

TANZEEM E ISLAMI



Striving for the Law of Allah, on the Land of Allah

PERSPECTIVE

The official online newsletter of Tanzeem e Islami
... Uploaded twice a month to [www. Tanzeem.org](http://www.Tanzeem.org)...

Special Issue: Pros and Cons of Social Media (7 pages)



'PERSPECTIVE' is a trend-setting newsletter issued by Tanzeem e Islami that focuses on a candid commentary on the current national and international issues, in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

A blend that gives Muslims an insight into the events of the past, those happenings at present and the Signs of things to come...

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Patron: Hafiz Aakif Saeed
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From the Qur'an:

“O’ you who have true faith! If one who publicly and openly commits sins brings you any news (concerning another person or a matter) then ascertain its truthfulness carefully (before you spread it) lest you harm people through (your own) ignorance (through accepting and following false reports) and then regret what you have done.”

(Surah Al-Hujraat; Verse 6)

Selected Hadith:

The Messenger (SAAW) of Allah (SWT) is reported to have said:

“When man wakes up in the morning each day, all his body parts warn his tongue saying: ‘Fear Allah with regards to us, for we are under your mercy; if you are upright we will be upright and if you are crooked, we will be crooked.’”

(At-Tirmidhi)

And

“He who protects his tongue from unlawful utterances and his private parts from illegal sexual intercourse, I (SAAW) shall guarantee him entrance into Paradise.”

(Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

EDITORIAL

All praise is due to Allah (SWT), and peace & blessing on his noble Messengers (AS), in particular, on the last of them all the blessed Prophet Muhammad (SAAW).

The current issue is dedicated to the pros and cons of using social media. Make no mistake; there are proponent of both schools of thought with quite compelling arguments. Our purpose here is not to pass judgement, but to lay the facts bare for the readers to have all possible facets of the issue before reaching an informed opinion. One thing is for sure, however, that the religious narrative always outweighs the contemporary materialistic one. Moreover, Islam has an extremely meticulous mechanism of weighing pros and cons of any action and analyzing which outweighs which, before delivering a verdict.

The rest of this issue deals mostly with the subject of the advantages and disadvantages of using social media, from both the worldly and more importantly the Islamic perspective. May Allah (SWT) bless us all with the insight to tell the wrong (or the more disadvantageous) from the right (or the more advantageous), along with acumen to find a middle ground that does not violate the Islamic Shariah in anyway.

Aameen!

Signing off...

Dr. Absar Ahmad (Chief Editor)

Pros and Cons of Social Media

Pros of Social Media – Islamic Perspective

1. Teaching the Quran/Hadith

Uthman bin Affan (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAAW) said, "The most superior among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." [Sahih Bukhari]

It is not without doubt that this is indeed a noble tradition, the social media no doubt today presents us with countless opportunities to achieve this spiritual superiority before Allah (SWT). Muslims today have developed countless ways of giving online courses in Arabic, Tajweed, Ahadith, Fiqh and so on through the social media and internet.

People can now learn the language of the Quran as well as its recitation within the comfort of their homes. Islamic internet websites provides question and answer segments which are closely regulated by certified clerics and Ulema of the Deen.

2. The ease of propagating Dawah

During the early Islamic era, the Sahaba (RA) and other Muslims rode horses or used other available means of transportation to travel to nations in order to call them to Islam, the religion was propagated through Dawah in gatherings or during discussions with individuals, these local means of communications though not as viable and fast but nonetheless aided successfully the spread of Islam through the special grace of Allah (SWT). The Prophet (SAAW) said "If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth." [Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim] In another tradition, the Prophet (SAAW) said "Allah, His angels and all those in Heavens and on Earth, even ants in their hills and fish in the water, call down blessings on those who instruct others in beneficial knowledge." [Al-Tirmidhi]

We have an advanced media and other electronic means of communications today. It can enable us to achieve so much more in this context. A simple message today on Islamic propagation can be viewed and read by billions of people around the globe through the use of social media platforms and electronic aids. This social and electronic media in this regards provide us with the opportunity to enlighten more individuals about Islam within a concise span of time, therefore if used rightly it has no limit to the extent to which the message of Islam can travel around the world. This can also be used to positively correct the view of Islam in the minds of certain individuals.

