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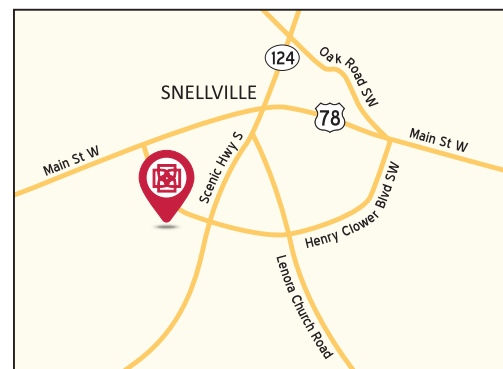


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From Editor's Desk



Publishing this magazine was a team effort and many deserve gratitude and acknowledgment. I would like to sincerely thank Syed Hasan Kamal for persuading Dr. L. Allen and Dr. R. N. Nash of Mercer University to write their experiences of recent faculty exchanges. This year with help of Syed Waseem and Dr. Abdullah (DC), we were able to compile a comprehensive list of poets who graced our Annual International Mushairas since 1985. I am sure it will preserve our institutional memory and will highlight AAAA's contributions to the promotion of Urdu language in Atlanta and beyond. Dr. S. M. Ghazanfar was very kind in sharing fond memories of his year 2000 visit to AMU, Aligarh. I thank AMU Vice-Chancellor, Gen. Z. Shah for sending his message promptly. We are thankful to Zubair Asmi, Dr. Shoeb Ahmad and Dr. Shahid Rafique for providing event photographs. Our President, Dr. Asif Taufiq made special efforts in fetching generous sponsors. All the assistance from Vice President, Sultan Khan, Dr. Farzana Bhramal and other AAAA members is gratefully acknowledged. For Urdu articles, we owe special gratitude to Ms. Naeem Fatima Taufique for her regular contribution. We are greatly appreciative of all the sponsors and community businesses for their support. I would like to thank, Dr. Valeed Ahmad of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) for getting Urdu typing done. My daughter, Tahira, helped me in putting together the profile article. My wife, Shaista, supported my spending several evening and weekend hours for this work.

This publication comes out yearly on the occasion of our Annual International Mushaira (poetry symposium). It contains information on AAAA activities, future projects and priorities, reminiscences, and Urdu poetry of local and guest poets, etc. Hope you would like this edition and we look forward to your feedback.

AAAA Zindabad!

With kindest regards,

Rasheed Ahmad, Ph.D.

Honorary Editor

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AAAA provides educational assistance to the needy students, helps our Alma Mater/other institutions to modernize, facilitates faculty student exchange and collaboration with institutions of higher learning, promotes Urdu language and its art forms.

AAAA is a non-profit organization with a tax-exempt status, 501(c) (3)



President's Message

RABBI ZIDNEE ILMUN: *"Oh my Lord advance me in knowledge"*. These are the words I hear my mother, a senior Aligarian, teaching my children after prayers.

What is so magical about the Lamp of Knowledge started by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, still being passed upon with great fervor and passion by an elderly woman? Speaking with my own experience, I found out early in my career, that the only advantage I will have over others is how much "knowledge" of a subject I have acquired. The only way to defeat an opponent is through knowledge. Once knowledge is obtained and is continuously being acquired as a student, nationality, color of skin, and physical beauty becomes of secondary nature. As Peter Drucker once said: "Today knowledge has power; it controls access to opportunity and advancement."

The question arises: What have we done as an Aligarh Alumni Chapter in Atlanta to provide an opportunity for this "Knowledge Flow"?

Yes, Mushairas are great, the Eid Milan Party and picnics are wonderful, but where is the conduit of "knowledge flow"?

Looking through all social gatherings, and sieving through my old trophies, the thing that stood out was the Exchange of Theological Professors between Mercer University and Aligarh Muslim University. Imagine the Question/ Answer Session: the classic misunderstandings about Christianity vs. Islam and the ability to ask a question without being labeled as a heretic. Yet, at the end of the day we break the bread together. We smile and have a better understanding of each other's religion. Why? Because we are acquiring the knowledge.

As the saying goes: *If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it*. Now I see why the 89 year old Aligarian lady, teaches her grandchildren "RABBI ZIDNEE ILMUN". This Senior Aligarian has survived two migrations in life. First to Pakistan, and then to the USA. Yet she survived and became a prominent teacher in Pakistan and an effective author in the USA. Why? Because the quest of knowledge she was given at Aligarh Muslim University always made her successful in life. Yes my friends: *RABBI ZIDNEE ILMUN*.

Asif Taufiq
Khadim-e-Ala (President)
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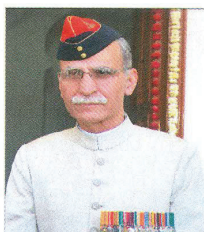
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28 July 2016

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY **SCALING UP DESPITE ALL ODDS**

1. The Aligarh Muslim University, has been mentioned as "Institution of national importance" in the Constitution of India. Sir Hamilton Gibb once called it "the first modernist institution in Islam".
2. The Aligarh Muslim University Act's Section 2(1) clearly mentions that the university means "the educational institution of their choice established by the Muslims of India".
3. Treading through a long passage of time, the AMU has achieved a special place on the national education map. During the last few years, to our utmost satisfaction, our University has made the following significant achievements:
 - a. Graded second Best University of the country by two international ranking agencies "Times Higher Education, London" and also by "US News and World Report".
 - b. The Department of Mathematics has been graded 69 best in the world.
 - c. The AMU has secured 'A' Grading (CGPA 3.35) in NAAC rating. This was something we had been aspiring for more than a decade but could not summon the determination, or courage, to take the plunge.
 - d. The Faculty of International Studies with 8 Departments has been established and the Department of Foreign Languages has launched undergraduate programmes in five foreign languages from the current session.
 - e. The restoration work of Strachey Hall has been completed and renovation of Jama Masjid and Kennedy Hall is in progress. A new building for Dawakhana Tibbiya College, J.N. Medical College Auditorium and Frank and Debbie Islam Complex of Management are reaching completion. Construction of an Olympic sized swimming pool and two new halls of residence is underway.
 - f. Faculty of Environmental Sciences with 3 new Departments and an Institute of Pharmacy has been approved by University's statutory bodies. The Visitor's consent is awaited. Further, a Community College, for award of B. Voc. Degree, has been established and a Six months' Core module syllabus for Environmental Studies, for undergraduate courses have been implemented in six faculties. 13 New Courses have been introduced.
4. These developmental activities, however, do need consistent support from Alumni of the University, spread all over the world.
5. I appeal to all alumni to come forward and take the lead in sustained development of their Alma Mater.

Zameer Shah
28 Jul

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Mercer University and Aligarh Muslim University: Building a Partnership

Dr. Robert N. Nash*, Jr., Atlanta

With eager anticipation, a small delegation from the Atlanta Aligarh Alumni Association and from the McAfee School of Theology gathered at the Atlanta airport on April 8, 2016 to welcome Professor Towqueer Alam to our city. For many weeks, we had been preparing for his visit by arranging for lectures in various classes across Mercer University and for visits to local churches, denominational meetings and civic organizations. I must confess that I had some concerns on my mind as I awaited Professor Alam's arrival. Our partnership with Aligarh Muslim University was based very much upon trust that the University would send to us a capable scholar and teacher who would be able to communicate with American audiences and with our students in the classroom.

We were not to be disappointed! I was the first to spy Professor Alam as he emerged from the "T" gates at the airport. He immediately impressed me! I saw a man of slight build dressed in the official dress of a scholar of AMU who greeted me warmly and who was obviously relieved that he had finally passed from his travels and into the hands of his official hosts in the United States. We immediately conveyed him to his rooms on Mercer University's Atlanta campus where he would be staying during his visit.

Over the next three weeks, Professor Alam and I would come to enjoy each other's company very much as we traveled together to the Macon campus of Mercer University and to various places in Atlanta and across the state of Georgia so that he could lecture on many different topics related to Islam and to the Qu'ran. For these three weeks, I became his student, learning extensively from him about the true nature of Islam. We had many opportunities to talk together about our own particular religions and about their similarities and differences. We also had many opportunities to laugh together about cultural differences and to help each other to understand the cultural contexts from which each of us came. We encouraged each other while, at the same time, deepening our own understanding of the faith of the other.

I was also very impressed by his abilities as a scholar and teacher. Professor Alam is a very gifted teacher who is able to communicate his own passion and convictions about his religion with deep pathos and humor. He has a gift for looking his students in the eye and connecting very closely with them in ways that help them to understand the point that he is making. As he spoke about the Ideal Society in the Qu'ran or about what the Qu'ran had to say about Jesus and about Christians, he was able to bring students to a point that they had a deeper respect for Islam after they listened to his explanations.

