning other languages. Each language you know is a human being. Quran – the final word of Allah (subhana-hu-wa-ta'ala), and in the Hadith, which are a collection of the savings of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), authenticated by scholars of his time like, Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Muslim, Ibn-e-Maja and At-Tirmidhi. Secondly, it surveys the constructive role that women can play in spreading Islam and serving the people by learning languages. Thirdly, keeping in step with the advancing times, the paper takes into account the imperative inevitability of learning the elanguages by Muslims as part of the process of striding in step with the current progression. In an era of increased communication through the internet, the world is becoming more and more globally oriented. Businesses, families, friends, and many other groups with common interests are able to form small "cyber" or computer-generated communities that transcend geographic boundaries. Hence it is important for Muslims to be computer literate in order to be able to congregate with the help of the highly advanced and popular media of the sophisticated e-learning. Finally, it also dwells on the dire need to learn to communicate with the people with special needs and the physically challenged, so that it is possible to reach out not only to the strong and the proficient but also the weak and the disadvantaged. Hence, this paper attempts to focus on the presentation of a well-rounded endeavor to formulate an infallible plan for widening the horizons of Islam by Muslims. In their quest of acquiring the expertise in learning different types of languages, they can make it possible to utilize their commitment on a variety of constructive levels in spreading the significance of Islam far and wide.

Despite our ability to transmit information across oceans, communication still relies on language to mediate interchange between individuals within these communities. Information is useless if it cannot be processed and understood. Therefore, in order to achieve true and complete globalization, we would have to eliminate language barriers and develop a universal standard of having a unified medium of communication - like the one we find in the English language - according to which everyone could interact at the same level of understanding.

Among one of the many signs of God's wisdom is that He created people as different nations and tribes having different physical features, shades, colors and languages. This is undoubtedly one of His signs of greatness. Since language is a means of communication for all human beings,

Prospective Dimensions of Learning Languages to Serve the Ummah Dr. Naela Hamed Danish

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Learning languages by Muslims can play a pivotal role in inculcating an ambiance of appreciation and tolerance among the non-Muslim communities, towards understanding the true essence of Islam. This endeavor can also promote Islamic ideals and values not just on a theoretical basis, but also as they are enacted in terms of their practical application in the everyday life of a Muslim. Those Muslims, who are fortunate enough to be blessed with a chance to acquire a good education themselves, and at the same time, have the drive to serve other people, can utilize their ability, by trying to learn more than one language. They can thus use their aptitude as a multi faceted powerful tool in the endeavor of popularizing and expanding Islam to realms uncharted before. Moreover, it is an effort, which has a three-dimensional effect in serving the Ummah: it is a constructive, creative and collaborative effort with an aim to produce long-term results of ensuring the continuity of Islam as one of the most adequate religions in the world once again!

Learning different languages can facilitate in providing quality education to the people of our community. On the other hand, it can also help to monitor, regulate and consider the varied challenges facing the people in diverse social, political, economic and geographical stratum all over the world. It is definitely an immense effort that promotes the willingness of the Muslims to be interactive with, and reflective of, the conditions prevailing for the populace in different circumstances. It can encourage the surmounting of personal and social problems to help the people emerge as one united force against the divergent aspects of destruction existing under the banner of progress and modernization.

This paper aims to focus on four particular aspects of learning languages in the perspective of promoting the awareness of Islam for the believers of other faiths, speaking varied languages. It can also to assist fellow Muslims in undertaking the mission of 'Dawa' in a successful and extensive manner in order to help Islam regain its position as the most widely accepted faith in the world. First of all, it concentrates on the directives of learning languages from the point of view of the Islamic tenets as mentioned in the Glorious