



SPECIAL EDITION

CBEC-SIUT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
JANUARY 10 - 11, 2025
"WARP AND WOOF OF HUMAN MORALITY"

A Pakistani craftsman weaves threads of different colors and shades to make a traditional khadi shawl on his loom. The metaphor of weaving was chosen as the underlying theme for CBEC-SIUT's January 2025 International Conference, held in January 2025, to reflect the diversity of sources that continue to inform human understanding of morality through the ages. Picture Courtesy: Sib Kaifee, Arab News.

Foreword by Farhat Moazam*

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together"
William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*

The theme chosen for CBEC-SIUT's bilingual (English and Urdu), January 2025 international conference was "The Warp and Woof of Human Morality" or "*Insaani Akhlaq kaa Tana Bana*." When weaving cloth on a loom, the warp constitutes the vertical threads whereas the woof are woven across these horizontally, an art the ancient Egyptians are credited for perfecting around 5,000 BCE. Weaving as a metaphor is frequently used to capture various aspects of human lives. Common examples include "the moral fiber" of individuals, "the fabric of life," and "weaving" ideas to find solutions for difficult problems.

The choice of using this metaphor for the conference was our attempt to challenge an ahistorical and myopic ethics education that compartmentalizes secular versus religious, modern versus traditional, liberal versus conservative, whereas humans are composites of many identities.

The conference drew participants from professionals and members of the public alike. This edition of the Center's newsletter, *Bioethics Links*, offers some of the highlights of the two days. This includes texts of three plenary talks, pictures of key events, quotes from attendees and examples of press coverage.

*Chairperson and Professor, CBEC-SIUT, Karachi

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

Keynote Speech

Pluriversality in Bioethics
Caesar Atuire, President, IAB

Plenary Talks

Ibn Sina: Physician, Philosopher, Father of Modern Medicine
Paul Lombardo, GSU, USA

Hope Without Moorings
Nauman Faizi, LUMS, Lahore

The Odyssey of Hayy ibn Yaqzan
Syed Noman-ul-Haq, IBA, Karachi

Female Consciousness and Female Urdu Poets
Fatima Hasan

Spreading the Word
CBEC Alumni

Urdu Literature and Ethics
Zehra Nigah, Itfikh Arif and Harris Khaliq

Photo Album, Other Events
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BIOETHICS AND WICKED PROBLEMS

Nauman Faizi*

I have been associated with CBEC as visiting faculty for the better part of a decade and have taught cohorts in the Master's and Post-graduate diploma programs. My focus has been introducing students to approaches to religious ethics, the history of the academic study of religion in the Western academy, and theorizing how the dimensions of our lives we might label "religious" or "religion" are entangled with the rest of our lives.

I was honored to be invited to the 20th anniversary of CBEC in January 2025 as one of the presenters at the event. My presentation drew on the history of medical applications of mesmeric trances in India in the 19th century and the hopes pinned on spiritual telegraphy in the US in the same century for elucidating an important distinction between two different ways of thinking about bioethical problems. What I want to share with us in this brief essay are the contours of that distinction and the implications it has for how we might think about bioethics as a "problem-solving" discipline or area of inquiry.

On the one hand, it is possible to conceive bioethics as a discipline that conceptualizes and resolves problems of a "tame," finite, specifiable, and resolvable nature. The term "tame problems" was coined by Rittel and Webber in 1973 to designate problems where "the mission is clear."¹ These are problems that can be clearly formulated, about which you can suggest finitely specifiable pathways of resolution, and you are sure when the problem's been "solved." Webber and Rittel provide the example of a game of chess as a tame problem. You can specify the rules of the game, you can unambiguously identify when a game has been won or lost, and, in some sense, each chess game is isolatable from other chess games or non-chess games. As they put it: "Chess has a finite set of rules, accounting for all situations that can occur."²

If bioethics were to be conceived as a response to a set of tame problems, then it stands to reason that the essential task of bioethics is providing a set of frameworks and approaches that can offer pathways, rules, and guidelines, via which the bioethical equivalents of a game of chess, or mathematical problems, are conceptualized and resolved. My contention is that approaches such as Fitz Jahr's – one of the early "founders" and architects of bioethics – engage in this sort of theorization when they offer Kant-inspired

"bioethical imperatives" as frameworks for resolving bioethical problems.

In his commentary on Jahr's bioethical imperative, Hans-Martin Sass notes: "The Bioethical Imperative is a necessary result of moral reasoning based on empirical physiology and psychology of humans, plants, and animals; as such it needs to educate and steward personal and collective cultural and moral attitudes and calls for new respect and responsibilities toward all forms of life."³

Similarly, Beauchamp and Childress use the phrase "the common morality" to refer to "the set of universal norms shared by all persons committed to morality... It is not merely a morality, in contrast to other moralities. The common morality is applicable to all persons in all places, and we rightly judge all human conduct by its standards."⁴ What I want to point out is that such principles are appropriate to bioethics, if bioethics is conceived as a way to address tame problems.

On the other hand, if bioethical problems are not clearly specifiable in the way that a game of football, cricket, or chess might be specified, and they are more akin to what Rittel and Webber call "wicked problems," then, perhaps the way to go about them is not to come up with an exhaustive approach or a set of frameworks. Rittel and Webber attribute ten characteristics to wicked problems in order to distinguish them from tame ones. Unlike tame problems, wicked problems resist finite formulation and there are no clearly specifiable criteria through which one can conclude that a



Dr. Daryl Pullman, Visiting Professor from Canada, was in CBEC to teach in the April 2025 Clinical Ethics Module. Seen here trying on a traditional Pakol hat gifted to him by the faculty.

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problem has been “resolved.” Wicked problems are “radical,” in that, they require us to figure out how one might live-well-with-a-problem rather than eradicate or resolve it and imagine a world without it. They may be thought of as “existential problems” that one has to negotiate and figure out as a matter of course, rather than address at a particular point in time.