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3. No Field must be left unchallenged for Satan

The field of social media and internet cannot be left unchallenged for the forces of evil to use as they please.

4. Highlighting global oppression

Social Media is an effective tool in highlighting global oppression by the dominant forces against the weak. The use of social media and the internet to draw the attention of the world towards atrocities committed in Palestine, Kashmir, Myanmar and the former Yugoslavia are a few examples of the good work done by social media pressure.

Pros of Social Media – General Perspective

1. Improved communication between Friends and Relations

Social media has improved communication all over the world. The whole world is well connected to every other part of it now. Long lost childhood friends can be reunited with, thanks to social networks. Social networks started as a place to connect with your friends in an easy and convenient way. Social networks have provided us the opportunity to connect with people and build better relationships with friends with whom we are unable to meet personally, and let them know about our life and take input about their lives and events happening with them. Improved communication between friends and relations can help in developing rapport.

2. Sharing

Social media can be used to instantaneously share all kinds of media, including files, videos, GIFs, pictures and a lot more on social networking sites.

3. Education

Home works, assignments and research material can be easily shared amongst students with the help of these sites. Social media has made distant courses very easy to attend. Online distant education systems have helped literal a lot of people over the last decade. Enhancement of knowledge is a definite merit of social media. Moreover, social media has become a tool where the notion of “home schooling” has flourished.

4. Reducing Communication Barriers

With social networks we are able to communicate our thoughts and perceptions over different topics with a large number of audiences, and raise our voice. The sharing feature available on the social networks makes your opinion about any topic reach huge number of people (even to those who are not on your friends list). We have the option to make groups with people who are like-minded and share the related news with them and ask for their opinion or input about the topic. Simply there are a number of options available for us to communicate with others on these social networks and everyone has a right to express views and opinions.

Cons of Social Media – Islamic Perspective

1. Promotion of indecency

Islam propagates the emulation of certain manners by Muslims, these manners are without a reason to better the Ummah in general, and one of such is the lowering of the gaze as stipulated in the following ayah where Allah (SWT) states, “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do” **[Surah An Noor: 30]**

The rule of modesty applies to men as well as women. A brazen stare by a man at a woman (or even at a man) is a breach of this refined manner. This is a commendable virtue which today has been brutally violated by the social media platforms we have. The expression of almost naked pictures of both men and women on social media is in abundance. This is ultimately because it is not easy refusing to enlarge the display picture of that Aura exposed girls or guy on your social network profile.

In a nutshell, today’s social media is rife with the promotion of indecency, lewdness and all form of sexual depravity.

2. Unguarded Utterances

One of the founding principles of the media is “freedom of speech”, freedom of speech irrespective of its effect on the individuality of society, freedom of speech weather blasphemous in nature to the principles of not only Islam but also other people ideology in general.

This principle of mass media practice has been transferred to the social media of today and has caused several negative tendencies to its users which include the Muslims in general, tendencies such the act of engaging in illicit discussion with the opposite sex and all that care to participate, public insult/abuse of individuals via these electronic means, display of illicit pictures of one’s self and foes, all these are done in the name of “freedom of speech and expression”.

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAAW) said, “...He who believes in Allah and the last day, let him speak good or remain silent”. **[Sahih Muslim]**

The Prophet (SAAW) has commanded “good” in the speech of man, this is to promote good qualities in individuals and promote peaceful coexistence beyond the right to utter anything we like in the name of “freedom of speech and expression” which only end in sowing seed of discord among people.

This prophetic manner is also an indication of the faith in Muslim for He (SAAW) said “...He who believes in Allah and the last day...”

This manner is fast becoming absent today in the way words are being exchanged through social media. Updates of Un-godly statement are the trends of the day on our social media.

The spread of illicit pictures and lyrics of western songs has done no good

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3. Demonization of Islam, Ulema and Muslims

Social media, along with the mainstream media, demonizes Islam, Ulema and Muslims in general on a regular basis. Islam is portrayed as a religion opposing basic rights, creating misconceptions about Islam and its supposed links with violence and terrorism. In turn, the Ulema and Muslims in general are portrayed as “terrorist”, “extremist”, “radical Islamist” in both the mainstream and social media.

