



## Report

### Religious Freedom Iftar Dinner

at Islamabad Club

Dated: 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022

Organized by: Implementation Minority Rights Forum,

All Neighbors & Global Economic Forum



E-128, Model Colony No. 2, Walton Road Lahore Cantt.

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## Recitation of Holy Quran & Holy Bible





**Speech by:**  
**Mr. Samuel Payra**  
**President Bright Future Society**  
**& Chairman Implementation Minority Rights Forum**

**Ladies and Gentlemen Aslam-o-Alikum, & Good evening**

Respected, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Dr. Ali Tariq International Islamic University Islamabad, H.E. Bernhard Schlagheck Ambassador of Germany in Pakistan. H.E. Paulo Neves Pocinho Ambassador of Portugal in Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Shoaib Suddle One-Man Commission on Minorities Rights at Supreme Court of Pakistan. Mr. Ahmad Raza Kasuri Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, Dr. Robina Feroze Bhatti Member National Commission on the Rights of Child, Representatives of Malaysia, British High Commission and Indonesia, Civil Society & Religious clergy,

Today in my speech I will discuss some points regarding importance of religious freedom in the light of Judgment PLD 699, 19th June, 2014, Supreme Court of Pakistan

**13-** Religion has played an important role in human history, and faith has influenced the minds and actions of individuals, societies and nations down the ages. By freedom of religion and belief is meant the right of a person to follow a doctrine or belief system which, in the view of those who profess it, provides spiritual satisfaction. However, it is impossible to define the term ‘religion’ in rigid terms. The freedom of religion must then be construed liberally to include freedom of conscience, thought, expression, belief and faith. Freedom, individual autonomy and rationality characterize liberal democracies and the individual freedoms thus flowing from the freedom of religion must not be curtailed by attributing an interpretation of the right to religious

belief and practice exclusively as a community-based freedom. The freedom of religion and conscience has been protected in several treaties and declaration<sup>4</sup>. Article 18 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 provides as follows: -

*“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”*

**36-** The spirit of pluralism reflected in the Holy Quran constantly points out that Muhammad (PBUH) had not come to cancel the older religions, to contradict their Prophets or to start a new faith. To the contrary, His message is the same as that of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon or Jesus. The cherished goal of creating a more pluralistic society where fundamental rights are respected would continue to elude us unless we realize that we are living in a world of globalized interdependence, a world of interconnectivity, of cyber space, of shrunken distances, of cross border migration, and a world of rapidly changing cultural identities. We are all members of one race of humans with common challenges, and we cannot confront these challenges without forging a common alliance. This paradigm shift in the world around us can be achieved at the international and domestic levels SMC No. 1/2014 etc 30 only by discouraging sectarian, racial and ethnic biases which are violative of shared values and fundamental rights, and by the promotion of and strict compliance with these values and rights.

**14-** The fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief was articulated at the international level by the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. These human rights norms then serve as moral checks and efforts are continually being made to incorporate these rights into domestic laws.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has invoked International Human Rights norms in numerous cases<sup>5</sup>. It is evident from a bare reading of these provisions that the freedom of conscience cannot be separated from the freedom of religion. While the freedom of conscience is an individual right, the right to religion has both individual and community-based connotations. **Sub-article (a) of Article 20 of the Constitution also recognizes the individual and communal nature.**

**15-(e)** The right of religious conscience conferred on every citizen is a right conferring three distinct rights i.e. Right to Profess, Right to Practice and Right to Propagate. What this means is that Article 20 does not merely confer a private right to profess but confers a right to practice both

privately and publicly his or her religion. Moreover, it confers the additional right not only to profess and practice his own religion but to have the right to propagate his or her religion to others. It is important to note that this propagation of religion has not been limited to Muslims having the right to propagate their religion but this right is equally conferred on Non-Muslims to propagate their religion to their own community and to other communities. This should not be seen as a right to encourage conversions but more importantly, should be seen as a right against forced conversions or imposing beliefs on others because if all citizens have the right to propagate then no citizen has the right of forced conversion or imposing beliefs on others. (Supreme Court of Pakistan)

**25-** Islam does not compel people of other faiths to convert. It has given them complete freedom to retain their own faith and not to be forced to embrace Islam. This freedom is documented in both the Holy Quran and the Prophetic teachings known as Sunnah. ALLAH addresses the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Quran:

*“If it had been your Lord’s will, they would all have believed all of who are on earth! Will you then compel humankind, against their will, to believe?”*

Surah Al-Ma’idah (5:32). Translation by Moulana Shabbir Ahmed 7 Holy Quran (10:99)

*Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands clear from error: whoever rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things.<sup>8</sup>*

**26-** Not only does Islam give the freedom of religions freedom to non-Muslims, its tolerant law extends to the preservation of their places of worship<sup>9</sup>. ALLAH says in the Quran:

*“You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State.”*

*Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947,*

**Thanks for all Diplomates, Religious clergy, Civil Society, special thanks to Mr. Brig. ® Azam effendi & Mr. Ilyas Masih Vice President All Neighbors**