While Webber and Rittel draw on social policy-related problems to make their case, their framework can be employed to make sense of problems that one has to “cope with,” “resist,” “palliate” rather than overcome, eliminate, and cure. If we are to think of bioethics as a discipline that theorizes and conceptualizes wicked problems, then its claims should sound less like clearly articulated principles, pathways, and guidelines, and more like Richard Rorty’s claims about philosophy.

Rorty notes that the quest for arriving at a programmatic “method” or a set of “principles” that will clarify the nature of the problems that vex us is wishful thinking: “It is useless to hope that objects will constrain us to believe the truth about them, if only they are approached with an unclouded mental eye, or a rigorous method, or a perspicuous language.”⁵ For Rorty, the only recourse available to us in the face of “wicked problems” – think climate change, justice, distribution of material resources, living with a chronic disease – is “conversation”: “Our conversation with our fellow-humans [is] our only source of guidance. To attempt to evade this contingency is to hope to become a properly-programmed machine.”⁶

In the face of intractable problems, Rorty suggests that we count and rely on “our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark, not our hope of getting things right... Our glory is in our participation in fallible and

transitory human projects, not in our obedience to permanent non-human constraints.”⁷

To my mind, Rorty’s claims against the search for procedural fixes to intractable problems offer two important insights. First, the search for procedure and method as our “savior” can be a symptom of our desire to evade the responsibility of constructing a fallible course of action and to, instead, posit an undeniable “principle,” a “non-human” constraint as the source of our actions. Our search for such principles may belie our desire to evade the messiness of human construction in the hopes of becoming a “properly-programmed machine.”

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, conceiving our ethical task as the construction of principles, procedures, and rules, is a way of preventing our thinking from becoming capacious, expansive, and political. It carries the risk of directing our intellectual labor to the construction of “scripts” and “cogs” that work within bureaucratic and professional settings, which we have to take as “givens,” as non-negotiable parameters within which our principles, rules, and procedures have to find their place.

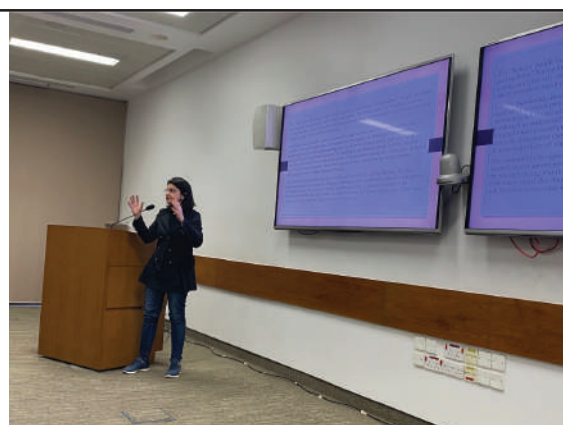
I can do no better than cite Rihito Kimura’s hopes about bioethics as more than a set of procedures for resolving tame problems. He noted in 1986: “Bioethics is a totally new form of discipline which goes beyond the notion of interdisciplinary studies: it is suprainterdisciplinary; it is deprofessionalizing medicine; it is a civil action movement.”⁸ To my mind, too, the degree to which bioethics is a discipline that addresses wicked problems, it ought to be akin to Rorty’s claims and Kimura’s rallying cry.

References of this article can be seen at the BioethicsLinks Online Link: bioethics.siut.org/bioethics-and-wicked-problems/

RESEARCH ETHICS WORKSHOP

January 30, 2025, Aga Khan University, Karachi

Ms. Sualeha Shekhani, CBEC faculty and member of the Pakistan National Bioethics Committee for Research (NBC-R), seen here conducting a session on “Community Engagement in Research” in a research ethics workshop organized by The Aga Khan University. The workshop targeted participants involved in research related to non-communicable diseases. Ms. Shekhani used local cases to highlight ethical challenges such as research fatigue, benefit-sharing and the absence of the notion of reciprocity in community-based research.



THE CHIMES OF *HAYY IBN YAQZAN*: FROM THE DIVINE COMEDY TO ROBINSON CRUSOE AND ONWARD

Syed Noman-ul-Haq*

How does one describe *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* — literally, Living, Son of Awake? This Arabic work of fiction, whose renderings, paraphrases, shadows, and footprints are found in Hebrew, Latin, English, German, French, Spanish, and elsewhere, is in the generic sense a piece of fiction no doubt. But what kind of fiction? It has been described as a “novel,” “fable,” “edifying tale,” “allegory,” “parable,” and often “philosophical romance.” Then, following the Latin *Hayy* tradition, it is also called a pioneering work in “autodidacticism,” — a word that combines two Greek words *autós* (“self”) and *didaktikos* (“teaching”), thus meaning “teaching oneself without the guidance/mediation of an external teacher.”

Nor is the substantive question straightforward: Is the *Hayy* a work of rational philosophy? Or is it a Sufi discourse in which philosophy functions merely as a ladder to reach mystical heights? In other words, is the author seeking ‘ilm, discursive knowledge, or is he rather a wayfarer traversing his path towards the station of *ma'rifa*, what may be described as gnosis? Then, a related question: Is his fundamental inspiration Greek philosophy, in particular Aristotle and Plato, in whose thoughts he is often drenched? Or does this inspiration ultimately happen to be the indigenous Islamic intellectual and spiritual ethos, given his running citations and frequent implicit references to the Quranic text, among other Islamic scriptural sources? Indeed, these complicating issues make the work ironically a richer historical and literary phenomenon, opening up many new vistas that bring before us dazzling sights.