These are all misconceptions about Islam that are due to the media’s prejudice and ignorance mostly because not enough knowledge is always sought in Islam.

Abu Darda (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAAW) said, “nothing will be heavier on the scale of the believers on the day of resurrection than good manners; Allah hates one who utters foul or coarse language”. [Al-Tirmidhi]

In another tradition, Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAAW) said, “the best of companions to Allah is one who is best to his companions and the best of neighbors to Allah is the one who is the best of them to his neighbors.” [Al-Tirmidhi]

So how does one define as “radical” a religion that preaches the best of manners and thereby forbidden the utterance of utter and foul language? How do you define as “extreme” a religion that preaches the best in a man as that who is best to his neighbors? So how does one define as “terrorism” a religion that preaches kindness to animals and even plants?

The media today does not carry or portray all that is good in the religion of Islam but miss-represents it mostly through doctored or one sided show in order to influence people’s views on Islam.

The Western media usually identifies “Islam” in Muslim conflicts. It hardly points other religions out in their conflicts.

For example, the news would say, "Five Israelis may have been shot, but they were shot by five Muslims", instead of saying "Five Israelis were shot by five Palestinians". The media often reverses this action when a conflict is against Muslims, for example the news would usually say "Bosnians are being killed by Serbians", but instead rarely says, "Muslims are being killed by Christians"

The negative impact of the media and social media in general are numerous but that also in not without an advantage in plays in the role Muslims lives and Islam as a religion.

4. Desensitization of the Righteous

Even people with rock solid morality and ideology are prone to become used to and desensitized, over time, to the vulgarity and profanity that accompanies internet and social media, without even realizing.

5. Frivolous Acts and wastage of precious time

It has been researched that exposure to social media makes people start using it for personal and frivolous acts, such as making photo-sessions, taking selfies and videos, even when used in a religious environment, thus wasting precious time and energy.

6. Dubious Statistics

The statistics regarding likes and shares have been researched to be based on unverifiable sources. Even if a Qur’anic clip is liked or shared a lot, it does not necessarily mean that it has been viewed in detail. The statistics regarding social media are often dubious to say the least.

7. Loss of Personal, Face-to-Face touch in Dawah

Social media and internet at times become ‘convenient’ alternatives to the tried and tested methods of personal, face-to-face Dawah.

8. A cog in the Dajjali Machine

At the end of the day, social media and its use along with internet is part and parcel of the Satanic and Dajjali culture predominant in the world today. It is merely another cog in the well-oiled machine of evil that controls the world today.

Cons of Social Media – General Perspective

1. Privacy Issues

Users of social networks must be careful what they say because the world is watching. While networkers have the ability to IM and chat one on one, much of what is said on social networks is viewable by the public. There is virtually no privacy when everyone can see what is being said.

2. Hacking and viruses/malwares/Trojans/zero-day attacks

Hacking and planting of viruses, malwares, and Trojans takes place on a massive level through the use of social media. Social networks do not offer security measures for their users, thus many of the computers used by networkers are vulnerable to hackers. Every bit of information on a networker’s computer becomes available to those skilled in this science, often without the knowledge of the networker. Along with the ability to hack is the ability to plant viruses. Many viruses today are passed through social networks, often undetected. Networks are a playing field for computer viruses, malware, Trojans and zero-day attacks.

3. Uncensored Media

Social networks are largely uncensored. While this may not seem to be an issue, some of the photos and language used by some networkers is inappropriate for children, yet it is viewable by the public. Because children of any age may network, everything available to adults is also available to children, and some things simply should not be seen by children.

