



May 16, 2018

Respected Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi Ji,

Pranaam & Happy Ramzaan !

You would kindly recall my PowerPoint presentation made in Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad before you in the conclave '*Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat*' on June 29, 2013. I followed this up through a couple of my letters to you. I'm grateful to you for having incorporated some of my suggestions in your Party's and Government's policies like uploading Muslim friendly articles on BJP's website and official emphasis on Skill Development and creating its social recognition. Thanks.

2. We, in the Muslim community, also appreciate your philanthropic concern regarding general backwardness of Indian Muslims expressed through your maiden 2014 speech in Lok Sabha, later that year your positive vibes about Indian Muslims shared with Fareed Zakaria of CNN and recently your speech in February 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan in the presence of the Jordanian King.

3. However, in our country, there continues to be an impression that in recent years there has been an atmosphere where Muslim baiting is becoming a part of the wider social ethos. At various levels - party & government functionaries, sangh parivar, individual activists - some statement or the other or a gesture is made that conspicuously harms the Muslim interests. For one such severe dereliction you had to consequently drop one of your ministers in 2016 for which the community is grateful to you.

4. Nonetheless, your Government's change of stand before the Supreme Court opposing the continuance of minority status of Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia defies logic. There is no provision in the Constitution or in any other law that if minorities establish an educational institution and later if some executive or legislative action is taken for its recognition, that would vitiate its minority character.

5. You know, Sir, that Waqf is a Muslim religious matter. But in the Standing Committee on Waqf Properties (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Bill 2014, appointed after your Government assumed power, out of 29 Members only two are Muslim. The Committee overruled the very logical submissions made by the Ministry's officers without assigning any reasons and thus took patently anti-Waqf view.

6. In your UP election speech of February 2017 your sentence pitching Shamshan against Qabristan warranted greater factual understanding in advance. Hundreds of Qabristan properties of Waqf are being encroached by unauthorized occupants and there is need to get them vacated and to protect them. No such issue has emerged in respect of a Shamshan.

7. Your concern against triple talaq is well founded but, statistically, the proposed remedial statute would help a very small number of individuals. On the other hand, if you create Indian Waqf Service (recommended by Sachar Committee but rejected by UPA Government - pointed out to you by me on 29 May 2013) that would go to protect Waqf properties and better manage the Waqf administration earning you tremendous Muslim goodwill.

8. Niti Ayog has recently come up with the list of most backward districts in which Muslim predominant districts much outnumber others and obnoxiously find place among the first many spots. This is a result of decades of neglect by the governments of the day. During your regime the Muslim community would be happy to see the tide turning through restoration of their constitutional rights to them.

9. Jihad means striving at inner moral uplift by the individual so that s/he becomes more positively useful to the society; it is a sacred article of Muslim faith. But in India, of late, there is a tendency to associate negativity with Jihad linking to it politically motivated prefixes. Some individuals are doing this mischief (even in respect of the community's internal affirmative actions for self uplift) giving an impression that they have blessings of your Party and Government. This impression needs to be neutralized.

10. The apparent dichotomy of your Government's approach towards the incoming migrants and refugees based on their faith appears at variance with the treasured Indian directive principle '*Ekam sat viprah bahuda*' as also the spirit of the New York Declaration on Migrants & Refugees, 2016 where your MoS External Affairs was present during drafting and release.

11. Respected Sir, the Muslim community is not beholden to any political grouping. It would be happy to incline toward the one who restores to their their constitutional rights and thus uplifts their low social, educational and economic status.

12. In this context you would be happy to know that we at Zakat Foundation of India have been working in tandem with your slogan of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas through our micro and macro institutional projects of Muslim uplift and empowerment. In order to apprise you in detail about these we would feel privileged to make a presentation before you on a date of your convenience.

Looking forward with warm regards

Yours sincerely,



Dr Syed Zafar Mahmood, President
Zakat Foundation of India