We are very grateful at the McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University for the partnership that we share with the AAAA and with Aligarh Muslim University itself. This partnership in which Dr. Loyd Allen, an American professor of Christianity, taught Muslim students in India about Christianity and in which Dr. Towqueer Alam, an Indian professor of Sunni Theology, taught Christian students in the United States about Islam is exactly the sort of partnership that can overcome misunderstanding and hostility and create a better world for all of us.

It was with great sadness that I traveled with Professor Alam to the Atlanta airport on April 30 so that he could return to India. I did not want him to leave. During our time together, we had become good friends with a deep respect for the religious and intellectual beliefs of the other. It is my hope that other faculty members and students can participate in further exchanges between AMU and Mercer University.

I must also express my appreciation to the administrations of AMU and Mercer University for their support of this partnership and to the AAAA for its help and encouragement. We have now established a base of trust and friendship upon which we can build future exchanges and collaboration.

.....
**Associate Dean, McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia.*



AAAA Members & Mercer University Faculty along with Interfaith Leaders at Dinner Reception after Peace Garden Ceremony

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FROM**

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AAAA – Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta & SIR SYED'S VISION (*Tahreek*)

S. Hasan Kamal, Atlanta

In words of late Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral, "Sir Saiyad's vision and his laborious efforts to meet the demands of challenging times are highly commendable. The dark post 1857 era was indeed hopeless and only men like Raja Mohan Roy and Sir Saiyad could penetrate through its thick veil to visualize the Nation's destinies. They rightly believed that the past had its merits and its legacies were valuable but it was the future that a society was called upon to cope with. I offer my homage to Sir Saiyad for his vision and courage that withstood all obstructions both from the friends and the foes."

Our time is no different; Islamophobia is on rise; education in community is on decline. AAAA – Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta under the previous leaders and current leadership of President Dr. Asif Taufiq, Vice President Mr. Sultan Khan, Secretary Dr. Shoeb Ahmad, and Treasurer Mr. Abdul Qayum took the challenge and they have collectively accomplished the following:

1. Donated \$17,000 for a smart classroom to AMU – Aligarh Muslim University. This classroom can be real-time online for distant teaching from as far as USA and other western countries.
2. Facilitated while bearing expenses in signing of MoU – Memorandum of Understanding in Atlanta between AMU and OSU – Ohio State University and MOU under Obama-Singh Accord. Four students, two boys and two girls, have been trained by OSU for double degree Ph.D. programs for becoming world-class-faculty. They have returned to AMU where they earned their Ph.Ds. Second batch of four students are on the way to OSU.
3. Facilitated while bearing expenses in signing of MoU between Morehouse College and AMU. One students from Morehouse College has completed one-year education at AMU. Now he is pursuing his medical education in USA.
4. Facilitated while bearing expenses in signing of MoU between GSU – Georgia State University and AMU for PhD exchange students in History or Political Science. Hope soon it materializes.
5. Facilitated while bearing expenses in signing of MoU between AMU and MU – Mercer University and for faculty exchange in Theology and Pharmacology. Prof. Wm. Loyd Allen visited AMU and Prof. Towqueer Alam has visited MU. The exchange was partially funded by AAAA. Additionally, cooperative research is being planned in the area of Greco-Arab medicine; commonly known as Tibiya.
6. In days ahead, AAAA is working to expand MoU to cover medical cooperative research in field of eastern diseases.
7. AAAA funded through SESSA – Sir Syed Emerging Scholar Award, a sister organization, to bring students from AMU under various disciplines for PhD program. SESSA with such help has managed to bring in excess of 70+ students to various US universities.
8. AAAA with cooperation of APPNA – Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America plan to bring six students for Ph.D. program from Pakistan; two from Karachi area, two from Punjab; one from Peshawar area; and one from Baluchistan. AAAA plans to use SESSA.
9. AAAA plans to have a workshop for young local students, like before, to how to prepare for admission to IVY schools with scholarships.
10. Last but not least, AAAA arranges social and cultural activities like Mushaira and picnic.

It goes unsaid, that AAAA, a 501(c), non-profit organization, needs your tax-deductible donations to continue accomplishing the above objectives. Please join AAAA and be part of effort in improving our community, locally and abroad.

AAAA Members and Mercer University Faculty at a Reception in Honor of Visiting AMU Professor Dr. Towqueer Alam, Apr, 2016



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Dr. Justin Sol



Lessons Learned by a Christian Professor Teaching Muslim Theology Students

Dr. Wm. Loyd Allen*, Mercer University, Atlanta

In the spring of this year, I traveled to India for a month at the invitation of Aligarh Muslim University to give lectures on Christian history as part of an exchange of professors between Aligarh and Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology. I'm sure I learned more than my students did!

Lesson #1. Aligarh Muslim University is an impressive school with a great heritage. It is an outstanding academic institution in many areas. In the spirit of its founder, Sir Syed, Aligarh constantly applies these academic disciplines in the service of those in need through outreach at the university hospital, the school for the blind, the pharmacy clinic, and other university programs.

Lesson #2. The Aligarh community has a great gift for hospitality. A questioner asked me at a recent presentation on Islam if everyday Muslims have compassion for strangers. After my visit to India, I had plenty of evidence to support my answer: an emphatic YES! At Aligarh and among all the Muslim communities I encountered on my trip, I found a genuine hospitality in everyone I met. From alumnus and host Hasan Kamal to the guesthouse keeper to the psychology professor who invited me to address his faculty to the theology professors who assigned students to watch over me to the physics student I met on a walk one afternoon who held my hand to help me cross a busy street, I felt welcome.

Lesson #3. I learned how important this professor exchange program is. In individual dialogue and the question and answer sessions after each lecture, I learned that the Muslim students know as little about Christianity as my Christian students and I know about Islam. A deeper knowledge on both sides is essential not only for religious understanding, but also in other areas as well, such as business contacts, political cooperation, and joint service to the under resourced.

Lesson #4. Most Muslims hold Christianity and its founder in high esteem. Jesus as a prophet and Mary as a model of womanhood are prominent in the Quran. When I spoke of Mohammed as the founder of Islam, Muslim friends kindly informed me that they understood Mohammed, peace be upon him, not as a founder of a new religion, but as the final prophet of the one true religion, which includes Christianity and Judaism as well as Islam.

Lesson #5. The questions Muslims ask of Christians and Christians ask of Muslims often are mirror images of each other, though like mirror images they are reversed in perspective. Muslims want to know, "If Christianity is a peaceful religion, then why . . . (fill in the blank with your choice of violent intervention from the West). Christians want to know, "If Islam is a peaceful religion, then why . . . (fill in the blank with your choice of atrocity by radical terrorists). And both usually defend their faith's peacefulness by appealing to scripture: Christians with Bible quotes, such as Jesus' "love your enemy," and Muslims by Quranic verses such as the one that states the killing of one innocent person is the same as killing the whole human race. Neither convinces the other by these text proofs. Pressed on the point, Christians say violent, hateful Christians are not true Christians, and Muslims say terrorists are not true Muslims. Each wonders how the other could possibly think otherwise. We need to talk, to understand one another better, and to take action to reject publicly the distortions of our own faith traditions arising within our own faith communities.

Lesson #6. I found the best way for me to promote better understanding of Christianity by Muslims was to make clear the distinctions between Christian and Islamic beliefs, Christianity and the United States, and Christianity and Western cultures. (I have since discovered this differentiation of religious, political, and cultural issues is also the best way for Christians to overcome Islamophobia—an irrational fear of Islam.) I believe this is the most valuable insight I gained at Aligarh.

First, Aligarh students often asked questions about the doctrinal differences between Christianity and Islam. Questions about the nature of the Bible and the divinity of Christ were the most common. I learned that these discussions, important as they are for mutual understanding, are the least helpful in learning to cooperate for a better world. Christians and Muslims are simply not going to find agreement about their separate theological views on the nature and revelation of the one true God and the relative authority of their sacred texts. Nor are they going to "win" the other through such debates. Doctrinal dialogue is most fruitful when it acknowledges common affirmations insisted upon by both Christianity and Islam: Divine calls for equal justice for all, compassion for the poor, and peacemaking.

Second, often persons confuse religious matters with political ones. This sort of question usually begins something like this: "If Christianity is . . . , then why does America . . . ? (Christians ask, "If Islam teaches . . . , then why do Muslims. . . .?") Of course, America and Christianity are separate realities as are Islam and Saudi Arabia or Islam and Iran or Islam and India. One cannot equate these countries' respective national policies with either of the great global faiths held by many within them. This is especially true of the United States, with its explicit constitutional separation of church and state.

