

RAHAT WELFARE TRUST

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The Age of Enlightenment

A Question of Identity. Whether it is the wearing of the scarf or a turban in France or the wearing of the *hijab* in posh professional colleges in London or Mumbai, it is now a question of identity. All over the world these outward manifestations, are signs of a deep rooted inner urge, particularly amongst the minorities to seek and assert their own identity. The need to belong, to confirm to a distinctive identifiable group is nothing new. But this search for identity, particularly by the youth, in the modern context, has everything to do with security and empowerment. And while belonging to a distinctive group may be of great help, at the same time it brings with itself extraordinary pressures. For example, simply the fact of being a Muslim is sufficient to raise suspicion and biases; and in some parts of the world, outright hatred and humiliation. The mere fact that your name is, say, Abdullah or Sakina, establishes your Muslim identity, and is enough to debar you from a job, a visa or a lucrative business opportunity. Not an easy time to assert your identity.

Islamic Character. Be that as it may, what we have to submit respectfully is that the Muslim identity must be embedded in the Islamic character. At some point of time in the near future, in an age of enlightenment, the name *Abdullah* must become synonymous with scholarship and learning; with reliability and trustworthiness; with honesty and integrity; with forgiveness and compassion, with piety and righteousness; and with forbearance and fortitude. Inshallah, all else will follow.

Single Point Agenda. But for this to happen, all of us will have to make tremendous efforts and focus on a single-point agenda: To impart education of the highest standards to our children, particularly the poor, the needy and the orphan child. And to impact on society this will have to be done on a mass level. Thousands of groups, NGOs, trusts, societies, schools, colleges and universities will have to be established to achieve this task.

Total Support. Rahat Welfare Trust, a registered Trust and NGO based in Mumbai is one such group working, for the time being, on a modest level. **Rahat** was established in 1992, primarily to promote the welfare of Muslim women and children, particularly that of widows and orphans and in **October 2004**, has over **2400** applications from such needy and deserving families. **Rahat** is helping **250** families on an ongoing basis under its **Total Educational Support Scheme, (TESS)**, under which a child once sponsored receives everything required to go to school. School, bus and computer fees, uniforms, books, shoes, socks, bags, raincoats, ties, stationery - almost everything is provided by **Rahat**. **Rahat** provides **total support** to the family to ensure that the child goes to school properly. Educating these children is now **Rahat's** responsibility. **Rahat** also gives a small monthly allowance for food and ration to several families. **Rahat** provides nearly four hundred uniforms to poor students, going mainly to state-run Municipal schools at the beginning of every academic year. **Rahat** continues its support to the poor and orphan students of Shaheen Urdu High school and Al Kausar Urdu School, both located in two different slum localities in North Mumbai. Support to these schools forms part of **Rahat's** long term agenda of promoting education on a mass level. Scores of **Rahat** scholars are now earning a decent livelihood and supporting their families. These are the shining stars of **Rahat**, who have enriched our efforts and have given meaning to our work. These are the role models who have shown that a better world is possible. **Rahat** is privileged and honoured to have had an opportunity to facilitate their well-being.

Zakat Collection. **Rahat** activities are funded mainly through the **Zakat** collection in Ramzan every year. But we do need funds on a larger scale, such is the undoubted need of the hour. We therefore request you to send **Rahat** a part of your **Zakat** this Ramzan. (Donations are also very welcome). And ask atleast two other persons to do the same. **Zakat** may be sent by a payee's account cheque/draft in favour of '**Rahat Welfare Trust**' to our registered office at 6, Fatima Manor, St. Monica Road, Bandra, (West) Mumbai, 400050, India. Donors in Mumbai may contact us on phone **26552256** or mobile **98923 09785**, we will collect the **Zakat** from their home, office or shop. Donations of **Zakat** to **Rahat** are eligible for deductions as per rules under Section 80 G of the I. Y. Act, 1961. **Thank You.**

IRFAN MERCHANT
President

ZAKAT PURIFIES YOUR WEALTH

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