**Thank you for your Attention**



**Speech By:**  
**Professor Dr. Mohyuddin Hashimi**  
**Dean Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies**  
**Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.**

### **Religious freedom: Islamic Perspective**

**Assalamu Alykum & Good Evening**

Today, I am honored to have the opportunity to speak in front of this wonderful gathering of Muslim and Christian communities on a very special occasion of the fasting season on the subject of religious freedom and Islamic perspective. Religious freedom is considered a "natural right" rooted in human nature and is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Allah Almighty has created man in a form which is not static like other species, but is a dynamic in nature, in which differences have been shown to facilitate evolution and development. Only then can a society be progressive and dynamic and reach its heights, if it recognizes rational inquiry and appreciates difference of opinion and belief in all respects. Freedom of thought and conscience plays an active role in all social, cultural, economic and intellectual development of any tradition. Islam, like other religions, claims to be a true divine religion, so the best way to invite people to believe in it is to convince them rationally. Man is free to make his own choices in this world, because this world is considered a test for him to choose based on his rational decisions, good or bad, right or wrong, for which he is rewarded or punished in the Hereafter.

*The Qur'an has made it very clear that: "There is no compulsion in matters of faith". (Al Quran 02:256)*

If Islam is a true religion with strong logical and rational foundations, then why do one needs to fear free thinking and religious freedom and does not allow dissent? Allowing religious freedom demonstrates the power and rationale behind a system of true faith.

*The Qur'an says: "Say, the truth is from your Lord; so believe if you like or do not believe if you will. (Al Quran 18: 29)"*

There are warnings of punishment for those who do not make the right choice, but this punishment is in the Hereafter, which means that only God has the power to decide. It is in man's best interest to make the right choice, and if he makes the wrong choice, he will be punished by God in the Hereafter. Belief in the Hereafter and Resurrection logically demands freedom of religion. To help make the right choice, God revealed the Holy Scriptures.

*The Qur'an says: We have sent down to you this Book with the truth for all mankind. So he who follows guidance does it for his own good and he who goes astray does it for his own loss. (Qur'an 39:41)*

Even the Prophet has been entrusted only with the task of informing and conveying and has not given authority to force people to believe.

*The Qur'an says: "Remind them; you are surely a reminder. You are not a warden over them. (Al Quran 88: 21- 22)"*

If the Prophet himself has no option, then how can the followers intimidate and coerce people in favor of faith? Although the popular interpretation of Islam based on medieval jurists' interpretation, having different political motives denies religious freedom and free thinking and has led Muslim societies to rigidity and intolerance suppressing dissent. The interpretation of Islam that gives us religious freedom based on rational thinking is in line with the universal concept of human rights and modernity with religious freedom. Despite the explicit mention of religious freedom in the constitutions of majority Muslim countries, it is seen that these countries have failed to advance this right and protect religious minorities. It has been maintained that other laws and policies of Muslim states restrict religious freedom and the government generally enforces these restrictions.

Islam seeks to awaken a deep awareness of the moral and spiritual responsibility of man for the protection of freedom, justice and equality and to establish a society in which human freedom and prosperity are promoted.

*The Qur'an says: "But if your Lord had pleased He could have made all human beings into one community of belief. But they would still have differed from one another.*

*(Al Quran 11:118)"*

Reformers in the Muslim world have sought to redefine and broaden the traditional ideological conception of religious pluralism and emphasize the equality of humanity, but the biggest obstacle is resistance from conservatives and fundamentalists. This tradition is neither unique to Islam nor limited to religion in general, as it has occurred in secular ideologies too. A modern man has witnessed violence and killings in the name of religion. To eliminate all kinds of intolerance and discrimination facing mankind today, which are basically product of the human mind, & to enjoy freedom in all aspects of religious life, Pluralistic & inclusive world-view & mindset needs to be promoted in all spheres of thought & practices. Finally, I am happy to inform you that Allama Iqbal Open University has recently set up a new department called the Department of Interfaith Studies which is now fully operational. As far as I know, for the first time in Pakistani universities we have started BS program with specialization in interfaith studies. We are now moving towards launching a research journal in the same area, and some will offer M. Phil and Ph.D. programs. We are also planning to hold an international conference in October this year on interfaith.

Thanks for your Time.





**Speech by:  
Dr. Ali Tariq  
Lecturer at Department of Hadith, faculty of Usuluddin (Islamic Studies)  
International Islamic University Islamabad**

In his speech he emphasized on the Importance of Interfaith Harmony and Religious Freedom.

He said that for the betterment of the Pakistan all religious must to work together and all citizens of Pakistan have equal rights. He also said that this Religious Freedom Iftar Dinner is an example that all religions among the Pakistan are together and we should continue this effort for the development of Pakistan.





**Presented Quaid-e-Azam Gold Medal awards & Certificates to Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad for Interfaith Harmony & Mr. Tariq Chaman for Religious Freedom by H.E. Bernhard Schlagheck Ambassador of Germany & Dr. Muhammad Shoab Suddle - Supreme Court of Pakistan One-Man Commission on Minorities Rights at Supreme Court of Pakistan**



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