Third, interfaith dialogue must separate cultural differences from universal religious teachings. One student asked me if all Christian women are "shameless." When I asked what this meant, he pointed to women wearing sleeveless dresses at worship. Back home in my church, a Christian asked me if all Muslim women in India were "oppressed." Asked to say more, she referred to women not eating with men at mealtimes, which I had experienced in a home in India. Both the Muslim's question and the Christian's question confuse culture with a religion. Christian women (but not all American women) strive for modesty, as all faithful Muslim women understand the Quran teaches they are equal to men in God's eyes, but the cultural expressions of these principals may in one culture be labeled shameless and in another oppressive. (And, of course, some Christians act shamelessly and some Muslims oppress women.) Some American Christian women cover their shoulders in worship and some Muslim women ate at table with me in India. Modesty and equality are common values in both the New Testament and the Quran, but cultural expressions of these differ according to time and place.

Lesson #7. Interfaith dialogue makes Christians better Christians and Muslims better Muslims, and by doing so makes the world a better place. I learned at Aligarh to begin my presentations with this: "I am not here to defend Christianity or to criticize Islam. I am a Christian and I am here to give an honest witness to how we Christians have historically understood and sought to live out our faith." In doing so, I and my fellow participants in dialogue learned we must accept some unresolvable differences in faith if we are to live together in peace. We also learned we share some deep, divinely ordained values: equal justice for all, compassion for the poor and needy, and an obligation to seek peace. I ended then and now with, "If we accept these realities and live them out, I will be a better follower of Jesus, you will be more submissive to the God revealed in the Quran, and the world will be better for the presence of such genuine Christians and obedient Muslims in its midst." Inshallah, may it be so.

*Professor of Church History and Spiritual Formation, James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia

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AMU Visit, February 2000: Fond Memories

Dr. S. M. Ghazanfar, Atlanta

During my younger days, there was always the enchanting lure of Aligarh Muslim University, founded as the citadel for modern, secular education, without compromising Islamic principles. My closest link to Aligarh, however, was through a very dear childhood friend whose family migrated from there and who, till this day, still sometimes writes “Aligarian” with his name. Also, whenever we encountered an AMU graduate, proudly wearing his blazer, with an AMU lapel, we used to feel an envious urge to perhaps someday attend Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s jewel to Muslims of India. That was not meant to be. However, at another stage of my life, I had the good fortune to be a guest at AMU

That was in February 2000. As part of a longer trip to Europe and elsewhere, I decided to visit my birthplace, to say prayers at my father’s grave and pay homage to his memory; that was 53 years after the 1947 exodus. As I was planning the journey, some good friends at AMU invited me to visit for a couple of days--and perhaps give a seminar. These were faculty colleagues from Jeddah’s King Abdulaziz University with which I was affiliated from 1983-86--Dr. Fazlur-Rehman Faridi, Dr. Nejatullah Siddiqui, Dr. Abdul Aziz Islahi, Mr. Akhtar Rizvi (affectionately known as “Gama”); they were part of AMU’s Economics Department faculty. In Jeddah, Azim Islahi was a most helpful colleague who assisted me considerably in my research on early Islamic socio-economic thought.

My host in India was Dr. Shahid Jamil, a UN scientist in New Delhi; he and his wife were about like family when he was a student at Washington State University in the 1980s. Some may know Dr. Jamil’s father, AMU’s illustrious scholar, late Dr. Abdul Majid Siddiqui. Also an AMU graduate, Shahid had kindly planned my travels in India, including the trip to Aligarh.

On February 14, in a rented car with driver, I traveled to Aligarh--fascinating trip, with numerous encounters with monkeys along the road. Once in Aligarh, Dr. Azim Islahi met us and took me to the AMU Guest House. Then we went to the AMU Economics Department.; the Chair, “Gama Sahib” welcomed me profusely. He promptly invited me for dinner at his house in the evening. I met several faculty members; I volunteered to assist in their research efforts and to guide students seeking admission in the USA, etc. If need be, I

volunteered, we could briefly meet sometime next day. I found out also that I was scheduled to give a campus-wide seminar the next day. I provided Gama and Azim my topic (“Social Sciences in the New Millenium: An Islamic/Holistic Perspective”) so he could spread the word, if necessary.

Then Azim Islahi took me to his house--met his family and had lunch together. I was keen to see the campus, so he took me around and I was impressed by the beautiful mixture of red-white, historic and modern structures--the majestic entrance gate, the tomb of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) next to the mosque, the original house where his grandson, late Syed Sir Ross Masood, also lived as AMU Vice-Chancellor, the Student Union, the Library, Asian Studies, etc. Following the campus tour, we briefly visited late Dr. Faridi and late Dr. Majid Siddiqui (Shahid Jamil’s father).

The evening dinner at Gamma Sahib’s house was uniquely delicious: deer-meat curry, antelope kababs, sugarcane kheer, etc. We reminisced about our days in Jeddah; enjoyable evening. Then back to the Guest House for some rest--and prepare for a busy next day. In addition to the seminar, a meeting with students was also scheduled.

As I got to the Guest House, I received a message from a former student, Dr. Syed Iqbal Ali, inviting me to breakfast next morning at this house. He had once gone to Communist Poland on a scholarship, but was disappointed there. Somehow he connected with me and asked to facilitate his transfer to the USA. There were risks in writing in English, so I translated his Urdu communications to English; eventually, he came to the University of Idaho; he is now a faculty member at AMU. Next morning I was at Iqbal’s house where I met his family and his illustrious father-in-law, Dr. Asloob Ansari, an impressive AMU scholar; he gifted me two of his books on Allama Iqbal. He passed away recently.

Then Iqbal took me to Dr. Rizvi’s Office. Several of Gama Sahib’s colleagues were rotating in and out to exchange greetings. Then we went to the Events Hall where my seminar was scheduled at 11.30 a.m. Classes had been cancelled, I was told. I was grateful for the warm welcome by the packed hall--students and faculty, including Dr. Faridi and Dr. Siddiqui. PVC Jafri, Dean

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Gupta, Dr. Rizvi, and yours-truly joined together at the stage. Gama Sahib expressed a few gracious remarks, jokingly adding, "I have asked Dr. Ghazanfar to take me with him to the USA!" Then Dr. Islahi introduced the seminar topic: "Social Sciences in the New Millenium: An Islamic/Holistic Perspective." Briefly, the essential argument of the seminar was that social-sciences, having become rather specialized, are likely to become more integrated and interdisciplinary in the future, about how they began a couple of centuries ago, quite in accord with the holistic Islamic view of knowledge. Thankfully, the seminar was warmly received. Later, Gama Sahib offered an honorarium for my visit; embarrassingly yet gratefully, I asked him to extend it some deserving student.

Next was a meeting with some students. Numerous questions arose--GRE's, TOEFL, transcripts, GPA requirements, undergraduate/graduate admission prospects, assistantships/fellowships, part-time work, summer jobs, student visas, etc. Also there was some curiosity about what I was all about, having gone through all of my post-secondary education in the USA. Briefly shared my story with the students. And upon learning that I had visited my birthplace and father's gravesite in East Punjab, a Muslim student said, "Sir, aapki aatma ko to barhi shanti mili ho gi." I understood what he said, but when I expressed some surprise with his use of Hindi

words, he answered, "Sir, Hindi is part of our earlier education."

That evening of February 15th, my AMU hosts had arranged a dinner gathering at the Guest House, attended by PVC Jafri, Dean Gupta, Dr. Faridi, Dr. Rizvi, Dr. Islahi, and a few others. And then followed the hardest part of the visit: farewell to my AMU friends. On February 16, 2000, I headed back to New Delhi via Agra.

Over the years, I have served as an external examiner for a few doctoral students from AMU. And also a few students came to the University of Idaho to do graduate studies.

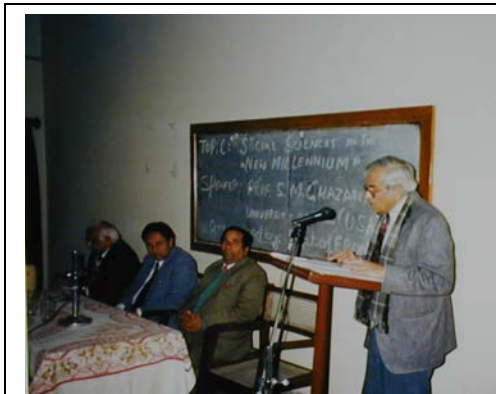
Indeed, wonderful memories often overwhelm; and they pop up without knocking, yet so therapeutic for the soul.

