

Large Demonstration for the Promotion of National and Social Unity

New Delhi: The Delhi State branch of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (Registered) organized a major conference on Saturday evening to strengthen national harmony and social unity. Major leaders from the Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and Buddhist communities participated in the event. Together, they pledged to reinforce the fabric of national and social unity and exposed those forces that are attacking our unity for their petty political gains.

The conference was attended by the national spokesperson of the Gurdwara Sangh and President of the All India Peace Mission, Daya Singh; former Delhi minister Rajendra Pal Gautam; Dr. M. D. Thomas, President of the Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies; renowned Islamic scholar Mufti Ataur Rahman Qasmi; Advocate Feroz Khan Ghazi, General Secretary of Samla; Professor Mohammad Suleman, Working President of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat and head of the Indian National League; former MP Ram Bakhsh Verma; and President of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan. The event was conducted by the well-known journalist Suhail Anjum.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan explained verses 11–13 of Surah Al-Hujurat, with which the conference had commenced. He said that Islam makes no distinction among human beings. According to Allah Almighty, the best person is the one who is most pious and God-fearing—that is, the one who fears Allah and protects and honours the rights of others. He cited multiple sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in which the Prophet said that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and no non-Arab is superior to an Arab, and neither is a white person superior to a black person nor a black person is superior to a white person. Rather, all are equal and all are children of Adam. He also referred to the advisory letter that the fourth caliph Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote to his governor in Egypt, Malik al-Ashtar, in which Hazrat Ali said: "Malik! People are either your brothers in faith or your equals in humanity." Dr Khan mentioned that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said that this quote is a source of international law and it should be written and hung at the entrances of all human rights organizations around the world.

Dr. Zafarul-Islam highlighted the need for national and social unity and brotherhood in the country, stating that it is not only necessary according to the Indian Constitution and laws, but it is also essential to ensure the progress of our country and society. If we want to stand shoulder to shoulder with the greatest nations of the world, we must promote love and mutual respect within our society. He said that those who are engaging in the politics of hate are a small minority that can be defeated by a united majority of the country.

The President of the All India Peace Mission, Sardar Daya Singh, recited some verses from the *Guru Granth Sahib* which have the same meanings as the verses of the Holy Qur'an that were recited during the conference. He said that everyone together fought for the freedom of this country, while some forces have constantly worked to divide the people of this society. They have deprived some communities of their rights and have greatly oppressed others—such as the massacre of Sikhs in 1984. At that time, members of the Muslim community saved Sikhs everywhere and gave them shelter in their homes and mosques. Sikhs owe this as a debt to the Muslims.

He said that immediately after independence, a decision was taken in 1950 by the President of the Republic, according to which if a Dalit converts to Islam or Christianity, his reservation is revoked—which is an injustice. He stated that a petition has been filed by the Sikh community in the Supreme Court against the law which has just been passed against Waqf.

Sardar Daya Singh said that it is commonly believed that historically Sikhs have had very bad relations with Muslims and that Muslims oppressed them. But no one tells you that Guru Nanak praised Babur, and that the only *Bani* (hymn) written by the founder of Sikhism for any individual was for Babur.

Daya Singh mentioned that Emperor Akbar gave 50 villages to Bibi Bhani, the daughter of the third Guru, Baba Amar Das, on the occasion of her wedding. It is this land on which the city of Amritsar was later built and where the Golden Temple stands. The foundation of this temple was laid by the Muslim Sufi saint Sayeen Mir Sahib.

He also said that Sikhs had very good relations with Emperor Jahangir. And when the eighth Guru, Harkrishan Ji, died of smallpox in Delhi in the year 1664 during the time of Aurangzeb, the emperor said that the place where the Guru died is the property of the Khalsa, and the Guru should be buried there. That is why Guru Harkrishan Ji was buried right there in Delhi.

Sardar Daya Singh said that if all these things are removed from history today, then what will remain? He said that the area of "Mata Sundari" in Delhi was given by the Mughals to Mata Sundari, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh. He stated that in Kartarpur, the Pakistani government has given 40 acres of land for the Gurudwara. This is our history. This country belongs to everyone. Everyone has sacrificed for it, and it is necessary to speak this truth today.

Former MP, Dr. Ram Bakhsh Verma, said that he began his life by going to the RSS *shakhas* and only later moved to secular politics. According to his experience, the people of the Sangh say one thing and do another. He stated that certain forces want to push this country backwards. Today's dictator calls himself a superpower. He has taken control of all the media in the country, joined hands with the country's wealthy, and is exploiting the public. Hitler did the same thing in Germany. After seizing power, he had started

eliminating the weak. The same is happening in our country today. Money is driving many things, votes are being bought. 80–85 percent of the people have been pushed to the margins, and no one is talking about them. This is why some people felt the need to burn the *Manusmriti*. He said that only four days after the Constitution was passed, the RSS mouthpiece *Organizer* had written that they would never accept this Constitution. These were the same people who, along with the British, stood against those fighting for independence. In fact, their Sarsanghchalak had said at the time that they did not want such freedom and would rather accept the British rule.