The *Hayy* was written some 900 years ago in the early 12th century in Andalus, Muslim Spain. Its author, the philosopher and theologian Ab Bakr Ibn Tufayl (Latinised, Abubacer Aben Tofail) was a vizier of the Almohad (al-Muwahhidn) ruler Ab Ya'qub Yusuf, whom he also served as a physician. This polymath author of the *Hayy*, who died in 1185, was a great supporter of his younger contemporary, Ibn Rushd, the redoubtable philosopher held to be the greatest Aristotelian in the whole history of philosophy. It was Ibn Tufayl who had urged Ibn Rushd to work on Aristotle and to purify this Greek giant from the obscurities of his commentators. Given Ibn Rushd's decisive impact on European philosophy, only this act is enough to give Ibn Tufayl a high place in world culture

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Hayy ibn Yaqzan is the name of the protagonist in Ibn Tufayl's tale. This human was born in an uninhabited island in the Indian Ocean, so goes the story, without human begetters. But his birth is explained not in transcendental-symbolic terms, but in naturalistic-physical terms, in terms that may legitimately be described as “scientific.” This was the case of spontaneous generation that comes to pass through the mixing of natural elements and confluence of natural forces — the underlying element being the mud of the shore. Hayy is then suckled and reared by a gazelle. So a feral human being grows up.

The main thrust of the tale is autodidacticism — learning without an external teacher but through one's own rational powers. Through the exercise of reason alone, then, Hayy discovers the real facts of the world, finding out the workings of the cosmos and arriving at philosophical truths; and indeed by the sole means of his inborn intelligence he acquires biological knowledge, ethical knowledge and, ultimately, knowledge of God, the “Necessarily Existent Being.” We may well characterize Hayy's mode of inquiry as embodying a “scientific method” by means of which he carries out all his discoveries of the physical world's operations and of virtuous social conduct. Since he grew up in the wild among animals, and his moral sense remained pristine without any family or communal biases, he also develops an ecological sensitivity, caring about all creatures around him and not arrogating himself higher than any other being in the natural environment. Hayy here stands as a leader of our contemporary environmental concerns.



Titles of early English translations of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*. George Ashwell's version in 1686 (left) reads “The History of Hai Eb'n Yockdan, an Indian Prince; or the Self-Taught Philosopher.” Simon Ockley (1708) translates it (right) as “The Improvement of Human Reason, Exhibited in the Life of Hai Ibn Yokdhan.”

The use of reason here takes many forms of manifestations — sometimes Hayy makes logical deductions from self-evident premises in an Aristotelian vein; sometimes he makes “inductive” generalisations; here we see him contemplating in the style of Plato and the Sufis; there we find him making systematic observations. When his mother gazelle dies, he dissects her body and proceeds precisely like a biologist to discover the centrality of the heart for life. Hayy’s ascent on the steps of cognizance manifests a paradigm case of self-tutelage, autodidacticism that is, a process that leads him finally to “the Cause of all things,” “the Maker,” and then he declares more in the Sufi mode than the rationalistic:

He is being, perfection and wholeness. He is goodness, beauty, power, and knowledge. He is He [*huwa huwa*]. “All things perish except His face.” (Quran, 28:88).

Note the Sufi cry, “He is He!” The story moves on: when Hayy is a fully mature man, he experiences his first human encounter. A man called Asal visits his island. Who is this stranger? He came from another island, but one that sustained a human population. After some initial struggle to make Asal overcome his phobia of the unknown fellow man, a struggle during which Hayy even uses brute force to subdue the evading stranger, the two become friends. Asal then teaches Hayy his human language, and they are now able to converse.

They compare notes about their cosmological ideas, their ethical principles, their notion of upright life, and, of course, about God. Lo! Hayy finds that they are identical; what Asal had learnt through the guidance and instruction from an external teacher, from some kind of an apostle, was no different from the body of knowledge that Hayy had gained by himself through exerting his own innate faculties of reason. And here Ibn Tufayl makes that resounding declaration that constitutes a core doctrine of Islamic philosophy — that reason and revelation lead to identical truths. The two have cognitive equivalence. What religion teaches by means of parables and stories, and what philosophy yields through the exercise of reason — these two are substantively the same. Indeed, Muslim philosophers recognize a higher status for prophets on account of their direct, instant knowledge of the truth, given that they are “gifted ones.”

Hayy ibn Yaqzan’s historical impact on world intellectual culture was massive; in fact, mind-boggling. We hear its

chimes all over Europe — in pure philosophy, in science proper, and in educational doctrines, not to speak of literature and that liberating genre of fiction. In 1671, Edward Pococke the Younger translated the *Hayy* into Latin from an Aleppo manuscript copied in 1303 that is now held in the famous Bodleian collection at Oxford University. Pococke called it *Philosophus Autodidactus*. And then, it feels like a continuous spring shower.

Just three years after the Latin translation, we saw the first English translation by George Keith, and another in 1686 by George Ashwell. Then we meet Simon Ockley, who renders the *Hayy* into English directly from the Arabic, *The Improvement of Human Reason: Exhibited in the Life of Hai Ebn Yokdhan*, published in 1708. Now the famous philosopher Spinoza, a pioneering foundational figure of the Enlightenment, finds the *Hayy* standing in such harmony with the spirit of the times, that he convinces his friend Johannes Bouwmeester to translate it into Dutch. More translations were to come and scholars say that the *Hayy* had become a “bestseller” during the Scientific Revolution.

The tide of the historical vicissitudes of the *Hayy* rises. In 1719, it charms Daniel Defoe and the world saw Robinson Crusoe modelled after it, set likewise on an island, although our Arabic tale may not have been the only source for Defoe. Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* is yet another ramification from the same literary seed. One recalls that Robinson Crusoe is considered to be the first novel in English, just as its source *Hayy* has the acclaim that it is the world’s first philosophical novel with an “enormous impact” on the Enlightenment. And so the spirit of *Hayy* lives in our modern sensibilities.