Yaad-e-maazi azaab hai Ya Rub

Chheen le mujh se hafiza mera

Dr. S.M. Ghazanfar, Professor-Emeritus (Economics), University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho; 1968-2002; Chair, 1971-73, 1993-2002; Director, International Studies Program, 1989-1993; presently AdHoc-Faculty, Kennesaw State University since 2013 (guest-lecturer, panelist, etc.), long-time human-rights/interfaith activist.

**Dr. S. M. Ghazanfar
Presenting a Seminar
Lecture during AMU
Visit in Feb, 2000**



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**AAAA Members in Zia
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Atlanta (Oct, 2015
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Dr. Wasi Siddiqui – A Giant among Aligarians

Founder, Entrepreneur, Academician

A prominent Aligarh alum and active member of the community, Dr. Wasi Siddiqui is one of the founders of the Aligarh Alumni Association Atlanta (AAAA), as well as an accomplished academician, with an M.Sc. from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and a Ph.D. from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Dr. Siddiqui was born in 1937 in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), India, the eldest child of late Mr. Mohammad Zaki and Begum Raisa Zaki. He has three younger brothers and four younger sisters. Due to his father's job as the District Inspector of Schools for the U.P. Education Department, the family moved every two to three years to cities such as Shahjehanpur, Basti, Bahraich, Ballia, Pilibhit, and Bijnore.

Dr. Siddiqui attended high school at the Town College in Ballia and graduated at the age of fifteen in 1st division with distinction in English, Science, and Mathematics. He participated in many school dramas, including the play Bahadur Shah in which he played a leading role. He was also a part of the school's gymnasium team.

Dr. Siddiqui attended Lucknow Christian College for two years, followed by another two years in Lucknow University where he completed his B.Sc. in Biology and Chemistry. Dr. Siddiqui continued the family legacy by attending Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), the same school as his siblings, father, and maternal grandfather. He pursued an M.Sc. in Botany there, guided by his family friend and mentor, the late Dr. Abrar Mustafa Khan. At the start of his time at AMU, he was housed in Mumtaz Hostel, but by his final year at AMU, Dr. Siddiqui had moved to the exclusive Aftab Hostel, an area reserved for star athletes or departmental toppers; he was the captain of the university's badminton team and had obtained 1st division. Through hostel life, he came into the company of Mr. Hamid Ansari, the current Vice-President of India, Dr. Abidullah Ghazi, a prominent author, and Dr. Nejatullah Siddiqui, an Indian economist and the winner of the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies.

After completing his Masters in 1959, Dr. Siddiqui secured a teaching position at the Department of Botany as Assistant Professor. A few years later, Dr. Siddiqui met and married Kamla Yahya, the daughter of the Additional Magistrate posted in Bijnore, U.P. Their first child Shahid Zaki Siddiqui was born in November of the following year. While his family was growing, life at the university was very busy for Dr. Siddiqui, who held positions such as Warden, NRSC President, NCC 2nd Lieutenant, President of Gymnasium Club, and Assistant Proctor.

Dr. Siddiqui received a scholarship from the University of France and a fellowship from Rutgers University in New Jersey for graduate work. His family and friends advised him to go to Rutgers. So in January of 1965, Dr. Siddiqui began at Rutgers University. He was given \$220 a month for his work, and housed in a small room at the department's greenhouse for free, courtesy of the Department

Chair. He worked odd jobs such as watering the plants, operating elevators, mowing lawns and completing traffic surveys in order to save up for his family to join him from India. During his first semester at Rutgers, he attained straight A's and was awarded an extra 30 credit hours for his M.Sc. from AMU. Dr. Siddiqui proceeded quickly with his research thesis and completed his Ph.D. in a short 27 months. However, while preparing for the oral defense of his thesis, Dr. Siddiqui received the shocking news of his father's death. Due to poor communication, he had not known his father was being treated for cancer. Despite this tragedy he was able to succeed; the results of his thesis were accepted for publication in internationally reputed journals.

He received a job offer from Bishop College in Dallas for the position of Associate Professor of Biology at a salary of \$10,500/9 months. In August of 1967, he began at Bishop. Three years after, he was a full Professor with tenure and worked as Department Chair with 15-member faculty roster all with earned Ph.D. degrees. Dr. Siddiqui stayed at Bishop until 1980.

After his time at Bishop, Dr. Siddiqui wished to pursue a more financially rewarding path, so he left his wife and three children in Dallas and headed to Alabama. There, he stayed with his younger brother Fasih, an engineer at Ampex Corp. Using savings from Dallas, Dr. Siddiqui purchased some gold inventory to sell to retailers in small towns. In 1981 he leased a showroom on 6th floor of Atlanta Apparel Mart, which increased to three to serve his increased business in silver, gold and diamonds. He continued the business growth during next five years and helped establish showrooms at Dallas and New Orleans in addition to the Atlanta location.

In fall of 1984, Dr. Siddiqui coincidentally met Hasan Kamal and Khursheed Ahmad, which led to a larger gathering at his house in Douglasville, Georgia. The gathering resulted in the formation of the Aligarh Alumni Association Atlanta (AAAA). This was the seed of AAAA establishment. Reminiscences of their journey until the Silver Jubilee celebrations (1984-2009) have been chronicled in the magazine "Alig", published in 2009.

Dr. Siddiqui has been very actively involved in the growth of Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations (FAAA) of North America. He is currently the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and leading efforts in strengthening the member organizations. His biggest challenge has been attracting sincere, younger persons helping the cause of alma-mater. He believes personal egos and tight control of old guards are proving to be detrimental to organization's growth.

He gives credit to previous Vice-Chancellor, P.K. Abdul Azis for initiating greater interaction between AMU and its overseas alumni which was later strengthened by his successor, the current Vice-Chancellor, General Zameeruddin Shah. Dr. Siddiqui himself traveled to Aligarh to attend the World Meet of AMU Alumni and took an active part in the deliberations. He has been instrumental in

facilitating Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) between AMU and universities in Atlanta. Dr. Siddiqui and his family members were involved in generating funds for the installation of a SMART classroom at Aligarh campus. Reflecting on the current situation in India, he is concerned about the recent court case related to AMU's minority character and anxiously awaits the final rulings.

Wasi *sahib*, as we affectionately call him, has been the backbone of AAAA since its inception. In the last 15 years, he and his wife, Kamla *aapa*, attended almost every board meeting. He comes across as a disciplined, punctual, methodical, organized, poised, reliable, and a forward-looking person who can handle situations with wisdom and frankness. His academic background and entrepreneurial skills have been an asset to the organization. Dr.

Siddiqui has played a key role in various educational projects initiated by AAAA and FAAA. He was instrumental in drafting the by-laws of the association. Dr. Siddiqui painstakingly recorded the AAAA history for an article which was published in 2009 "Alig" magazine. Through his personal initiative and networking, the Honorable J. Frank Harris, then Governor of the State of Georgia, proclaimed November 8, 1986 as Aligarh Alumni Day as a tribute to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of AMU. Wasi *sahib* and his wife have devoted immeasurable time and energy for the organization. In addition to generous support and ever ready help, his family has always been a gracious host for so many in the last three decades. Now at the age of 80, Wasi *sahib*'s dedication and devotion never seem to diminish and he continues to anchor the organization with his distinguished style and royal demeanors.

-Rasheed Ahmad, Atlanta

Dr. Wasi Siddiqui at AAAA Events and Activities



L to R: At 25th AAAA Anniversary Program (2009), Vice-Chancellor Gen. Shah Reception (2013), Dr. Touqueer Alam Reception at Mercer University (2015), FAAA Convention, Phoenix, AZ (2016), AAAA Youth Program (2009), Mercer University & Indian Consul-General Reception (2015), Festival of India Booth (2016), With his wife, Ms. Kamla Siddiqui (2016)



My Residential Life in Sulaiman Hall

M. Umar Farooq, Atlanta

More than half a century ago, I resided in Sulaiman Hall from 1959 to 1964 in North Block and Kashmir House hostels in the Aligarh Muslim University. Though my memories may be fading yet the good old days of the university residential life still remain an integral part of my life. This was an era before internet, TV, VCR, DVD, iPad and portable music devices such as iPod etc. that transformed the world. During this period Aligarh Muslim University was also undergoing an extensive construction phase that changed the character of the university for ever. Kennedy Hall, Maulana Azad Library, Civil Engineering Department and Arts Faculty Buildings were added. Kashmir House was built and became part of Sulaiman Hall. Medical College buildings were also under construction.

During that time most of the students in Aligarh came from the middle class families from small towns that were financially affected by “Zamindari Abolition” and reduced employment opportunities in government services. They still could afford Aligarh University as the fees were really low. I paid about Rs. 30 per month in tuition fees for my B.Sc. and B.Sc. Engineering. Boarding and lodging fees were Rs. 60 per month and Rs 30 took care of my breakfast and pocket money with one or two films per month.