4. The Dark Web

The dark web is the World Wide Web content that exists on darknets, overlay networks that use the Internet but require specific software, configurations or authorization to access. The dark web forms a small part of the deep web, the part of the web not indexed by web search engines, although sometimes

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the term deep web is mistakenly used to refer specifically to the dark web. The darknets which constitute the dark web include small, friend-to-friend peer-to-peer networks, as well as large, popular networks like Tor, Freenet, and I2P, operated by public organizations and individuals. Users of the dark web refer to the regular web as Clearnet due to its unencrypted nature. The Tor dark web may be referred to as onionland, a reference to the network's top-level domain suffix .onion and the traffic anonymization technique of onion routing.

Dark-web content

A December 2014 study by Gareth Owen from the University of Portsmouth found that the most commonly hosted type of content on Tor was child pornography, followed by black markets, while the individual sites with the highest traffic were dedicated to botnet operations. Many whistleblowing sites maintain a presence as well as political discussion forums. Sites associated with Bitcoin, fraud related services and mail order services are some of the most prolific. To counter the trend of controversial content, the artist collective Cybertwee held a bake sale on an onion site. The study also found that some of the activities on the darkweb include:

- Gambling, Guns, Chat, Abuse, Books, Directory, Blog, Porn, Hosting, Hacking, Search, Anonymity, Forum, Counterfeit, Whistleblower, Wiki, Mail, Bitcoin, Fraud, Market, Drugs.

In July 2017, Roger Dingledine, one of the three founders of the Tor Project, said that Facebook is the biggest hidden service. A more recent February 2016 study from researchers at King's College London gives the following activities and content by an alternative category set, highlighting the illicit use of .onion services.

- Violence, Arms, Social, Hacking, Illegitimate pornography, Nexus, Extremism, Other illicit, offshore Finance, Drugs.

5. Trolling: Cyber-Predators

Along with privacy and censorship comes the issue of cyber predators. Social networks do not screen their users and have no real way of knowing what kinds of people are using the network. Social networks offer a hunting ground of sorts to cyber predators seeking out unsuspecting networkers. Cyber bullies are also able to use social networks as an easy way to blast their prey.

6. Cyber-Bullying

Cyber bullying is a major threat to the minds of the young. It is fueled by social media and can leave a devastating scar on the brain of the victim, which may lead to PTSD or a psychotic break.

7. Deceasing sense of good judgement

Social media may have strengthened connections, but it has also devoid us of the sense to judge which connection is worth fostering. We are now trying to communicate to people who are continents apart and, in the process, are neglecting the people who are physically present next to us. A false sense of positivity and communication is going viral. Relationships are breaking and trusting souls are disappearing.

8. Fake news

In the mid-1990s, Nicolas Negroponte anticipated a world where news through technology become progressively personalized. In his 1996 book *Being Digital* he predicted a digital life where news consumption becomes an extremely personalized experience and newspapers adapted content to reader preferences. This prediction has since been reflected in news and social media feeds of modern day.

In the 21st century, the capacity to mislead has been enhanced by the widespread use of social media. For example, one 21st century website that enabled 'fake news' proliferation was the Facebook newsfeed. In late 2016 fake news gained notoriety following the uptick in news content by this means, and its prevalence on the micro-blogging site Twitter. In the United States, 62% of Americans use social media to receive news. This, in combination with increased political polarization and filter bubbles, led to a tendency for readers to mainly read headlines.

Fake news has seen higher sharing on Facebook than legitimate news stories, which analysts explained was because fake news often panders to expectations or is otherwise more exciting than legitimate news. Facebook itself initially denied this characterization. A Pew Research poll conducted in December 2016 found that 64% of U.S. adults believed completely made-up news had caused "a great deal of confusion" about the basic facts of current events, while 24% claimed it had caused "some confusion" and 11% said it had caused "not much or no confusion". Additionally, 23% of those polled admitted they had personally shared fake news, whether knowingly or not. Researchers from Stanford assessed that only 8% of readers of fake news recalled and believed in the content they were reading, though the same share of readers also recalled and believed in "placebos" – stories they did not actually read, but that were produced by the authors of the study. In comparison, over 50% of the participants recalled reading and believed in true news stories.

9. Communal hatred and racism (especially Islamophobia)

In the media, Islamophobia has been more and more spoken about over time. Websites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have been directly associated with these media references to Islamophobia. According to *The Social Network of Hate: Inside Facebook's Walls of Islamophobia*, by British academic Imran Awan, Awan himself had went through 100 different Facebook pages online to which he found 494 posts and comments that were directly appointing hateful words towards Muslim individuals.

