

The Cost of Refusal to Read the Bold Writings on the Wall

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On the completion of 25 months of IMPAR formation today, I wish to express my concerns on the recent happenings, which is causing deep sense of unease in the community. While we are endlessly discussing the events and forwarding all sort of videos, but failing to objectively analyse the situation, and more importantly the ramifications of the unfolding events for Indian Muslim community? Today's world is changing at a frenetic pace. We need to understand changing paradigms and keep pace with it. The cost we have paid in the last hundred years or so for persistently refusing to read bold writings on the wall is incalculable. Governed by the hysterical speeches and emotional responses, we as a community opposed and obstructed, and rarely appreciated or adjusted to the change. Muslims as a community acted in a mindless and frequently obstinate manner, almost exactly the opposite of what should have been our natural responses.

While we debated upon individuals and events, but never the causes and the trends obtaining in the social and political environment. And certainly not developed capacities to be able to strategically think and objectively analyse what the undercurrents held for us? We chose to fight British when they were firmly settled at the Thorne of Delhi and as a result, tens of thousands of Ulemas lost their lives. Mir Salar Jung and Sir Syed who talked sense were given all sort of names by clergy and common Muslims alike. We have not changed a bit since then. We challenge BJP with all our might and that only helps it. BJP is firmly settled today and has positioned itself as nationalist party. The more Muslims defeat it the more it grows. Babri Masjid agitation prolonging for forty years and the huge cost we paid, finally to accept what was inevitable, refusing several graceful and gainful offers. We continue making mistakes.

There is no rocket science to know that the increase in communalism apparently suits to the political interests of the ruling regime. While the world has criticised what happened on our channels a few days ago, and some action also taken against Nupur Sharma and others, no one has condemned the person who provoked it. Whose agenda Tasleem Rahmani kind of characters are serving, who regularly appear on TV channels, and by their typical attire, illogical debating and misplaced aggression only strengthen the general impression that Muslims are highly intolerant and have no respect for multicultural values and religious faiths of other communities? We may be momentarily pleased with the action taken against the BJP spokespersons, but are we aware of the consequences? According to social media reports, Nupur Sharma's popularity has skyrocketed.

While political and legal actions may serve some purpose temporarily, but its time for Indian Muslim community to work hard and win over the hearts of the majority community. Let's remember that in a multicultural society perceptions matter. If image and perceptions are negative, nothing else will work positive. IMPAR has accordingly prepared a social reforms agenda, which aims to initiate the change for improving the inter-community relations, and social and political environment. IMPAR has also prepared a fifteen point media advisory for Muslim panellists, which will be issued tomorrow. It aims to encourage more effective media articulation and presenting the community points of view in a way that it creates appreciation and not animosity, unless the intention of the panellists is to justify the envelopes. In such circumstances, the community must be more alert, to name and shame such bigots and self-styled scholars.

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