The books were still a source of entertainment and information. Urdu poetry was generally understood and appreciated. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Jigar Muradabadi, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Shakeel Badayuni, Nashur Wahidi etc were alive and active. Aligarh University “Tarana” by Majaz was composed by Ishtiaq Mohammad Khan. Detective novels, specially, James Bond books were very popular. In Urdu, Ibn-e-Safi transformed the detective novels into an authentic art form. Jasoosi Dunia was the most popular monthly magazine in our hostels. Films also were one of the most popular means of public entertainment. Sahir-Ludhyanvi and his contemporaries flooded the airways with high class lyrics. Naushad, Shankar-Jaikishan, Hemant Kumar and S.D. Burman were creating immortal semi-classical film songs sung by the great singers Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh, Talat Mahmood, Manna Dey, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle. Students had an opportunity to listen to the most popular and latest offerings in film music by listening to the hour long “Binaca Geetmala” program broadcast every week on the radio.

Sulaiman Hall rectangle (North Block, East Block and South block) housed almost equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim students, most of them belonging to engineering faculty. These were the only hostels I know, where Janm Ashtami festival was celebrated and at the same time we also celebrated Eid-Miladun-Nabi.

All India Mushaira hosted by the Students’ Union was very popular and in Sulaiman Hall under the leadership of our warden, late Mr. Naseem Quraishi, “Mahfils” in which great poets like Firaq read poetry for the whole night. We also hosted Inter Hall debates in Urdu and English, General Knowledge Quiz and Bait-Bazi competitions. The Youth Festival participation was instrumental in making boys and girls participation in music and drama as a regular and acceptable part of university cultural life. Sports were very popular and many of our sportsmen gained recognition on national level. Numaish was another source of entertainment for about ten days. Groups

of students going for a whole evening of roaming in Numaish and eating kabab-paratha was an exciting activity.

In July every year the seniors would pass on unwritten traditions and rules to the new comers called “juniors” at “Introduction Nights”, though they also included some ragging. After these introductions, seniors were always treated with respect and considered as big brothers “.....Bhai” to the juniors for ever. Few of these interesting rules and traditions are given for example as below:

Always respect your seniors; always follow the dress code (black sherwani, kurta and pajama) on all important occasions and university functions and dress properly even when you go to the dining hall or outside the hostel; addressing another Aligarhian with the word “Partner” in case one is not aware of the other person’s name; tea was almost a tradition after every lunch and dinner and one who did not drink tea was looked down upon; share home-made food with your room-mate; when some one came to the railway station to see you off always treat them with a cup of tea etc.

Though there have been many memorable incidents during my stay at AMU, I will mention one when I arrived for the Sulaiman Hall Annual Function on an elephant dressed like “Mughal-e-Azam” and made a small speech in front of the audience. Every one loved it and I was Moghal-e-Azam for some time.

Aligs are unique and easily recognized everywhere as they greet with “Salam Alaikum” and grab the opportunity of being the first to do that. Perhaps, that’s the reason why Aligs seldom give the reply “Wa-alaikum Assalam”, even if they fail to greet first.

My grooming at Aligarh taught me good moral values and social skills. AMU besides providing modern education also provided the environment and opportunities for the overall development of one’s personality. I consider myself fortunate and thank my parents for sending me to Aligarh and giving me this gift of life. I understand the true meaning of Sir Syed “Tahrik” and am committed to improving the life of the under-privileged through education. With the help of many of you we are able to help many schools including feeder institutions and hundreds of students every year through the Aligarh Education Endowment Fund.

May Allah bless you for your support and give us strength to continue with our efforts!

**Shikwa-e-zulmat-e-shab se to kahin behtar tha
Apne hisse ki koi shamma jalate jaate!
Uski woh jaane oose paase wafa tha ke ne tha
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AAAA International Mushaira at a Glance (1985-2015)

Syed Waseem and Rasheed Ahmad, Atlanta



Date	Venue	Poets	Nizamat
1985	Woodruff Hall, Emory University	Khumar Barabankavi (India), Shaharyar (India), Mehmood Alam Raaz, Rashid Fazli, Abid Jafri (Canada), Khurshed Ahmad (Houston), Saba Ismail and Zia Ismail (Tampa), Badaruddin Daood (Kansas)	Jamal Zubairi (Canada)
1986	North Decatur Church	Shabana Azmi (Chief Guest, India), Rahi Masoom Raza (India), Basheer Badar (India), Javed Akhtar (India), Salman Akhtar (USA), Khalid Fareed (Canada) Rashid Fazli (Saudi Arabia)	Dr. Abdullah (DC)
1987		No Mushaira	
1988	Woodruff Hall, Emory University	Mumtaz Mirza (India), Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Waseem Barelvi (India), Ghaffar Asar (India).	Aijaz Hashmi (Chicago)
1989	White Hall, Emory University	Qateel Shafai (Pakistan), Basheer Badar (India), Kalim Ajiz (India).	Musheer Siddiqui (Atlanta)
1990	White Hall, Emory University	Jameeluddin Aali (Pakistan), Jagan Nath Azad (India), Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Pirzada Qasim (Pakistan), Mohsin Bhopali (Pakistan), Joan Ailia (Pakistan)	Himayat Ali (Pakistan)
1991	White Hall, Emory University	Manzar Bhopali (India), Khamukha Hyderabad (India), Ashufta Changezi (India), Saleem Kausar (Pakistan)	Ashufta Changezi (India)
1992	White Hall, Emory University	Raghib Muradabadi (Pakistan), Rahat Indorvi (India), Kishan Bihari Noor (India), Anjum Rehbar (India)	Raghib Muradabadi (Pakistan)
1993	White Hall, Emory University	Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Sehba Akhtar (Pakistan), Saghar Khaiyyami (India), Mashkoor Husain Yaad (Pakistan), Malikzada Manzoor (India), Sarwar Alam Raaz (Dallas)	Malikzada Manzoor (India)
1994	White Hall, Emory University	Ali Sardar Jafri (India), Pirzada Qasim (Pakistan), Akbar Hyderabad (England), Rahid Fazli (Saudi Arabia)	Dr. Abdullah (DC)
1995	White Hall, Emory University	Kaifi Azmi (India), Mairaj Faizabadi (India), Qateel Shafai (Pakistan), Moj Rampuri (India), Wali Aasi (India), Khamukha Hyderabad (India), Naseem Nikhat (India), Mirza Yousuf (St. Louis)	Rukhsana Waseem (Atlanta)
1996	White Hall, Emory University	Mohsin Ehsan (Pakistan), Gulzar Dehlvi (India), Manzar Bhopali (India), Saghar Khayyami (India), Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Manzoor Hashmi (India), Zaki Kakorvi (Atlanta)	Dr. Abidullah Ghazi (Chicago)
1997	North Indian Creek Hall	Shamim Jaipuri (India), Waseem Barelvi (India), Azhar Inayati (India), Mirza Yosuf (St. Louis)	Mirza Yosuf (St. Louis)
1998	White Hall, Emory University	Pirzada Qasim (Pakistan), Irfan Siddiqui (India), Nawaz Devbandi (India), Mansoor Usmani (India)	Mansoor Usmani (India)
1999	White Hall, Emory University	Ahmad Faraz (Pakistan), Azhar Enayati (India), Kalim Aajiz (India), Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Saghar Khayyami (India), Salahuddin Pervaiz (India), Shaharyar (India)	Dr. Abdullah (DC)
2000	White Hall, Emory University	Waseem Barelvi (India), Popular Merruthi (India), Ada Jafri (Pakistan), Sarmad Sehbai (Pakistan)	Siraj Karatela (Atlanta)
2001		No International Mushaira due to 9/11	
October 4, 2002	Doraville Recreation Center	Bashir Badar (India), Meraj Faizabadi (India), Popular Meruthi (India), Taqi Abedi (Canada), Tariq Subzwari (Pakistan), Zaki Kakorvi (USA)	Dr. Taqi Abedi (Canada)