These posts and comments consisted of racial slurs and negative comments towards Islam. With such a large community that exists on these social media websites, it is hard to not see hateful words spoken towards individual groups or people. The most common comments and words that were found during the Facebook investigations were ones discriminating against the clothing of Muslims, and also directed to how people believe they should be deported. The President of the United States also has taken a standpoint in the views of Islamophobia in the media as well. It is alleged that President Trump could be implementing an identification system for Muslim individuals.

Social media is full of posts that are anti-social, racist and contain Islamophobia. Websites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have been directly associated with these media references to Islamophobia. Same is the case with apps such as WhatsApp.

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10. Death of Creativity

Death of creativity and birth of inactivity is another aftermath of social media usage. Kids, instead of being involved in healthy outdoor activities, are consumed into Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and the likes.

11. Distraction

Social media is a major cause for distraction of people these days. A ping on WhatsApp or a message on Facebook is irresistible to old and young alike. A few minutes of Instagram night before an important exam can be devastating! It leads to a terrible kind of addiction that slowly eats up the individual. Eyesight loss, migraines and increased anxiety issues are just the beginning.

12. Personal data infringed

With social media comes an increased sense of courage and that is followed by us publicizing our lives. Most of us have provided the net with all sorts of possible data about our family and profession. This can lead to serious security breaches in our lives and can destroy is, if misused. A simple rumor can ruin our reputation. Personal data can be obtained by hacking or phishing by criminals. A number of frauds and scams have taken place due to social media.

13. Leads to Addiction

Many studies have shown that the extensive use of social media can actually cause addiction to the users. Throughout their day, they feel to post something on their pages or check others posts as it has become an important part of our life. In extreme case it has been diagnosed as a psychiatric disorder called "The fear of missing out", a.k.a. "FOMA".

14. Lead to Isolation

Extreme usage of social media has reduced the level of human interaction. Because of social networks, the interaction with other people has become effortless and people have isolated their lives behind their online identities. Face-to-face communication and meetings has been reduced and many of us have lost the flavor and charm to be together under one roof. This has been causing a tendency of isolation in the society.

15. Cause of Deaths

Social media has also been a cause of death. Over use is one thing, but copying stunts shared by other users takes stupidity to a whole new level – a level where one can lose his life. Thousands of lives have been lost as social media glamorizes drugs, BSDM, erotic asphyxiation and alcohol abuse. Hundreds more die while making 'selfies'! Habits such as smoking and drinking have been glorified using social media in the past. Adolescents are trapped into these circles and ruin their lives.

GENERAL CONCLUSION and CAUTIONS

Social media is important and may be beneficial, but only if used in the right way. Unfortunately, it is noticeably being used in a very wrong way today.

Methods of constructive usage of social media and electronic aids

1. Ensure that you limit yourself to the quest for useful knowledge always, The Prophet (SAAW) said, "He who sets foot on a path in the quest of knowledge, Allah facilitates for him the path to Paradise." [Al-Tirmidhi]

It is therefore essential for us that if we must indulge in the use of the social and mass media, then we should do so in such a manner that it will be beneficial to use with respect to the acquisition of rightful knowledge and May Allah (SWT) guide us to paradise through such venture. **Aameen!**

2. We live in an environment soaked in non-Islamic values and conducts. Parents and elders must know that Islam clearly says that children are a blessing, a trust, and a test from Allah (SWT). The Qur'an says, "And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and surely with Allah is the mighty reward" [Surah Anfal: 28]

This remind us of a binding responsibility to ensure that we instill the path of guidance on those we are responsible for be it our friends, brothers and sisters as well as our children. We can always endeavor to educate them on the most effective ways to utilize the media tools they find at their disposal.

3. Social media today enables us to bridge communication boundaries by staying in a virtual company of people from all over the world. This is similar to a gathering of people around each other but just with the absence of physical presence. We therefore stand to benefit just as much in a social/virtual gathering as we would in a physical one. And this is of course with reference to our contacts on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and so on.