Dr. Ram Bakhsh Verma said that we and our Muslim brothers have the same ancestors. It was due to some of our shortcomings that some of our people separated from us. There was never any Hindu-Muslim conflict here. There were Hindus in Aurangzeb's army and Muslims in Shivaji's army. Subhash Chandra Bose gave the second-highest rank in the Azad Hind Fauj to a Muslim. For this country, Bahadur Shah Zafar and Begum Hazrat Mahal made greatest sacrifices. He said that Mohammad Firoz Khan was a commander in Rani Jhansi's army who fought the British until his last breath, while some of Rani Jhansi's own relatives had betrayed her. He said that changing religion does not change one's parentage — our DNA is the same. He concluded his speech with Iqbal's verse: *Mazhab naheen sikhaata aapas mein bair rakhna* (Religion does not teach you to bear hatred against one another).

Advocate Firoz Khan Ghazi, General Secretary of SAMLA, said that our Constitution and laws have strived to unite different communities and classes into one nation. This is written right in the preamble of the Constitution, but today a party is in power whose very goal in life is to humiliate Muslims. He said that the National Integration Council was established to create unity in the country. The Ministry of Home Affairs had issued guidelines on how the police should act during riots and disturbances. A law was passed in 1991 for the protection of places of worship. All of this was for the promotion of national unity so that people from different communities could come together to form one nation. But for the last 30–35 years, some forces have been trying hard to tear this nation apart again. He said that it is our duty to stand against the politics of hatred. These forces have already attacked Muslim personal laws and waqf, and much more is yet to come. That is why it is necessary that we raise our voices and say that we will neither tolerate any injustice nor allow it to happen. If we do not stand together today, this country will break apart. He said that what we today call "*Akhand Bharat*" (Undivided India) and dream about was actually created by the Mughals. Before them, we were divided into hundreds of small princely states.

Former Delhi minister Advocate Rajendra Pal Gautam, while speaking at the conference, said that he has visited this area several times in the past few weeks. He said he wants the voice rising from here today to reach the grassroots, to the poor and Dalit settlements, because the real issue lies there. These people are not just targeting Muslims; Christians too are on their target. The poor, Adivasis, and Dalits are on their target. After them, others will be targeted too. He said that the forces of hatred attacked Muslims and

Christians at a time when many Dalits and Adivasis began to convert to Islam and Christianity. The British, French, and Dutch who came to India went back, but the Muslims and Christians who are here today are all people of this land. Today, there are 200 million Muslims in India and their majority were originally Adivasis and Dalits. This is because some people here and their religious texts, like *Manusmriti* and the *Vedas*, say that everyone other than Brahmins is lowly. In such a situation, if these people changed their religion, it was not something surprising.

There are some people here who believe that no one other than a Brahmin is a human being. There was a time when no one except Brahmins had any rights, and this situation has been ongoing for two and a half thousand years. The Brahmins did not struggle against the Mughals or the British, nor were they oppressed by them. It is said that during British rule, when a Brahmin, Raja Nand Kumar, was sentenced to death on charges of murder, it was the first time the Brahmins protested against the British. When Ambedkar gave widows the right to remarry, they all turned against him. We need to get to the roots in order to understand what the real problems are. Two thousand years ago, Buddhists were wiped out in this country. Buddhist temples were converted into Brahmin temples. It is said that when Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, excavations were carried out beneath the Somnath temple, and Buddhist relics were found there.

It was also true that those who instigated the riots against Sikhs in 1984 are the same people who are instigating riots today. They were the ones who burned Pastor Staines. No matter what you do, in their eyes, you are impure. Recently, when the Dalit Leader of Opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly went to a temple, the temple was washed with Ganga water after he left. Those who die, kill, or are looted in riots are all people from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minorities. It is a fact that before 1993, there were no Hindu religious processions in this country—so why are they being held now? These people have assigned some individuals the task of defending religion. When Muslims were in power, their religion was not in danger, so how is it now, when they themselves are in power? The whole issue is that they want to retain control over political power. That is why they orchestrate riots. The fight is not between Hindus and Muslims, but rather over power.

Rajendra Pal Gautam strongly emphasized that we need to come out of closed rooms and go down to the poor and Dalit neighbourhoods, which are used during riots. We must make efforts to ensure that poor and Dalit people are not used in the politics of hate. Today the situation is such that they have complete control over every department of the government, they have total dominance over the Election Commission, they have removed many people from the voter lists and added others in order to gain political advantage. Today, if even the Supreme Court starts delivering judgments based on faith, the issue becomes very grave. The followers of *Manusmriti* consider the poor, the weak, Dalits, and Adivasis as their tools and use them for their own purposes, even though they have no love for them. We have to go to these poor people and tell them that it is the *Manusmriti*

that created all our problems. Until these poor people stop going to the *shakhas*, the situation will not change.

Professor Muhammad Suleiman, Working President of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat and head of the Indian National League, agreed that our message needs to reach the grassroots so that the public, the poor, Dalits, and Adivasis can understand these matters. He said that today, capitalists and fascists have come together to form a strong organization. It is the responsibility of every citizen to play their role in this major struggle. Our country is hurtling down the path of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. We must stop this, and we must reach the misled youth.

At the end of the conference, Dr. D. M. Thomas said in his presidential address that all religions contain good teachings, but some people use religion for their own malicious purposes. We must work together. We must understand that we are all human beings, and all are servants and children of the same God.

In addition to members of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, many prominent local individuals and professors and students of Jamia Millia Islamia participated in the conference.

(End)

Photo: Former Minister Delhi, Rajendra Pal Gautam speaking at the conference