Turning to the domain of intellectual history, the chimes of the *Hayy* are to be heard all over. The founder of empiricism in modern-day philosophy, John Locke, happened to be a student of Pococke, the Latin translator of the *Hayy*, and knew his teacher’s translation since he refers to it. But what is more, historians say that the English philosopher’s classic *tabula rasa* (“blank slate”) theory — the theory that the human mind at birth is a blank slate — is inspired by the *Hayy*; this observation is highly plausible. Historians have also traced the Arabic tale’s diffusion in, and in many cases, direct impact on, the thought of Robert Boyle, Voltaire, and even Karl Marx. This includes *Emile, or On Education* of Rousseau.

But far away in time from all of this is a medieval Hebrew

translation of the *Hayy* carried out in Muslim Spain. The scholar Rudolph Altrocchi in 1938 provided a groundbreaking body of historical evidence: he demonstrates that Dante read this translation. Yes, indeed, there are many crucial parallels between the *Hayy* and the *Divine Comedy*, such as one ecstatic and “gorgeous vision” of *Hayy* — a vision whose sharp reflections are to be found in Dante’s description of Paradise.

A very large number of scholars have made Ibn Tufayl and

his *Hayy* their subject of research; L. Goodman is one of them, whose translation of the text I have reproduced. Here, one recalls an article published in *The Guardian* many years ago, written by M. Wainswright. It was called, ‘Desert Island Scripts: Footprints of a 12th-century Muslim Robinson Crusoe.’ Wainswright tells us that the drizzle continues until now.

A longer version of this essay by Syed Noman-ul-Haq previously appeared in Dawn on Sunday, May 22, 2016.

RECLAIMING FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN URDU LITERATURE FROM ZAY KHAY SHEEN TO CONTEMPORARY POETS

Fatima Hasan*

There was a time when the presence and role of women were not mentioned in history. The part played by women in nurturing civilization and promoting language and literature was barely recognized. The patriarchal system not only ignored women but also considered them as nonexistent, essentially manifesting that women are devoid of any intellectual capabilities and wisdom. It was in the 1960s that women writers started to challenge such patriarchal practices by highlighting feminist consciousness in their literary writings.

Feminism’s rise in literature finds its profound connection with women’s social and political awareness. The global women’s rights movement played a key role in shaping it, and gradually it made its way into literature as well. Feminist consciousness refers to the awareness and understanding of women’s issues, their despotic oppression, and their courageous struggle for equality in a male-dominated society. In Urdu literature, feminist thoughts began in the early 20th century when women raised their concerns through writings.

Early magazines for women played an important role in developing this consciousness. Through writings in “*Tehzeeb-i-Niswan*,” “*Khawateen*,” and “*Ismat*,” women started to establish their own unique identities. These publications provided women a platform to express their thoughts freely and challenge societal norms that restricted their potential and confined their thoughts. Through these magazines, women writers not only documented their experiences but also presented alternative narratives that contradicted patriarchal assumptions.

*Poet and Scholar, Former Secretary, Anjuman Taraqqi e Urdu, Karachi

In his article, “*How Can Society Be Reformed?*” Maulana Hali argued that women’s education is essential for eradicating repressive customs from our culture. His contemporary, Zahida Khatoon Sharwaniya, wrote the *masnavi* [narrative poem] “*Aaina-i-Haram*” in the style of Iqbal’s *Shikwa* [The Complaint] and published it in 1915 through the Dar-ul-Ishaat Punjab of Maulvi Mumtaz Ali. In this sixty-couplet *masnavi*, the men of the subcontinent are lamented for keeping women ignorant and inflicting great injustice and atrocities upon them and their offspring.

Zay Khay Sheen (Zahida Khatoon Sharwaniya) emerges as the first important figure within this tradition of feminist writing in Urdu literature. She was born in Behkampur, Aligarh, in 1894 and died in 1922. She was also the first female poet who could not be ignored due to her own unique thought and style of expression. At first, she tried to conceal her identity and kept changing her poetic name. Her famous *mussaddas* [six-line stanza], “*Aaina-i-Haram*,” was published along with her ten poems voicing women’s concerns. Her second



Dr. Aamir Jafarey gives an invited talk on ethical issues in robotics during the Global Robotic Surgery Symposium held on February 14-15, 2025 at SIUT, Karachi. In his talk, he highlighted the seductive allure that modern technology presents and cautioned its careful use in medicine.

collection, "*Firdous-i-Takhaiul*," was published after her death in 1940 and proved her literary prowess. Her poetic voice posed a challenge to the patriarchal repression and narrated the experiences of women in a society that oppresses women. Her work stands as a testament to the fact that women's intellectual capabilities are not inferior in any aspect, but rather have been systematically undervalued by men in society.

By the mid-1930s, the Progressive Movement brought a new era of women's writings. Writers who were influenced by this movement, and later by modernism, remained in solidarity against misogynistic customs of society, included notable figures like Rashid Jahan, Ismat Chughtai, Qurratulain Hyder, Hajra Masroor, Khadija Mastoor, Ada Jafarey, Mumtaz Shireen, and Khalida Hussain. They leveraged their literary capabilities to expose and critique patriarchal structures that oppress women.

The feminist movement all over the world gained momentum in 1975, after the first UN conference on women held in Mexico. In our part of the world, the term 'feminist' gained

acknowledgment in the same year. Many important women of Pakistan adopted a unique and singular approach to express themselves in the late 20th century. Among them were Kishwar Naheed, Fahmida Riaz, and Zahida Hina, who developed a connection between Urdu literature and the global feminist movement. This period marked a turning point in feminist consciousness in Urdu literature, as many women writers began to explicitly align their work with feminist principles and ideologies.

It is encouraging that a large number of women from the new generation are establishing their position in the fields of writing and education, and they are aware that as human beings, they are neither inferior nor superior. Their male contemporaries have largely moved beyond a negative attitude and are considering them as their equals. This was a long and difficult journey made possible by these important female writers whose works contributed significantly to this journey. However, women writers continue to assert their presence in literary spaces challenging patriarchal narratives due to the deeply entrenched discrimination and urban-rural awareness gaps in our society.