The Messenger of Allah (SAAW) said: "The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like that of the seller of musk, and the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows. So as for the seller of musk then either he will grant you some, or you buy some from him, or at least you enjoy a pleasant smell from him. As for the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows then either he will burn your clothes or you will get an offensive smell from him." [Sahih Bukhari & Sahih Muslim]

In another Tradition, the Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) said: "Mix with the noble people, you become one of them; and keep away from evil people to protect yourself from their evils." [Sahih Bukhari & Sahih Muslim]

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran: "And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever [in] neglect." [Surah Al-Kahf: 28]

The message is clear. If we stay with someone for a long period of time, after some time the quality of that person that we are with will be reflected in ourselves. We begin to talk or act like them so if their action and lives values are not in conformity with that of Islam, we begin to lose our Iman by gradually being with them. It is therefore imperative that we regulate the communication we make with people through the social and mass media to that which will benefit us and Islam positively.

**Press Releases issued by Tanzeem e Islami****Date: 02 February 2018****Lahore (PR): “It is very unfortunate that there is no punishment for contempt of religion in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.”**

This was stated by the Ameer of Tanzeem e Islami, **Hafiz Aakif Saeed**, during the Khitab-e-Jumu'ah at Quran Academy, Lahore.

The Ameer noted that Senator Nehal Hashmi of PML-N had been awarded punishment for contempt of court, and it is true that every person found guilty of breaking the law ought to be punished irrespective of high or low social status, however, it was very unfortunate that while the same constitution of Pakistan clearly stated that no legislation would be done repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah, yet that particular article of the constitution was trampled at will and legislation contrary to Islamic Shariah was done at a regular basis but neither the government nor the courts took any notice to stop it. Moreover, there was a barrage of vulgar and lewd content being shown on media but neither the government nor the courts took any notice to stop it. The Ameer remarked that our religion, Islam, had made “Riba” (usury and commercial interest) “Haram-e-Mutaliq” (strictly forbidden), yet our entire government apparatus was running on a riba-based economy. He added that, ironically, the Shariah Court and its Judges were afforded a lesser status than ‘regular superior courts’.

The Ameer stated that it was a severe crime not to implement *Shariat-e-Muhammadi (SAAW)* in our country, one that was created on the basis of Islam. He concluded by remarking that past governments and courts had been complicit in that crime and it appeared that the present institutions, too, were not willing to make any effort towards achieving that goal which was an attitude that amounted to a blatant contempt of religion.

Date: 09 February 2018**Lahore (PR): “The bill passed by the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly declaring Qadianis as non-Muslims is praiseworthy.”**

This was stated by the Ameer of Tanzeem e Islami, **Hafiz Aakif Saeed**, during the Khitab-e-Jumu'ah at Quran Academy, Lahore.

The Ameer noted that as a matter of principle, the government of Azad Kashmir ought to have taken this stance back in 1974, when the parliament of Pakistan had declared Qadianis to be deemed as non-Muslims. He, however, commended the recent legislation done by the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly and added that “better late than never”. The Ameer demanded that the practical and Shariah-based requisites of the legislation, too, ought to be fulfilled, whereby the sentence awarded to an apostate according to Islam is capital punishment. He said that had this Islamic punishment of the crime been appended to the law promulgated in 1974, our nation would have been sheltered and protected from the treacherous deceit being perpetrated by the Qadianis today.

While expressing deep concern on the visit of the Indian External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj, to Saudi Arabia as the guest of honor at the Al Janadria cultural festival, the Ameer remarked that the Holy Qur'an had declared the Jews and the polytheists as the greatest enemies of Islam and Muslims. He lamented the fact that a polytheist was being “warmly welcomed” in the region where our religion, Islam, had originated and which had a permanent connection with the Holy Prophet (SAAW).

While welcoming the ban slapped on the promotion of “Valentine’s Day” on media by Pemra, the Ameer said that blind following of the Western civilization would always prove to be detrimental and destructive for our society. He concluded by advising the entire nation that we ought to avoid such vulgar and obscene rituals.