

PRESS BLURB 11

THE CALL FOR SULHE KUL FOR PEACEFUL- COEXISTENCE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SUNNIS AND SHIAHS AND OTHERS

Dear Chief reporter/Bureau chief/Channel head

You are requested to send your representatives to cover the event which carries much importance today. In the backdrop of bloody Shia-Sunni conflicts in many countries and sporadic sectarian clashes in India, the event is very important and topical. This is an attempt to build bridges between the two major sects in India.

Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, a noted Islamic scholar and Director General of the Wisdom Foundation has initiated a dialogue between Sunnis , Shias and Sects for peaceful living. As a first step renowned and reputed ulema and clergy are invited to participate in the debate. They will seek solutions to the conflicts through logical arguments and historical perspectives.

The seminar titled “THE CALL FOR A PEACEFUL DIALOGUE AMONG SUNNIS AND SHIAHS AND OTHER SECTS” has been planned at the Karimi Library, Anjuman-i-islam from 11AM-1PM followed by lunch.

Many misconceptions will be dispelled at the debate. Sunni and Shi'ah are post-Quranic terminologies. Violence is

antithetical to Islam. A tradition of the Prophet Muhammad clearly states: “ A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hearts people feel safe” (Baihaqi) and again “The believer in God is he who is not a danger to life and property of any other.” (Tirmizi, Nisai and Bukhari); The Prophet once said: “All creatures form the family of God: and he is best loved of God who loves His creatures” (Baihaqi; Qitab-ul Iman)

The *Quran* recongnizes diversity, acceptance and tolerance of differences based on gender (49:13; 53:45), colour, language (30:23), belief and nationality (64:2, 6:165). Harmony between the different social groupings and communities is praised whereas unhealthy competition and dominance of one by the other is condemned (2:213, 10:19, 7:38, 13:30, 16:63, 29:18, 35:42, 41:42, 64:18). Scholars cite the Prophet’s saying, “My *Ummah’s* differences are a mercy”

THE POLITICS OF POWER

For several decades, Catholics and Protestants (like the Shiahs and Sunnis in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and other places) in Northern Ireland have been blamed for violence in the area. It is often forgotten that the conflicts are for geo-political rather than religious reasons. The reality is that neither Catholicism nor Protestantism (nor Shias and Sunnis) endorse such violence. Unfortunately, those with profound religious affiliations have unabashedly been accused of exacerbating tensions.

The conflict currently raging in West Asia between Shias and Sunnis has less to do with religious differences and more because of geo-politics and modern identity politics. Some vested interests are fueling this false division and are

perpetuating the conflict. The conflicts between sects and communities need to be peacefully and effectively eliminated.

Historically, Shias and Sunnis have, despite the differences, tried to live in peace. Sunni Ottoman Empire and Shiah Saffavid Empire had their share of conflicts, but they also lived peacefully for centuries.

Nonetheless, today despite Islam's rich historical heritage of peaceful co-existence, clashes between the Sunni and the Shiah take place across the Muslim world. The advantages of peace building efforts are numerous.

The lives and security of minorities have always been central to Islam. The killing of the Christian minorities in Pakistan is a ghastly and despicable act and against the values of Islam. It must be absolutely condemned. Minorities in Muslim-dominated countries must be protected in keeping with the compassionate tradition of Islam.

Political ploys have enmeshed the world today. People of the world can and should continue to live with the deeply ingrained sense of tolerance. And this is at the heart of the effort for a bridge between Shias and Sunnis.

The Wisdom Foundation thanks Indian Ulema for their keen interest in mitigating the suffering of both the sects caught in sectarian wars.

As a follow-up to this Conference, The Wisdom Foundation will bring forth a publication on Islam's values on Peaceful

co-existence with quotations from the Quran, Traditions of Prophet. We will request Ulema from ALL schools of thought to kindly share their knowledge with us and the rest of the world. The publication to be brought out in in English, and Urdu the form of a Booklet will be translated into Hindi, Marathi and other languages. It will be compiled as a Text and distributed to Educational Institutions : schools of ALL mediums of languages, denominations, patshallas, madrassas. We will also circulate them to Government offices and Members of Parliament.

We will also set-up Committees from ALL Muslims denominations to work together and assist in programs for harmonious co-existence and peace.

DATE: 1st June 2015

**VENUE : KARIMI LIBRARY, ANJUMAN-I-ISLAM
SECRETARIAT, BADRUDDIN TYABJI MARG,
D.N.ROAD, OPP CST, MUMBAI 400001**

TIME: 11AM-3 PM.

THE MEETING WILL BE FOLLOWED BY LUNCH

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**Zeenat Shaukat Ali
Director General, The Wisdom Foundation
19th May 2015
Cell No 9821487371**