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Date	Venue	Poets	Nizamat
October 4, 2003	White Hall, Emory University	Salim Kauser (Pakistan), Girgit Ahmadabadi (India), Shaharyar (India), Zakia Ghazal (Pakistan), Azra Sadiq (Pakistan)	M. Inamullah (Atlanta)
October 1, 2004	White Hall, Emory University	Zaki Kakorvi (Atlanta), Tariq Sabzwari (Pakistan), Zakia Ghazal (Pakistan), Khamkhah Hyderabad (India), S. K. Nizam (India), Sabiha Saba (New York), Anwaar Qadri (Maryland)	M. Inamullah (Atlanta)
December 16, 2005	White Hall, Emory University	Habib Hashmi (India), Prof. Mohsin Ihsan (Pakistan), Saghar Khayyami (India), Zubair Rizvi (India), Ishrat Afrin (USA), Husain Imam (USA)	M. Inamullah (Atlanta)
November 22, 2006	Kohinoor Restaurant, Norcross	Nida Fazli (India), Rehana Roohi (Pakistan), Popular Meeruthi (India), Khushbir Singh Shaad (India), Jazib Quraishi (Pakistan), Rais Warsi (New York)	Feroz Alam (Atlanta)
December 8, 2007	Perimeter College, Clarkston	Himayat Ali Shair (Pakistan), Hanif Akhgar (USA), Khamokhah Hyderabad (India), Zakia Ghazal (Pakistan), Akhtar Shumar (Pakistan)	Sadaf Farooqui (Atlanta)
November 29, 2008	Mercer University	Azhar Inayati (India), Dr. Himayet Ali Shair (Pakistan), Popular Meruthi (India), Shahnaz Noor (Pakistan), Dr. Abdullah (DC)	Sadaf Farooqui (Atlanta)
October 10, 2009	Perimeter College, Clarkston	Sabiha Saba (NY), Dr. Satya Pal Anand (DC), Dr. Abdullah (DC), Nayyer Jahan (Los Angeles), Dr. Zaki Kakorvi (Atlanta), Abid Jafri (Canada), Dr. Abidullah Ghazi (Chicago), Mirza Yosef (St Louis), Zohra Chishti (Dallas)	Sadaf Farooqui (Atlanta)
November 6, 2010	Perimeter College, Clarkston	Anwar Masood (Pakistan), Sabiha Saba (New York), Tahir Faraz (India), Wasi Shah (Pakistan), Zakia Ghazal (Toronto), Dr. Zaki Kakoravi (Atlanta)	M. Inamullah/ Dr. Asif Taufiq (Atlanta)
October 8, 2011	Hilton, Peachtree Industrial	Iftikhar Arif (Pakistan), Nazeer Baqri (India), Bano Arshad (England), Inam -ul -Haq Javed (Pakistan), Khalid Irfan (New York)	Dr. Abdullah (Atlanta)
September 29, 2012	Meadow Creek High School	Nida Fazli (India), Munzar Bhopali (India), Wasi Shah (Pakistan), Khalid Irfan (New York), Dr. Sabiha Saba (USA)	Aslam Parvez (Atlanta)
September 14, 2013	Berkmar High School	Dr. Pirzada Qasim (Pakistan), Dr. Nikhat Iftekhhar (Pakistan), Zahid Fakhri (Pakistan), Waseem Beralvi (India)	M. Inamullah (Atlanta)
September 6, 2014	Mercer University	Naseer Turabi (Pakistan), Iqbal Ashhar (India), Manzar Bhopali (India), Popular Merrathi (India), Dr. Sabiha Saba (New York), Dr. Abdullah (DC)	Yasir Nomani/ Nadeem Fatmi (Atlanta)
November 21, 2015	Al Noor Banquet, Norcross	Seema Ghazal (Pakistan), Lata Haya (India), A.M. Turaaz (India), Maqсад Allahabadi (USA)	Yasir Nomani/ Nadeem Fatmi (Atlanta)

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یہ انوکھا زندگی کا عالم ہے
ان گنت قسمتوں کے رنگ دیکھے

اب اپنی موجودہ زندگی پر نظر ڈالیے۔ انسان کی ان گنت ضروریات ہیں، جن کو پورا کرنے کے لیے اللہ تعالیٰ نے مختلف انواع و اقسام کی لاتعداد اشیاء اور نظام پیدا کر دیے ہیں۔ حیرت کی بات ہے کہ دنیا کو کسی چیز کو انسان کی ضرورت نہیں۔ البتہ انسان کو ہر چیز کی ضرورت ہے۔ مثلاً غذا، ہوا، پانی، روشنی، موسم، چرند، پرند، پھل، پھول، پودے، درخت سورج، چاند تارے آسمان اور زیر زمین معدنیات وغیرہ وغیرہ۔ یہ بھی تعجب خیر حقیقت ہے کہ ابتدا سے آج تک انسانی کی بنیادی ضروریات یکساں ہیں اور انتہا تک بھی رہیں گی۔ مگر وقت کے ساتھ ساتھ مختلف علوم کی روشنی و مدد سے ان ضروریات کو پورا کرنے کے طریقوں میں حیرت انگیز تبدیلیاں آئیں اور آسانیاں پیدا ہو گئی ہیں یہ سب علم کے فیض اور کرشمے ہیں زندگی کے ہر شعبہ پر نظر ڈالیے۔ ابتدائی زندگی اور وقت کا تقابل آج کے زمانے سے کر لیجیے بلکہ صرف ساٹھ ستر برس پہلے کے حالات دیکھ لیں۔ ہر جگہ ہر شعبہ میں اس قدر تبدیلی اور تغیر نظر آئے گا کہ عقل حیران رہ جائے گی۔ علم کی بلندی کی یہ بھی ایک انتہا ہے کہ انسان نے وقت اور فاصلوں پر قابو پا کر چاند پر کمند ڈال دی اور کل دنیا کو ”گلوبل ویلج“ بنا ڈالا۔ یقینی طور پر فی زمانہ ٹی۔ وی، کمپیوٹر، سل فون کے ذریعہ ہر قسم کی معلومات۔ اخلاقی یا غیر اخلاقی اہم یا غیر ضروری مع تصویر ذرا سی دیر میں گھر بیٹھے حاصل کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ ترقی یافتہ اور پسماندہ قوموں میں نمایاں فرق حصول اور استعمال علم کی کمی بیشی کی وجہ سے ہے جس کو شوق قوت ارداد اور عمل کے ذریعہ ختم کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ علم صرف انسان کی بہبودی کے لیے استعمال ہونا چاہیے اس کی بربادی اور تباہی کے لیے نہیں جو علم انسانی برادری کو نقصان پہنچائے وہاں علم کا اصل مقصد فوت ہو جاتا ہے۔ آج کل خطرناک جدید ترین ہتھیاروں کی ایجادات انسانی زندگی کے لیے سب سے بڑا خطرہ ہیں۔ مثلاً ”ڈرون“ کے حملے ”ڈرون“ اچھے برے انسان کو بے گناہ اور قصور وار کی بجائے بوڑھے عورتوں اور بیماروں کی پہچان نہیں کر سکتے۔ ان کا کام تو بلا تفریق مارنا اور تباہ کرنا ہے۔ علم کا اس قسم کا استعمال حد درجہ افسوسناک ہے۔ ایسی تباہ کن ایجادوں کے موجد علم دین کو نظر انداز کر کے صرف علم دنیا سے کام لیتے ہیں۔ فی زمانہ بعض مختلف غیر متوازن علم کے زیر اثر معاشرہ میں چند خرابیاں جڑ پکڑ رہی ہیں جو مستقبل میں انسانیت کی تباہی کا باعث ہو سکتی ہیں۔ مثلاً خلوص، محبت اور ہمدردی کا فقدان۔ پیسے سے محبت اور اس کی ہوس، تیزی سے بڑھتا ہوا نفسانفسی کا رجحان وغیرہ وغیرہ۔ مگر مایوس ہونے کی ضرورت نہیں۔ ہر شخص اپنے خیالات اور اعمال پر اختیار رکھتا ہے۔ علم کی قدر کیجیے، علم زیادہ سے زیادہ حاصل کیجیے۔ خود فائدہ اٹھائیے۔ دوسروں کو فائدہ پہنچائیے۔ صرف خیال یہ رہے کہ علم متوازن اور مکمل ہو۔ (آمین)

علم کی بلندیاں اور فیض

نعیم فاطمہ توفیق (علیگ)

انسان اللہ تعالیٰ، خالق گل کائنات کی بہترین تخلیق و مخلوق ہے۔ روز اول سے جب انسان وجود میں آیا تو قوتِ اظہار و گویائی اور سوچنے سمجھنے کی صلاحیت کے ساتھ قوتِ فیصلہ اور عمل کی آزادی سے بھی نوازا گیا۔ ان خصوصی اوصاف کی بنیاد علم پر رکھی گئی اور مکمل متوازن علم سے حضرت آدم کو نوازا گیا، جس کی برکت سے اول خاکی انسان کو وہ عظمت حاصل ہوئی کہ نوری مخلوق فرشتوں نے حضرت آدم کو اللہ کے حکم سے سجدہ کیا!

