networks, email, instant messaging & bulletin boards. Netizens speak of this "new" society as if it has banished loneliness; a new "mental Main Street" joining strangers in commonality. It is the substitute contact. There are "virtual" romances & of course, surging, tsunami-like, cyber-porn.

In the Muslim world they thought instead of fighting TV that countering it was best. "The antidote to poisonous foreign cultural invasion" was clear. Better locally produced TV programs. The answer to the poisons on the Internet is very unclear. With just a click a child's world can forever be tainted. Asking for govt control is a waste of time. So we come full circle to the word spoken in the silicon valleys of Arabian sand. The parents must live the moral life & the children will follow. As Prophet Yaqub inquired of his sons: "What will you worship after me? They said: We shall worship your God, God of your fathers, Abraham & Ishaq, One God & unto Him we have surrendered." (2:132-133). Are you inquiring of your children? Unto whom have they surrendered?

Quicksand: In the fading light of newspaper land, it's easy to forget what was good about them. Overshadowed by the fast & furious world of the internet with wire stories, blogs & an avalanche of "tweets" every second, we are tantalized by the promise of immediacy. Instant material/sensual gratification, contributing to the creation of cultural shallowness & the single-minded pursuit of the pleasures of consumption. Do we really need to know the minutiae of people's daily lives? Our "freedom" today is to simply to walk about in our cages & choose the wallpaper. Inner freedom or private space has been invaded & whittled down by status updates. Aren't the angels doing a good enough job of recording our deeds? Why are we doubling up? We are doing more talking about our life than actually living it. BTW, the angels do more than just record our deeds. They categorize it as either good or evil! We humans don't... we deceive ourselves that we are "free" to do what we like. This thought process is a Satanic bondage.

Anyone with a computer/phone, cannot only easily access the news, they can comment on it; adding their name to the posts that trail all news stories. But what happens when the posts are so reactive and knee-jerky in their tone? The results can be devastating. If you read only the printed, hold-it-in-your-hand version of the newspaper, you're lucky. Things have become nasty online. It's revolting what readers spew in the

postings that appear below the stories on the Web sites of newspapers that allow comments. People featured in news stories are sometimes outraged or reduced to tears after reading the vitriol. Comments have been racist, sexist & as vulgar as anything on a bathroom wall. What's the point of that? It's a new form of roadrage on the internet highway (or a super sewer?) where people can get away with it because they have "usernames" that keep them anonymous. BUT...The angels have recorded your names & faces. Would you be the one bitterly crying: "The book shall be set in place & you will see the sinners fearful at what is in it & saying, 'Alas for us how is it with this Book, that it leaves nothing behind, **small or great**, but it has numbered it?' They shall find **all they did present** & God shall not wrong anyone." (18:49)

People have said/done pretty stupid & crude things when they thought no one would ever know it was them? We wouldn't print a letter to the editor laced with such venom/hate. Why do we do it on the internet? Beware of firing off "nasty" postings on the spur-of-the-moment. A bit of googling or digital snooping on the digital sand can reveal your long forgotten mud-slinging or hormone-induced "romanticisms." Think before you leap into *that* website. For every atom's weight of evil will be queried on that Day. Every day spouses digitally spying on one another...employers digging up the digital past of potential employees... watch out!!! Digital tracks are harder to erase than tracks in the sand.

The most obvious reason for the recent increase in porn addiction is technology. Tech has amplified the spread of the porn virus. Before the internet was born, porn was only available in print form (magazines) & for television (VHS & DVDs). But the birth of the internet allowed for a completely new venue of expansion for the porn industry. Porn is no longer exclusively accessed by going to an adult film or book store; instead, it's widely accessible online, available to billions (men, women & CHILDREN) – often without payment – with just the click of a button. It's horrifying!

O Muslims ! Let's claim the power of the Internet from those who are Gog & Magog. Those who are lawless. What have given humanity this "power?" Silicon dioxide (SiO2), silicon's most common compound, is the most abundant compound in the earth's crust, and comprises roughly 14% of the crust. An example of an element we cannot live without. Let's use it for every atom's weight of good. How lucky we are, at the sandy gate...if we use it well...then... How lucky we will be to stand at The Pearly Gates!

It's a silicon chip. The stuff of techno-dreams. Also, of a glinting grain of sand. Hold it in your hand & you hold tomorrow. Turn away from it, and as sand through open fingers, see entire horizons of potentialities slip away. Can we Muslims allow ourselves to commit a pitiful abdication of such a heavy, technological responsibility? We cannot absent ourselves from the moral & social questions raised. To leave it in the hands of the godless. The advances of technology & science, rather than obliterating the world of myth, have enhanced its power to deceive. We live in imaginary, virtual worlds created by persons that profit from our deception. Humanity belongs to "the cult of distraction" where society is consumed by the vacuous & the vapid rather than striving for self-awareness, contribution & accomplishment.

The godly must take the helm of the technological Titanic. Come out from under the panic of inferiority complexes & be free to make decisions that strip away layers of accumulated dysfunction to arrive at touchstones to a digital life worth living. Let's reach for the twinkling stars on a stairway made of glittering sand.

The silicon-operated world carries **power**. It carries **seduction**. It carries power allied with seduction. It is a world wide-open for Islam, to harness the strengths & counter the false, the destructive seductions of this power-tool.