CBEC FORUMS

Caring Beyond Cure: Navigating Ethics in Pediatric Palliative Care Saturday, December 21, 2024



This forum was led by Dr. Shahzadi Resham, Assistant Professor at the Department of Pediatrics and Child Health & Department of Oncology at the Aga Khan University (AKU), Karachi, and a pioneer in pediatric palliative care in Pakistan. During the forum, she used a case to highlight the ethical challenges specific to decision-making, such as disclosure and consent, when dealing with pediatric patients and their families. This was a well-attended forum, particularly from those in the pediatric specialty.

Breaking the Cycle: Rethinking Support for Juvenile Offenders Saturday, April 12, 2025



In this forum, Ms. Farah Khan, a criminal lawyer from Karachi, discussed the issue of juvenile recidivism within the context of Pakistan. Using statistical data and case studies from her research on the same topic, she highlighted systemic shortcomings, including unjust policies, socioeconomic inequalities and lack of structured reintegration programs that perpetuate a cycle of offenses among juveniles. The forum attracted on-site and online audience, including lawyers, psychologists and physicians.

THE WARP AND WOOF OF HUMAN MORALITY

انسانی اخلاق کا تنا بانا

HIGHLIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, JANUARY 10-11, 2025 INAUGURAL SESSION



Dr. Anwar Naqvi (left), Provost of Sindh Institute of Medical Sciences, delivers the opening remarks to inaugurate the CBEC-SIUT conference.

"CBEC has stood the test of time and has given us [at SIUT] the enrichment, joy and fulfillment in the true sense of the word. I am proud to be associated with this institution."

Anwar Naqvi, Provost, SIMS, Karachi

پرائی روشنی میں اور نئی میں فرق اتنا ہے ☆ اسے کشتی نہیں ملتی اسے ساحل نہیں ملتا
اکبر الہ آبادی

*What sets the old light and the new apart, is this alone
One cannot find the boat, the other a shore (Akbar Allahabadi)
"In my opinion, this couplet by an Asian poet from the 19th century is still relevant today. It captures the growing chasm between traditional and contemporary forms of knowledge in bioethics education today. We must work towards building bridges between the two; both offer important values for the ethics of healthcare professionals."*

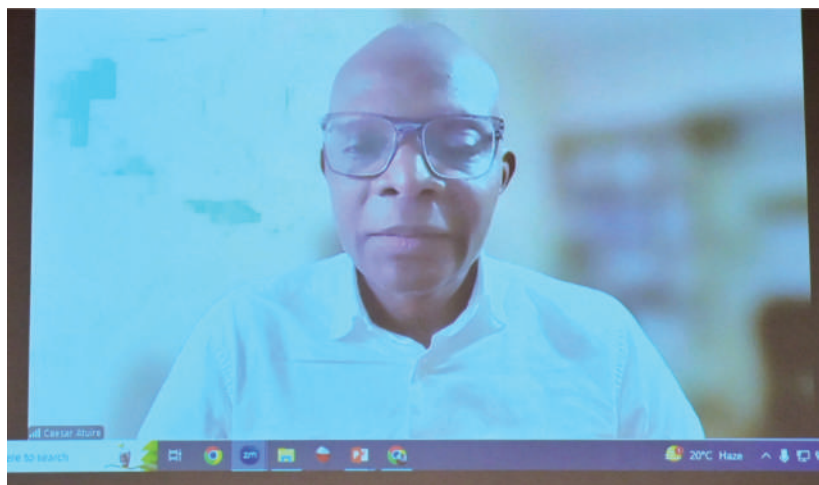
Welcome Address

Farhat Moazam, Chairperson CBEC-SIUT

KEYNOTE SPEECH

"We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of CBEC. And in [such moments], it is a good thing to look in the past and project into the future ... When we look into the future, we have to think of new pathways to engage in bioethics... The work of CBEC colleagues in Karachi is precisely this type of bioethics which is sensitive to local context but is also open to dialogue internationally. And this is what I call the pluriversal approach to bioethics... a world in which many worlds fit together... Pluriversality asks us to recognize and respect and work with differences of people across the world."

Dr. Caesar Atuire, President of the International Association of Bioethics



Dr. Caesar Atuire, Ghanaian philosopher delivers the keynote speech titled, "Pluriversality in Bioethics" online followed by an engaging discussion with the audience.

ALUMNI TALKS: SPREADING THE WORD

My Journey through the Rough Terrain of Biomedical Ethics in Pakistan



"With the involvement of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, my university has approved a module on bioethics for pharmacy students, which was initiated as my CBEC PGD project. It will officially become part of their curriculum in the coming years."

Dr. Amjad Mahboob, PGD Alumnus, Class of 2020, Infectious Disease Specialist, Swabi, KPK

Journey of a Thousand Miles - The Prelude and the Foundation



"From my PGD Project on Organizational Ethics with healthcare workers emerged the medical error analysis committee [at Patel Hospital]. So activism with ethical sensibility kicked in. We started an anonymized reporting system, the first one in Pakistan."

Dr. Nida Wahid Bashir, PGD Alumnus, Class of 2010, General Surgeon, Karachi, Sindh

Contextualizing Genome Ethics in Pakistan: Engaging Minds from Classrooms to Clinics



"My thesis work was a content analysis of publications looking at ethical issues in the conduct of genetic research in Pakistan. This was presented at the Global Forum for Bioethics in Research (GFBR) conference in 2019 which led to a 4-week fellowship at University of Oxford for me."

Dr. Natasha Anwar, MBE Alumnus, Class of 2019, Molecular Pathologist, Lahore, Punjab

SEMINAR: WOMEN IN PAKISTAN



Dr. Fatima Hasan talks about her research on "Female Consciousness and Female Urdu Poets." See pages 6-7 for text of her plenary talk.