انسان دنیا میں اللہ کا نائب بنا کر بھیجا گیا، یعنی بحیثیت نائب اللہ، انسان کو اللہ تعالیٰ کی طرف سے عائد کردہ کچھ ذمہ داریاں اس دنیا میں مستقل انجام دینا ہیں۔ اس امر کے لئے علم و حکمت لازمی جز تھے جن سے انسان کو نوازا دیا گیا۔ انسان کو محدود دماغ، اللہ کی ذات اور اس کی قدرت کاملہ کا مکمل احاطہ نہیں کر سکتا اور نہ اس کے حکم پر کیوں اور کیسے کا سوال کیا جاسکتا ہے دین و دنیا کی زندگی میں بہترین کامیابی حاصل کرنے کو علم دنیا سے پہلے کامل پختہ ایمان کو اللہ نے لازمی قرار دے دیا جو متوازن علم کا جز و لازمی ہے۔

حضرت آدم علیہ السلام پہلے انسان ہی نہ تھے بلکہ اللہ کے اول رسول اور پیغمبر بھی تھے، جو علم دین کے علاوہ دنیا کے مکمل علم سے واقف تھے۔ جن کی وساطت سے اس دنیا میں، دنیاوی و دینیوی علوم کی ابتدا ہوئی۔ اس حقیقت سے کوئی با عقل انسان انکار نہیں کر سکتا کہ آخرت اور دنیاوی زندگی میں کامیابی کے لئے دینی علم اور دنیاوی علوم دونوں لازم و ملزوم ہیں۔ دینی علم کا صحیح ماخذ صرف اللہ کی آسمانی کتابیں ہیں۔ جن میں توریت، زبور، بائبل اور قرآن مجید کے نام سے عالم طور پر لوگ واقف ہیں۔ قرآن آخری اور مکمل آسمانی اللہ کی کتاب ہے جس میں کسی قسم کی تبدیلی انسان نہیں کر سکتا کیونکہ قرآن کی حفاظت کی ذمہ داری خود اللہ نے اپنے ذمہ لی ہے۔ قرآن بلا تفریق ہر انسان، ہر زمانے کے لیے کھلا پیغام ہے۔ علم قرآن انسان کی روح و قلب کی صحت مندی اور دین کی پاکیزگی کے لیے لازمی ہے۔ یہ علم زندگی کی ابتدا اور انتباہ کی حقیقتوں سے آگاہ کرتا ہے۔ انسانی زندگی کا مقصد زندگی کو صحیح طور پر گزارنے کے طریقے اور اس کا انجام صاف طور پر واضح کرتا ہے۔ دینی علم واضح الفاظ میں انسانی زندگی اور اس دنیا کی اصلیت بتاتا ہے کہ یہاں ہر چیز فانی اور چند روزہ ہے۔ آج تک اس حقیقت کو کوئی جھٹلا نہیں سکا۔ آخرت، یوم حساب، روح اور جنت دوزخ کا علم بھی صرف آسمانی کتابوں سے صحیح حاصل ہو سکتا ہے۔ دنیاوی علوم یہ ضرورت پوری نہیں کر سکتے۔

غزل

شکیل اعظمی

ہر گھڑی چشم خریدار میں رہنے کے لیے
کچھ ہنر چاہئے بازار میں رہنے کے لیے

میں نے دیکھا ہے جو مردوں کی طرح رہتے تھے
مسخرے بن گئے دربار میں رہنے کے لیے

ایسی مجبوری نہیں ہے کہ چلوں پیدل میں
خود کو گراتا ہوں رفار میں رہنے کے لیے

اب تو بد نامی سے شہرت کا وہ رشتہ ہے کہ لوگ
ننگے ہو جاتے ہیں اخبار میں رہنے کے لیے

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حیدر حسین جلیسی

اظہار عشق کرنے میں کیا جان جائے گی
عورت کو ڈیل کرنے کا انداز سیکھ لو
عورت سے بہن کہہ کے اگر گفتگو کری
عورت کو دیکھتے ہی جو تم مسکرا دیئے
ہر کالی پیلی سے کہو کتنی حسین ہو
عورت نے جیسے چاہا نہ تم ویسے گر ملے
انگریزی جتنی آتی ہے عورت پہ جھاڑو دو
بھولے سے اس کی عمر اگر تم نے پوچھ لی
مِس کو مسز نہ کہنا کبھی بھول کر بھی تم
تم عشق کے اکھاڑے کے بس داؤ سیکھ لو
عورت سمجھ میں آگئی جس دن پٹھان کے

یا لڑکی sorry کہہ دے گی یا مان جائے گی
ورنہ وہ کہہ کے تم کو چچا جان جائے گی
کس پائے کے چغد ہو وہ پہچان جائے گی
کتنی بھی ہو توانا وہ ہلکان جائے گی
اتنا سا جھوٹ بول دو قربان جائے گی
تم پر لگا کے چار چھ بہتان جائے گی
بس آنٹی کہا تو پریشان جائے گی
منہ گر بچا لیا بھی تو بنیان جائے گی
ہاں گر مسز کو مِس کہا سب مان جائے گی
ہر دھان پان بن کے پہلوان جائے گی
مہران جانے والی بھی مردان جائے گی

نظم

اقبال اشہر

اردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی
میں میر کی ہم راز ہوں غالب کی سہیلی
دکن کے ولی نے مجھے گودی میں کھلایا
سودا کے قصیدوں نے مرا حسن بڑھایا
ہے میر کی عظمت کہ مجھے چلنا سکھایا
میں داغ کے آنگن میں کھلی بن کے چنبیلی
اردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی
غالب نے بلندی کا سفر مجھ کو سکھایا
حالی نے مروت کا سبق یاد دلایا
اقبال نے آئینہ حق مجھ کو دکھایا
مومن نے سجائی مرے خوابوں کی حویلی
اردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی
ہے ذوق کی عظمت کہ دیے مجھ کو سہارے
چکبست کی الفت نے مرے خواب سنوارے
فانی نے سجائے مری پلکوں پہ ستارے
اکبر نے رچائی مری بے رنگ ہتھیلی
اردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی
کیوں مجھ کو بناتے ہو تعصب کا نشانہ
میں نے تو کبھی خود کو مسلمان نہیں مانا
دیکھا تھا کبھی میں نے بھی خوشیوں کا زمانہ
اپنے ہی وطن میں ہوں مگر آج اکیلی
اردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی

غزل

نصیر ترابی

وہ ہم سفر تھا مگر اس سے ہم نوائی نہ تھی
کہ دھوپ چھاؤں کا عالم رہا جدائی نہ تھی

نہ اپنا رنج نہ اوروں کا دکھ نہ تیرا ملال
شب فراق کبھی ہم نے یوں گنوائی نہ تھی

محبّتوں کا سفر اس طرح بھی گزرا تھا
شکستہ دل تھے مسافر شکستہ پائی نہ تھی

عداوتیں تھیں ، تغافل تھا ، رنجشیں تھیں بہت
بچھڑنے والے میں سب کچھ تھا ، بے وفائی نہ تھی

بچھڑتے وقت ان آنکھوں میں تھی ہماری غزل
غزل بھی وہ جو کسی کو ابھی سنائی نہ تھی

کسے پکار رہا تھا وہ ڈوبتا ہوا دن
صدا تو آئی تھی لیکن کوئی دہائی نہ تھی

عجیب ہوتی ہے راہ سخن بھی دیکھ نصیر
وہاں بھی آگئے آخر ، جہاں رسائی نہ تھی

علی گڑھ سے تعلق نہ ہونے کے باوجود علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی اور علی گڑھ برادری سے قریب آنے والے اور وقت، مال اور جدوجہد کا اثاثہ صرف کرنے والے تو قابل مبارک باد ہیں ہی لیکن غیر علی گڑھ سے شیفنگی کی حد تک محبت پیدا کرنے کا اصل سہرا ایسوسی ایشن کے ان ذمہ داروں کے سر بندھتا ہے جو مادر علمی علی گڑھ کے فرزندانوں میں ہیں۔ جناب حسن کمال، ڈاکٹر وصی صدیقی، سید محمد وسیم اور یاسر نعمانی وغیرہم کے نام نامی ان میں خاص ہیں جو ایسوسی ایشن کو ثریا کی بلندی تک پہنچانے کے لیے کوشاں اور سرگرم عمل رہتے ہیں۔