In the silicon chip of the Electronic Age, there is hope. **And there is immense danger.** This is where material civilization meets astounding delivery systems. Instantaneous/Global/Long-Range. This is where Islam is utterly, absolutely, imperatively needed. Spectacular achievement is always preceded by spectacular preparation. Electronize Islam.

The Digital Earth co-exists with the Lost Earth. One 7-year-old takes to the "mouse." Elsewhere, another sleeps with rats. Lost people, by the millions, & amongst these many young girls, exists in the Digital Earth. Digital porn is dooming many to hell here, as they have found out, and to Hell there, as they will find out. Islam! Islam! Digital Islam...Help these lost people. Or Nietzsche's words will haunt us: "Whither are we moving now? Do we **not** now wander through an **endless nothing**?" Self-opinionated religious Youtube videos, time-wasting on social media, these are becoming dangerous "endless nothings."

But how it shines and sparkles, the bauble of tomorrow, the chip's silica, like the uncountable grains of sand on Allah's beaches, once lofty mountains, now one with the sea. What a world it can build, under the hand of the Muslim helmsman. Electronic dawah: Just think of it! The dawah beyond space and matter, into time and the mental, "virtual" realms, unfolding.

Tech has radically changed the way we live our lives. But have we unwittingly handed too much away to shadowy powers behind a wall of code, all manipulated by a handful of Silicon Valley utopians, ad men & venture capitalists? And, in light of data breach scandals, what does that mean for democracy, the balanced system of government that was created long before big data, total information & AI? Through our unquestioning embrace of big tech, the building blocks of democracy are being removed. The middle class is being eroded, sovereign authority & civil society is weakened, and we citizens are losing our critical faculties, maybe even our free will.

The quotients of tomorrow's peoples and nations will be judged on the sharp hinges of this world: information-rich, information-poor? The computer introduces a parallel form of literacy. Computer-driven technology, supra-technology, becomes at once art, voice and arsenal of those who use it and those who have access to it. There is no excuse, and every incentive, for the monopoly of one culture, one civilization to this literacy and this access. Bypass and preference systems may shape or seek to shape silicon-tomorrows. Already, remote-control war, bloodless at the push-button level of origin, has changed the face of human conflict. War is easier in the control room than in the trenches. The Muslims need to enter computer/digital reality fully aware of its latent benefits and pitfalls, its true implications & dimensions.

TV started quite prettily too, once. No mega-medium of world power envisaged then, just a fantastic box with clean, *emphasis on clean*, exciting entertainment for the family gathered there in the living room; the world was coming to your home. Now TV is the button-pusher of events, the foreign-policy stager, the final arbiter. It is the culture-conqueror, its army made of roof-top satellites, from Iran to Antartica. The entertainment has gone gory, gruesome & loose, with monitors floundering to rein it in. Rating-systems for violence & porn now needed on children's software games. If it moves, shoot it. With awesome looking guns. In 3-D, full stereo, shred, splatter & skull-crunch. And what else does that "thing" that looks female need to take off or do with her body to make young hormones go speeding off, in the wrong direction, on the information highway. And worldwide, governments that are so interested in AIDS, with all sorts of devious campaigns, turn a blind eye to the greatest disaster facing children, men...porn. Women's organizations are strangely silent as their kind fuel a hellish conflagration consuming "innocents" & destroying families.

Communication is what the computer age is all about. Now it is you who goes out to the world from your monitor. You, the button-pusher. The need to reach out & to be heard seems overwhelming, as if the passive communications revolution of the TV-feed were finally being turned on its head. Millions of blogs. There is not a small whiff of revolt here. It is about convenience, it is about speed & efficiency. But ultimately the growing whirl emanating from the electronic community's flashing signals is about communication. Here, Muslims have the upper hand. The Great Communicator does not belong to the twenty-first century at all. A word spoken in silicon valleys of sand, Arabian, was and is more potent than all the beeps & blips and clicks & clacks combined. **More potent**. It's the spoken word of faith...the unmatched Quran...the guide. The Internet...misguided.

On TV & Digital media, on their might when allied, a British television playwright about to die young offered some sobering thoughts for tomorrow. In his last days, after a life devoted to the medium of surfaces (TV), and some probing, if secular, work, he thought upon the world he was about to leave. Upon the shape of things to come. And then never thinking about God in his busy life, he thought...Upon God. And he said: We have gone from being humane citizens to being greedy consumers. The guaranty of Freedom today is ownership. The ultimate guaranty is ownership of the airwaves & of the virtual world of cybernetics, computer-generated living. Then, when entertainment (and its business) really is the function of the world, we are doomed. The future he was glimpsing followed the only path he knew. He spoke of life, of people who had forgotten, had deliberately chosen to forget God. How unlucky the Westerner trapped in their ungodly digital hell.

How lucky we are at the sandy gate. How lucky we Muslims are not to be able to forget. To perceive even dimly. And we have a job to do. To stamp that passport to tomorrow with the sign of Islam. To go digital, **but not mindlessly digital**. *Mindlessly following those who have forgotten God*. To go digitally-Islamic.

Technological communication has improved but basic human communication has deteriorated. Citizens of the Net praise the feeling of computer-exchange intimacy, the flood of community feeling pulsing through the fiber-optic networks: social