"Human consciousness is reflected in literature, especially in poetry. Why poetry? Because it embodies the core of what it means to be human. To gauge a society's evolution, look at its intellect and aesthetics, and these two converge in poetry. Now, if being human and human society are defined by consciousness, the question arises: When in history was women's consciousness ever truly acknowledged? Because in history, women are not even visible on the margins."

Fatima Hasan, Scholar and Poet, Karachi



Dr. Arfana Mallah' talks on "Women of Sindh: Caught between Feudalism and Fundamentalism" narrating her experiences working with women in Rural Sindh.

"A Sindhi folk song used to play on the radio in the 70s in which a young girl laments to her mother: 'Why did you even bring me into this world, only to sing lullabies to tell me I belong to someone else?' The women in our homes would listen to it and cry. As a child, I used to hate such songs that made women cry. But later, I realized their sorrow. In a feudal society, a woman is merely a property ... something to be owned, exchanged, and given away."

Arfana Mallah, Scholar and Activist, Jamshoro

A PLAY BY SCHOOL CHILDREN: A GREENER WORLD



"The play [helped children] reimagine fairy tales with an environmental theme...the play was entertaining and educational, making complex ideas easier to understand. Working with CBEC was a meaningful experience. Their unique approach to ethics and education was truly inspiring."

Samar Kashif,
Drama Instructor and Producer of the Play

School children in a group photo with their drama instructors, Ms. Samar and Mr. Asher (standing right), along with CBEC faculty, after their performance. The play, "A Greener World, Re-imagined through Classic Tales," centered on environmental pollution and the responsibility of humans. The picture on the right depicts a scene from the play portraying Snow White, the Wicked Witch and three environmentally conscious birds.

LESSONS IN ETHICS FROM THE PAST

"The entire narrative of Hayy bin Yaqzan involves the exercise of his rational faculties, which made it relevant during the Age of Reason. Students often ask me, amid the ravages of time and history, "Sir, is Islam compatible with rationality?" I don't know how to answer that. The entire thrust of Islam is on rationality."

Syed Noman-ul-Haq, IBA, Karachi
See pages 2-3 for text of his plenary talk.



Dr. Paul Lombardo (left) and Dr. Syed Noman-ul-Haq (right) in a conversation about Muslim philosophers cum physicians, Ibn Sina (d. 1037) and Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), on which their respective talks were focused.



Dr. Nauman Faizi, LUMS, speaking about "Hope without Moorings" in the conference. See pages 2-3 for text of his plenary talk.

"Ibn Sina did not allow himself to be confined by the narrow boundaries of any single field. His inquiries moved fluidly between medicine, philosophy, theology, and the sciences. In the same spirit, CBEC's courses are designed to be integrative. It feels fitting to revisit the life and legacy of Ibn Sina as we mark two decades of CBEC's journey. He remains a powerful touchstone for the work we aspire to do at CBEC."

Paul Lombardo, Georgia State University, USA

AN AFTERNOON OF ADAB [LITERATURE AND ETHICS]



Dr. Nida Wahid Bashir (standing), CBEC faculty, introduces the guests, Harris Khalique, Zehra Nigah, and Iftikhar Arif (seated left to right), for the session exploring interplay of literature with ethics. Following a discussion, the poets recited their famous works at the request of audience.



"In times of upheaval, literature becomes the most powerful weapon to raise a voice against oppression and tyranny. It is in this way, through literature, that human ethics is shaped...the poets, through their craft, give shape to morality."

Zehra Nigah Sahiba, Urdu Poet, Karachi



"Urdu is relatively a very young language. In a short span of time, it came to be spoken across the entire Indian subcontinent, not as the language of the elite or those in power, but of the common people. In this way, Urdu created a parallel history, one that was shaped through literature."

Iftikhar Arif Sahib, Urdu Poet, Islamabad

THE EVENING SPECIAL: BONFIRE & DINNER



Speakers and guests gathered on the 7th floor CBEC-SIUT terrace for an evening marked by a bonfire, barbecue, an assortment of Pakistani dishes, Kashmiri tea, and warm gulab jamans. The dinner provided an opportunity for guests, faculty, and organizers to converse about the proceedings of the conference.

CBEC-SIUT FACULTY REFLECTIONS



I believe that some of the most rewarding experiences and the greatest events that occur in life often rest on serendipity, something you have not planned for as one does 5 year and a 10-year plans. I think CBEC, the way it came about in SIUT, is an example of this, a leap of faith on the part of Dr. Adib Rizvi and myself. Our biggest national challenge in the last 20 years has been to develop diverse educational activities, from formal degree awarding bioethics programs in the Center to workshops conducted in provinces for clinicians, researchers and other healthcare related professionals. A monumental task undertaken by a small but dedicated faculty.

Farhat Moazam,
Professor and Chairperson



When I first enrolled in the PGD, I had no idea that years later, I would eventually become a faculty member at the center. These two decades at CBEC have been nothing short of a rollercoaster. The Centre has grown and so have I. We have reworked traditional assessment methods for a field that is characterized by shades of grey and that's the kind of innovation I hope we can continue into the future.

Bushra Shirazi, Professor



While I had been drawn to abstract ideas in philosophy since my first year in university, it was only at CBEC that I saw how philosophy breathes differently when rooted in lived contexts, engaging with real people, and social structures. This conference was a culmination of applying bioethics: thinking, creating, organizing, and making it meaningful for people from across disciplines. What CBEC has given me is not just training in bioethics, but a way of seeing life holistically.

Farid bin Masood, Senior Lecturer



Twenty years ago, our first conference, "Foundations of Moral Thought: From the Greeks to the Contemporary Bioethics," was a litmus test for us, for the Centre, of what was ahead of us. We had a tremendous response to that... Twenty years later, we still look ahead. There is no highway. We have to build our own way forward even now. Every step has to be thought through, and every step has to be built forward. This is what we have learned.