مرسر یونیورسٹی کے اسکول آف تھیا لوجی کی تمام اساتذہ بالخصوص پروفیسر راب نیش، پروفیسر ایریس ایلن کپپلر، پروفیسر ولیم لائڈ ایلن اور پروفیسر واکر اسکول آف تھیا لوجی کے ان اہم ستونوں میں ہیں جن پر اس اسکول کی شاندار عمارت قائم ہے۔ اسکول آف تھیا لوجی کے جن اساتذہ سے تین ہفتے تک سب سے زیادہ تعلق رہا ان میں پروفیسر راب نیش ہیں۔ مرسر یونیورسٹی کے اٹلانٹا کیمپس کے علاوہ میکن کیمپس میں دسیوں لکچرز میں

پروفیسر نیش ایک مخلص سامع کی حیثیت سے موجود رہے۔ مزید برآں مختلف گرجاؤں کے لکچرز میں بھی ان کی رفاقت حاصل رہی پروفیسر نیش مذاہب عالم کے ماہر و مشاق استاذ کے علاوہ بشر دوست اور انسانیت نواز ہیں جن کا عینی مشاہدہ خاکسار نے متعدد بار کیا۔ مرسر یونیورسٹی کے دونوں کیمپس کے علاوہ گرجاؤں میں جو لکچرز بھی خاکسار نے طلبہ و سامعین کے گوش گزار کیے ان سے اندازہ ہوا کہ اسلام اور قرآن کے بارے میں وہ جاننے کے خواہش مند ہیں۔ اگر یہ سلسلہ جاری رہا تو یہ علمی خدمت کے علاوہ دعوت حق کی جہت سے یہ عظیم الشان دینی خدمت بھی ہوگی۔

میں اس بات اللہ رب العزت کا جتنا بھی شکر ادا کروں کم ہے کہ صرف اسی کی توفیق سے میں نے بے جھجک اسلام اور قرآن کے رخ زیبا کو پیش کرنے کی کوشش کی اور میرا ضمیر مطمئن ہے کہ اس سلسلہ میں کوئی سمجھوتہ نہیں کیا۔ دوسری طرف حضرت عیسیٰ کے سچے متبعین کی جو خصوصیات ہیں قرآن اور بائبل کی روشنی میں بغیر کسی تعصب کے منظر عام پر لانے کی کوشش کی۔ طلبہ اور حاضرین کی طرف سے جو بھی سوالات اس سلسلہ میں ہوئے غیر جانبداری کے ساتھ اور بڑی جرأت مندی کے ساتھ جوابات بھی دینے کی کوشش کی۔ میں اس نتیجے پر پہنچا کہ حکمت عملی (Practical wisdom) اور تحمل و بردباری (Tolerance) کے اثاثہ کے ساتھ اگر اپنی بات کہی جائے اور دوسروں کی بات سنی جائے تو خوش آئند اثرات و نتائج سامنے آتے ہیں۔

ایک بات جس کا اعتراف کیے بغیر اس علمی سفر کا حق ادا نہیں ہو سکتا اور وہ یہ کہ راقم نے یہ بات شدت سے محسوس کی ہم مسلمان قرآن و حدیث میں جن چیزوں کو پڑھتے ہیں اور وہ پریکٹیکل کرتے ہیں۔ ایفائے عہد، حق گوئی وقت کی قدر دانی، امانت کا پاس و لحاظ غیبت سے احتراز، بشر دوستی، تواضع اور مہمان نوازی جیسے اوصاف کی زندگیوں کی زینت ہیں۔

علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی کے شیخ الجامعہ جنرل ضمیر الدین شاہ اور مرسر یونیورسٹی کے پریسڈینٹ ڈاکٹر ولیم انڈرووڈ دونوں ہی لائق مبارکباد اور قابل صد ستائش ہیں جنہوں نے علمی اور ثقافتی تبادلے کے اس مہم کو جامہ عمل پہنانے میں علم دوستی اور فرادلانہ تعاون کا ثبوت دیا ہے۔ اس طرح کے علمی تبادلے کے پروگراموں سے نہ صرف یہ کہ اس میں ایک صحت مند ماحول پیدا ہوتا ہے بلکہ اس طرح کے علمی اور ثقافتی تبادلے متعلقہ اداروں کو بھی قدر و احترام کی شاہراہ پر لا کر کھڑا کرتے ہیں۔

سپرپاور ملک میں تین ہفتے

پروفیسر تو قیر عالم فلاحی صدر شعبہ دینیات (سُنی) و ناظم دینیات علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی، علی گڑھ

۲۰۱۶ء کی یکم مارچ سے ۱۵ مارچ اور ۱۷ اپریل سے ۳۰ اپریل تک کے ایام راقم الحروف کے لیے مہتمم بالشان ایام ہیں۔ یہ تاریخیں وزیٹنگ پروفیسر کی حیثیت سے علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی میں پروفیسر لائڈ ایلن کی تشریف آوری اور وزیٹنگ پروفیسر کی حیثیت سے راقم الحروف کی اٹلانٹا کی مرسر یونیورسٹی کی زیارت کی روح پرور یادیں تازہ کرتی ہیں اور علمی و ثقافتی سرمایوں کے باہمی تبادلے کے لیے بلند حوصلے، مستحسن جذبات اور وجد آفرین کیفیات کے ساتھ میدان عمل میں سرگرم عمل رہنے کے لیے مہمیز کرتی ہیں۔

پروفیسر ایلن کے فکرائگیز اور معنی خیز خطبات سے طلبہ، اساتذہ اور غیر تدریسی ملازمین نے تاحدا مکان اخذ و استفادہ کیا۔ اخلاق و کردار، انتھک جدوجہد اور کلاس روم میں حسن کارکردگی کے جو جو ہر پروفیسر موصوف نے بکھیرے ہیں وہ یہاں کے طلبہ کے لیے بالخصوص سرمایہ سیم وزر کی حیثیت رکھتے ہیں۔ خاکسار کو ۸ اپریل سے لے کر ۲۹ اپریل ۲۰۱۶ء تک مرسر یونیورسٹی میں خدمت کا جو زریں موقع ملا اور مرسر یونیورسٹی کے اٹلانٹا کیمپس اور میکین کیمپس میں بارہ لکچرز کے علاوہ اٹلانٹا، میکین اور دیگر مقامات کے گرجاؤں میں چھ دیگر لکچرز دینے کا جو شرف حاصل ہوا وہ اٹلانٹا کے اے۔ ایم۔ یو المونائی ایسوسی ایشن کے بلند عزائم اور مبارک حوصلوں کے علاوہ جناب آصف توفیق، عزیز دنانی اور عبدالقیوم صاحبان کے اخلاص، ایثار، حمیت دینی اور علمی شوق کے مرہون منت ہے۔ یوں تو المونائی ایسوسی ایشن سے متعلق تمام ہی افراد کی سعی و جہد قابل رشک اور لائق ستائش ہے تاہم یہ کہنے میں باک محسوس نہیں ہوتا کہ ایسوسی ایشن سے متعلق تین شخصیتوں خاکسار کی نگاہ میں قابل ذکر ہیں۔

ڈاکٹر آصف توفیق صاحب جن سے اگرچہ آخری ایام میں ملاقات ہوئی، غالباً یہ علیگ نہیں ہیں تاہم ایسوسی ایشن میں کلیدی رول ادا کرتے ہیں اور علی گڑھ اور علی گڑھ برادری سے والہانہ محبت رکھتے ہیں۔

دوسری شخصیت جناب عزیز دنانی کی ہے۔ آپ کا اہل خیر میں شمار ہوتا ہے۔ اتفاق فی سبیل اللہ کا جذبہ خیر قابل قدر ہے۔ مرسر یونیورسٹی اور علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی کے درمیان علمی و ثقافتی تبادلے کے منصوبہ کو عملی جامہ پہنانے میں غالباً اس مرد مجاہد کا بڑا اہم رول ہے۔ اٹلانٹا کے دوران قیام میں دسیوں بار ملاقات میں آپ کی دینی حمیت اور ایثار و قربانی کا جذبہ میرے ذہن و دماغ پر نقش رہا۔ علی گڑھ سے کوئی علمی تعلق نہ ہونے کے باوجود علی گڑھ اور علی گڑھ برادری سے جو تعلق خاطر ہے، وہ قابل رشک اور لائق تقلید ہے۔

عبدالقیوم صاحب بھی علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی کے تعلیم یافتہ نہیں ہیں تاہم ایسوسی ایشن کے تمام ہی لوگوں سے جو قلبی وابستگی اور علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی سے جو والہانہ تعلق ہے وہ ناقابل بیان ہے۔ ایسوسی ایشن کے بعض دیگر ذمہ داران کے ساتھ موصوف خاکسار کے پونے دو گھنٹہ پر مشتمل پہلے لکچر بعنوان ”قرآن اور آئیڈیل سوسائٹی“ میں شریک تھے۔

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