



## **“My Vision is to Create a World without Poverty”**

**"Poverty in the world is an artificial creation. It does not belong to the human civilization."**

*In this period when banking and corporate greed has devastated the economic situation of the world, and which has caused millions of people globally into financial destitution, with all the unfortunate ramifications that this brings.... it is refreshing to remember, that not all bankers are "like that." This is a snapshot of the life and achievements of Muhammad Yunus, an Asian Hero in world affairs.*

In 1974, famine gripped Bangladesh. Hundreds of thousands died and millions became destitute. "Villagers had to borrow from loan sharks on terrible conditions," says Muhammad Yunus, "and some even became slave labor for the money lenders." For Yunus, who had just returned to Bangladesh as an economics professor after completing his Ph.D. in the U.S., it was wrenching to discover how meaningless his academic achievements were in the midst of all this suffering. Hoping to cure his own sense of helplessness, he wandered the muddy lanes of a village next to his university, searching for ways to help. Little did he know that this nervous exploration would plant the seeds of an economic miracle still blooming decades later.

Yunus compiled a list of the village's 42 most impoverished and went about repaying each of their debts for a paltry total of \$27. While banks would never lend money to these often illiterate and undocumented peasants, Yunus simply asked that they work hard and repay him "when they could." He recalls: "It was a big shock that just a little money could make people so happy. With the money they could become free."

This is the operating ethos of the Grameen Bank, which Yunus founded in 1983 and which has since extended microloans to 6.6 million people in Bangladesh, most of them women. "Conventional banks look for the rich," says Yunus. "We look for the absolutely poor." As Yunus sees it, credit is a human right, enabling a person "to unwrap that gift of one's self and find out who he is." Yet the concept he pioneered has proved to be much more than kind-hearted charity: 99% of Grameen's borrowers repay their debts—despite the fact that they borrow without providing collateral—and the bank makes a modest profit.

Inspired by his success, many others have embraced Yunus' concept. From the U.S. to Uganda, over 100 million people are now enrolled in various microcredit schemes. Prominent global figures otherwise at each other's throats, such as Paul Wolfowitz, head of the World Bank, and Hugo Chávez, the leftist President of Venezuela, have all praised Yunus' achievement. And, on Oct. 13, Yunus received the most extraordinary endorsement yet, becoming the first businessman ever to win the Nobel Prize for Peace. As the news broke, his entire country celebrated. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia heralded him as "the pride of Bangladesh," while thousands flocked to Grameen's headquarters in the suburbs of Dhaka to congratulate their hero.

For Yunus—whose father struggled to support 10 children as the owner of a tiny ornaments shop in the city of Chittagong—the Nobel is an almost unimaginable accomplishment. But his ambitions are far bolder than this. Yunus insists it's possible to eradicate global poverty within two generations, with microcredit uplifting countless millions.

"At the rate we're heading, we'll halve total poverty by 2015," he says.

"We'll create a poverty museum in 2030." NY times "Asian Heroes" by Ishaan Tharoor

## BIOGRAPHY

Born third of nine children on 28th June 1940 in the village of Bathua, by the Boxirhat Road in Hathazari, Chittagong (then Bengal Province of British India). His father was Hazi Dula Mia Shoudagar, a jeweler, his mother was Sofia Khautn. Yunus studied at his village school in the early years. When his family moved to Chittagong, he enrolled in the Lamabazar Primary School. Later, he studied at Chittagong Collegiate School and passed the matriculation examination, in which he secured the 16th position among 39,000 students in East Pakistan. During his school years, he was active in the Boy Scouts, and travelled to West Pakistan and India in 1952. In 1955, he attended the World Scouts Jamboree in Canada as part of the Pakistan contingent. On the way back, he travelled through Europe and Asia by road. Next, Yunus enrolled into Chittagong College where he was active in cultural activities and got awards for acting in dramas. Muhammad Yunus studied at Dhaka University in Bangladesh, then received a Fulbright scholarship to study economics at Vanderbilt University. He received his Ph.D. in economics from Vanderbilt in 1969 and the following year became an assistant professor of economics at Middle Tennessee State University. Returning to Bangladesh, Yunus headed the economics department at Chittagong University.

Married twice, he has two daughters. Monica Yunus is the oldest and is quickly establishing herself as one of America's most promising young sopranos. A 2003 Sullivan Foundation Award winner, Ms. Yunus has already performed with numerous opera companies throughout North America. Monica was born to Yunus and his Russian wife in Chittagong, Bangladesh in 1977 and left for USA after only three months. She was raised by her mother in New Jersey. Monica has been a prize winner in numerous competitions, among them The Florida Grand Opera Competition, Palm Beach Opera Competition, the Lee Schaenen Foundation Award, and most recently The Mirjam Helin International Competition in Helsinki, Finland. She earned her degrees from The Juilliard School. Yunus married a Bangladeshi in 1980 - Afrozi Yunus, a professor of physics at Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka. They have a young daughter Deena.

## NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. AND THE GREMEEN BANK

In 2006 Dr. Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to create economic and social development from the ground up, through micro-financing. This award not only inspired the people of Bangladesh towards greater achievements, but also gave worldwide recognition to the nation as a whole. His vision is the total eradication of poverty in the world. "Grameen," he claims, "is a message of hope, a program for putting homelessness and destitution in a museum, so that one day our children will visit and ask how we could have allowed such a terrible thing to go for so long." Muhammad Yunus has proved himself to be a leader by transforming his vision into practical action for the benefit of millions of people, not only in Bangladesh but in many other countries as well.

## VISION

Muhammad Yunus's vision is the total eradication of poverty from the world. 'Grameen', he claims, 'is a message of hope, a programme for putting homelessness and destitution in a museum so that one day our children will visit it and ask how we could have allowed such a terrible thing to go on for so long'. This work is a fundamental rethink on the economic relationship between the rich and the poor, their rights and their obligations. The World Bank recently acknowledged that 'this business approach to the alleviation of poverty has allowed millions of individuals to work their way out of poverty with dignity'. Credit is the last hope left to those faced with absolute poverty. That is why Muhammad Yunus believes that the right to credit should be recognized as a fundamental human right. It is this struggle and the unique and extraordinary methods he invented to combat human despair that Muhammad Yunus recounts here with humility and conviction. It is also the view of a man familiar with both Eastern and Western cultures — on the failures and potential for good of industrial countries. It is an appeal for action: we must concentrate on promoting the will to survive and the courage to build in the first and most essential element of the economic cycle — Man.

## HIS WISH LIST

There will be a global government to resolve issues of conflict between nations, and regions; to see that all parts of the world enjoy the similar quality of life; to pay attention to global human issues; to protect the planet, and the interest of all living beings on the planet.

## THE ELDERS

Nelson Mandela announced the formation of this new group on the occasion of his 89th birthday. "The Elders can speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes. They will reach out to those who most need their help. They will support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair." Nelson Mandela. Dr. Mohammad Yunus shows his great humility when he was invited to be a member of this group formation as he remarked in his book that he thought only to get their autographs. He said at the inauguration "I hope we will see clearly and focus our efforts on economic issues as well as social issues - wherever we can have the most impact."

## BRIEF ASTROLOGY OVERVIEW

Muhammad was born with his Sun in maternal Cancer, and in advanced people who "rule the emotional waters", this sign fosters a desire to "mother" the masses. The extent to which he has done this, alleviating the suffering of millions by giving them the means and opportunity to raise their standards of living, testifies to his advanced spiritual status. He is probably an initiate - one whose consciousness has expanded to the extent that he totally identifies with the race of man as a whole. He is truly globally conscious. His birthtime is unknown, but I have placed Pisces on the Ascendant, because its universal and empathetic nature fits Yunus' profile.

Exciting and original Uranus falls in his house of money, giving him his original ideas about the use of money, and how to create social change to benefit the masses. Beneficent Jupiter adds its expanding power, and indicates his great love of mankind and of the planet (Jupiter trine the Earth, Sun in the 4th house). Saturn gives the ability to build a substantial financial structure which will greatly benefit society (rules the 11th house). These three planets are all in the business and banking sign of Taurus. His ingenious ideas in the creation and distribution of money and wealth point to the likelihood that Muhammad is a Ray 3 Soul - and a member of the 3rd Ray Ashram whose goal is to raise humanity through original ideas, business and finance!

The keynote of Cancer is "I build a lighted house and therein dwell", and this impulse is distributed by Neptune - the esoteric ruler of Cancer. It is in Virgo - the sign which prepares man to receive the Christ spirit, trine Uranus. We could interpret Muhammad's soul purpose simply as: to use his brilliant visionary powers to help mankind (collectively) "build a lighted house" - by giving people the means/ energy/ credit/ prana/

money/ opportunity, to do so. Lifting oneself out of poverty, improving the standard of living, educating the children - all this leads to more "lighted" consciousnesses. Yunus has helped millions in this way, indicating his success in realising his spiritual purpose for this life. Muhammad Yunus is a Lightbearer for humanity, and has managed to bring more light to the "house" of humanity in his lifetime. Truly a Goodwill Economic Hero. [Click here for solar chart.](#)

#### MANY AWARDS (INCLUDING)

King Abdul Aziz medal in 2007

Ramon Magsaysay Award

World Food Prize

Sydney Peace Prize

26 honorary doctorate degrees and 15 special awards.

Houston, Texas declared 14th Jan as "Muhammad Yunus Day.

Dwight D Eisenhower Medal for Leadership and Service from Eisenhower Fellowship in 2009.

#### BOOKS

Banker to the Poor

Grameen Bank, as I See it; Grameen Bank; 1994

A World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism; Public Affairs. 2008

Information from Wikipedia and Yunus' official website <http://muhammadyunus.org>