Aamir Jafarey, Professor



I came to CBEC following its 10-year external review, which recommended bringing in someone with a social sciences background. CBEC has shaped my professional journey. Last year, while helping put together the special anniversary edition of our newsletter and planning the 20-year conference, I felt the warmth of the Centre's rich history. I sifted through old photographs, collected memories from senior faculty and alumni. That made me realize that I am a small part of something bigger.

Sualeha Shekhani, Assistant Professor



I have been part of CBEC since its beginning, and it has become a place for my intellectual growth. As a clinician interested in bioethics, I have always searched for spaces where my intellect could be nourished, and I kept coming back here, whether I was a faculty or not. I believe we need more places like this where clinicians can engage in reflection. Being one of the organizers and a presenter as well, was full of learning like any other experience at CBEC.

Nida Wahid Bashir, Part-Time Faculty



*The picture in the centre is a group photo of the current CBEC-SIUT faculty and staff.

WHAT THE PRESS SAID...

DAWN
E-PAPER | JUNE 10, 2025

HOME LATEST ISRAEL-IRAN WAR GAZA SEIGE PAKISTAN OPINION BUSINESS IMAGES PRISM WORLD SPORT BREATHE MAGAZINES TECH VIDEOS

SIUT conference on morality, ethics concludes

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter | Published January 12, 2025

18, 2025

THE NEWS

Home Latest National Sports World Business Entertainment Technology Health Oped Magazines

Karachi

Int'l moot of SIUT's Centre of Biomedical Ethics ends

پاکستان

تازہ ترین بھٹ ایران اسرائیل جنگ پاکستان دنیا برطانیہ و یورپ کھیل انٹرنیٹ ویڈیو دلچسپ جنگ ای پیپر

ایس آئی یو ٹی میں اخلاقیات پر دو روزہ بین الاقوامی کانفرنس کا آغاز

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SIUT's CBEC marks 20 years with Int'l conference on human morality

by News Desk January 11, 2025 in Karachi

ایس آئی یو ٹی میں 2 روزہ بین الاقوامی کانفرنس آج شروع ہوگی

عنوان "انسانی اخلاقیات کا تانا بانا" رکھا گیا ہے، ملکی اور غیر ملکی مقررین شرکت کریں گے

Int'l Bioethics Conference at SIUT begins

F.P. Report

KARACHI: SIUT's Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture (CBEC) inaugurated its two-day international conference titled "The Warp and Woof of Human Morality." This event marks the 20th anniversary of the Centre and features national and international speakers discussing human morality and ethics through talks meant to appeal to public and professionals alike.

President of the Asian subcontinent. The International Association of first day concluded with a

سینٹر آف بائیومیڈیکل ایتھکس اینڈ کلچر، ایس آئی یو ٹی میں اخلاقیات پر دو روزہ بین الاقوامی کانفرنس کا آغاز

کراچی (ایف پی رپورٹ) سینٹر آف بائیومیڈیکل ایتھکس اینڈ کلچر، ایس آئی یو ٹی میں دو روزہ بین الاقوامی کانفرنس کا آغاز ہوا۔ اس موقع پر سینٹر آف بائیومیڈیکل ایتھکس اینڈ کلچر کے ڈائریکٹر جنرل نے افتتاحی تقریب کا خطاب کیا۔ انھوں نے کانفرنس کے مقاصد اور اہمیت پر روشنی ڈالی۔

کانفرنس کے افتتاحی سیشن میں، سینٹر کے ڈائریکٹر جنرل نے کانفرنس کے مقاصد اور اہمیت پر روشنی ڈالی۔ انھوں نے کانفرنس کے مقاصد اور اہمیت پر روشنی ڈالی۔

کانفرنس کے افتتاحی سیشن میں، سینٹر کے ڈائریکٹر جنرل نے کانفرنس کے مقاصد اور اہمیت پر روشنی ڈالی۔ انھوں نے کانفرنس کے مقاصد اور اہمیت پر روشنی ڈالی۔

The above collage shows selected snippets from print media, both English and Urdu, covering the international conference. Highlights from the conference were also streamed on different channels on television. Such coverage helped to spread awareness of ethics among the general public.

VIEWS OF ATTENDEES

"A medical practitioner must not only master clinical skills but also understand the social framework, and this conference facilitates it. At the same time, it gives other members of the society a clear understanding of how to view clinical practice and social context in an integrated way."

Amar Sindhu, Activist and Social Worker

"I was very interested in the event because of my long association with SIUT and CBEC. It was gratifying to share the poetic thoughts of Iftikhar Arif, Zehra Nigah and Harris Khalique ... the other sessions of the two-day proceedings covered a vast range of topics that relate to bioethics, including its cultural and philosophical implications in our lives."

Ghazi Salahuddin, Journalist

"The talks here are so engaging...even today, since morning and until now into the evening, it is like we have completely lost track of time. The speakers are so wonderful, and the talks so engaging."

Shabana Tabassum, Health Manager, Patel Hospital

"Today, weaving culture into ethics is exactly what we need and I believe CBEC is uniquely positioned to do it."

Aasim Ahmad, Nephrologist, The Kidney Centre

"The conference is so inspiring, with so many ideas to ponder upon, and take-home messages."

Anila Kazmi, Quality Assurance, SIUT

"We have such amazing association with CBEC. These halls and corridors feel as familiar today as they did twenty years ago. It's a joy to return here after all these years with fellow alumni."

Jamshed Akhtar, Pediatric Surgeon, NICH

CBEC'S LONG-STANDING ASSOCIATION WITH KMU

Recent CBEC Workshop, KMU, Hazara Campus, KPK
May 21-23, 2025

CBEC-SIUT has had a long relationship with Khyber Medical University (KMU), a public sector institution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). It began in 2009 when KMU Professor Tasleem Akhtar approached CBEC with her conviction of the important role of integrating ethics in biomedical research, public health and professional clinical practices, and expressed the university's commitment to expand bioethics education in the province. Since then, CBEC faculty have undertaken many workshops in KMU and its affiliated institutions in helping them to achieve their goals. Recent workshops have focused on research ethics to enhance the knowledge and sound functioning of ethical review committees (ERC) and their members in KPK.

The most recent CBEC workshop, "Methods and Ethics of Health Research," took place in May 21-23, 2025 at the invitation of Dr. Khalid Rehman, Director of the Institute of Public Health and Social Sciences (IPH&SS), KMU. Held at KMU's newly established campus in Mansehra, the workshop aimed to introduce participants to foundational concepts in health research ethics, public health challenges, and the ethical regulatory frameworks in Pakistan.

CBEC faculty, including Dr. Aamir Jafarey, Ms. Sualeha Shekhani, and Mr. Farid bin Masood, along with associate faculty and MBE alumnus Dr. Natasha Anwar, facilitated the



Dr. Moazam conducting a session on informed consent in clinical practice during a workshop held in KMU, Peshawar in December, 2013.

sessions. Participants came from diverse fields, including public health, epidemiology, family medicine, basic sciences, and dentistry, reflecting a wide interest across disciplines.

During the workshop, CBEC faculty encouraged participants to apply for its formal certificate courses in Research and Public Health Ethics, as well as Clinical Ethics. KMU organizers also committed to adopting the WHO benchmarking tool to evaluate and strengthen the Ethics Review Committees across its constituent institutions.

During the closing session, KMU's Vice Chancellor, Dr. Zia-ul-Haq, expressed a strong interest in initiating formal bioethics education programs at the university and invited CBEC to support this endeavor. This marks not just the continuation of a long-standing relationship but also holds promise for shaping an ethically grounded healthcare landscape in the KPK province.



The hospitality of the organizers extended beyond the workshop! Dr. Zeeshan, Deputy Director Research (first from left) and Dr. Rubab, KMU faculty (second from right), went with CBEC faculty to Shogran. Picture shows the group on horsebacks at Paye meadows after an adventurous ride.



At the conclusion of academic activities on Day One, the faculty and workshop participants were driven to the scenic hills of Nathiagali for a dinner.

CBEC-SIUT MAKES INROADS IN BALOCHISTAN

Workshop at SMBZAN Institute of Cardiology, Quetta, Balochistan, June 13-14, 2025



Dr. Moazam and Mr. Farid (right and left, standing) during a session on discerning differences between medical treatment and research.

CBEC's goals include building and enhancing national bioethics capacity in clinical and research ethics within institutions and healthcare professionals of the four provinces in Pakistan. The Centre has been able to do so in Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through invited workshops and enrollment of their professionals in its bioethics programs. However, CBEC's reach into Balochistan, the country's most disadvantaged province, had been minimal due to a paucity of medical fraternity contacts despite faculty efforts.

This changed in 2023 when Dr. Rukhsana Majeed, Head of the Department of Community Medicine, Quetta Institute of Medical Sciences (QIMS), participated in a CBEC workshop to review the WHO Tool for Benchmarking Ethics Oversight of Health-Related Research. The following year, at Dr. Majeed's invitation, CBEC faculty ran a very well-attended two-day bioethics workshop in QIMS. Participants included enthusiastic professionals from other institutions in Quetta, requesting that CBEC undertake the same for them.

Building on the momentum from the QIMS workshop, CBEC faculty conducted a second workshop at the Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Institute of Cardiology, Quetta (SMBZAN ICQ). Brig. Dr. Omer Iftikhar Kahloon, the institute's Commandant, extended the invitation and demonstrated his strong support through active participation throughout the event. Dr. Hania Hashmi, Research Officer at the institute, played a key role in organizing the workshop. CBEC faculty, Dr. Farhat Moazam, Dr. Aamir Jafarey, and Mr. Farid bin Masood, were involved in teaching.

Day one focused on Clinical Ethics, beginning with a comparative exploration of traditional medical ethics versus contemporary bioethics. This was followed by sessions on informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. Two specially developed CBEC videos effectively helped participants contextualize the nuances of consent and privacy in clinical encounters relevant to local Pakistani settings. Day two centered on Research Ethics, starting with an activity to differentiate between clinical practice and research, highlighting the distinct ethical implications. A session on the basics of research ethics introduced common ethical challenges and the importance of ethical oversight mechanisms. This led to an introduction to the WHO Benchmarking Tool for Ethics Oversight. The day concluded with a dynamic research case discussion, where participants divided into two groups deliberated on ethical issues, as members of a simulated ethics review committee.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, with balanced representation across specialties and hierarchy, including clinical, nursing, diagnostic, and administrative departments. Participants actively engaged in all discussions, sharing experiences and perspectives unique to their professional contexts. Brig. Dr. Kahloon sat through all the sessions of the workshop, displaying the institute's commitment.

Besides the two workshops, CBEC has had a student from Balochistan who completed the Clinical Ethics Certificate Course and another who is currently enrolled in the PGD program.



Dr. Aamir (standing) introduces the workshop participants to the basics of research ethics including the significance of ethics oversight bodies.

PGD CLASS OF 2025, MBE CLASS OF 2026 GLIMPSES FROM THE ACADEMIC YEAR

CBEC held two modules in the past six months — the Foundation Module from January 13 to 25, 2025, and the Clinical Ethics Module from April 21 to May 3, 2025. The Foundation Module stressed the importance of bioethics as an interdisciplinary field and connected various strands, including philosophy, law, religion and humanities to contemporary bioethics. The second module focused on the ethical issues connected to the clinical practice of medicine. The following moments capture the dynamic engagement of our students and faculty through the modules.



Foundation Module: MBE Seminar, "Religion and Bioethics" with Dr. Nauman Faizi from LUMS (right).



It's not 'all work and no play' at CBEC! An evening of street food with faculty and students in January 2025.



Clinical Ethics Module: Students involved in Small Group Discussions, an important pedagogical tool used at CBEC.



Clinical Ethics Module: Students in class watch a role play, livestreamed from another room, during a "Hospital Ethics Consultative Services" session.



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