

Community Link

VOL. 26/19

Friday, May 6, 2016

28 Rajab 1437 H

PAGE 19

Green & White Day in Sacramento with Ambassador Jilani



PAGE 21

Barbara Alter: A Lady of Substance



PAGE 23

Balochistan's First Female Naval Officer



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OPEN Forum 2016 Attracts 700 Pakistani-American Entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley



Glimpses of OPEN 2016 Forum 2016: The Pakistani-American entrepreneurs need to think of new ways to help people who are being left behind. They need to explore ideas such as helping build new skills needed for the new economy, promote policy discussions on the idea of universal basic income and expansion of safety nets and development of new gig economy, to ensure full employment with decent incomes. Failure to do so could lead to significant social strife and cause irreparable damage to the very foundations of the system that has brought great wealth and power to America as a nation. Pictures by Ali Hasan Cemendaur

■ By Riaz Haq

OPEN Forum 2016 in Silicon Valley drew over 700 Pakistani-American entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, bankers, accountants, lawyers and high-tech executives to Santa Clara Convention Center on Saturday, April 30, 2016.

The forum featured keynotes by Qasar Younus, the Pakistani-American head of Silicon Valley's top incubator Y-Combinator, and Atif Rafiq, Chief Digital Officer at fast food giant McDonald's Corp.

OPEN Forum 2016 Agenda: The conference included presentations and discussions in four parallel tracks to inform and educate attendees on various aspects of starting and building businesses at different stages. In addition, there were panels on social entrepreneurship, women

empowerment, inspiring Pakistani-American youth, and dealing with the rise of Islamophobia in the United States. Also screened was a documentary "K2 and the Invisible Footmen" about the unsung mountaineering heroes of Pakistan's tallest and the world's second tallest mountain peak K2 and the film "The PHD Movie" about grad school.

Silicon Valley's impact on jobs in America: The first keynote I attended in the morning was about order automation at fast food giant McDonald's. The effort is spearheaded by Atif Rafiq, a Pakistani-American who has been hired by the restaurant chain operator as its first Chief Digital Officer. After the presentation, I asked Atif as to how he sees the impact of his work on employment at McDonald's. Given the fact that the service sector is the largest employer in the United

States, how would the ongoing service sector automation efforts impact the larger jobs picture? Would the emerging gig economy a la Uber be enough to make up for service sector job losses? Rafiq confessed it's a significant issue but he did not directly answer it.

Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, including Pakistani-Americans, are credited with creating millions of new jobs in new industries ranging from semiconductors to computers, communications and software and biotechnology over the last several decades. The question is: Will the new industries spawned by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs help or hurt the overall employment in America?

Twin forces of globalization and automation: The twin forces of automation and globalization are now causing significant unemployment and underemployment in the

United States. The impact of job losses and growing inequality are the subject of the current election campaigns.

First, it was the manufacturing jobs that moved offshore in 1980s and 1990s in an effort to save costs and fatten profits. This forced many factory workers to move into service industries and take pay cuts. Now the service sector jobs are also falling prey to outsourcing and automation.

Instead of addressing the root causes of economic difficulties faced by many Americans, Republican front-runner Donald Trump's presidential primary campaign is blaming immigrants and Muslims for their problems. This is giving rise to forces of racism, bigotry, xenophobia and Islamophobia in America.

Future of Capitalism and Democracy in America: The success of

American capitalism and democracy is built on the firm foundations of nearly full employment and a large middle class. The erosion of these two ingredients threatens the very foundations of America's peace and prosperity.

In response to high unemployment in 1930s, British economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) argued: "The government should pay people to dig holes in the ground and then fill them up." He advocated massive spending by government to stimulate demand when all else fails.

John Maynard Keynes: Who was Keynes? Here is how UC Berkeley's Robert Reich described him a few years ago: "A Cambridge University don with a flair for making money, a graduate of England's exclusive Eton prep school, a collector of modern art, the darling of OPEN, P18



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Over 600 California Muslims Lobby State Lawmakers at Fifth Annual Muslim Day at the Capitol



Anaheim, CA: This past Monday, April 25, over 600 Muslims of all ages from across California held over 90 advocacy meetings with elected officials and their staff in Sacramento as part of the Fifth Annual

Muslim Day at the Capitol (MDAC) organized by the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA). Among the attendees were over 180 delegates from the Bay Area.

WATCH: Hundreds Turn Out for CAIR-CA Muslim Day at the Capitol (KGET 17)

The participants sought the support of their legislators on four issues in efforts to promote just, equitable and progressive policies within the State. These included protections for immigrants, measures to prevent school bullying, the right to engage in boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS), and police accountability.

MDAC participants heard from a variety of speakers including Jewish Voice for Peace-Sacramento's David Mandel, Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones, Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon

(CA-63), and Muslim Student Association West Vice President Khwaja Ahmed.

The Muslim community's size, diversity, and civic engagement was the highlight of the day.

"Muslim Day at the Capitol is a chance for our community to communicate with government representatives and express our concerns directly," said CAIR-SFBA Executive Director Zahra Billoo. "The 600 people present today are advocating for civil and human rights for all Californians."

Spirituality in an Age of Violence: Al-Ghazali's Relevance Today

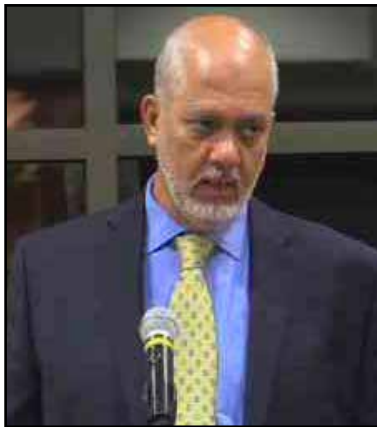
■ By Dr A. Khan
Chicago, IL

Elmhurst College, Illinois, has the unique distinction of building bridges across cultures and religions, and promoting the interfaith dialogue through the Al-Ghazali series of annual lectures. This year's lecture was delivered on April 15 by Professor Dr Mustafa Abu Sway, Dean, College of Da'wah and Usul Al-Din & College of the Qur'an and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University, Jerusalem.

The proceedings started with notes of thanks and welcome by Dr Larry Braskamp, president of Elmhurst College, and Ms Uroosa Nafasat, Vice President of Muslim Students Association. Introducing the speaker Professor Inamul Haq said, "Dr Abu Sway is the Imam Al-Ghazali Chair at Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, he was a Fulbright Scholar at Florida Atlantic University and a visiting professor at Bard College in New York. Through his writings and worldwide lectures, Professor Abu Sway has contributed to studies on Imam Al-Ghazali, classical and contemporary Islamic issues, and the Palestinian question."

Professor Abu Sway started his lecture by saying, "In the Name of God, Who revealed the Torah, Zabur, Injil, and the Holy Qur'an; And peace and blessings upon all his messengers and prophets, and peace and blessings upon you, Assalamu Alaykum."

He thanked Elmhurst College for welcoming Imam Al-Ghazali to the hearts and halls, and for opening the door for the youngest Abrahamic siblings. He said, "Today's inter-



faith gathering brings forth a spiritual giant of the 11th century, and the finest of America's 21st century academia and lovers of wisdom to foster that, which is best for the future." He also offered special thanks to Dr Larry Braskamp, Elmhurst College President; Rev Scott Mathini, College Chaplain; Dr Paul Parker, Chair Department of Religion at Elmhurst; Rev Emily Labrecque, Director Niebuhr Center; and Prof Inamul Haq, adjunct faculty and program coordinator & Muslim Co-chaplain, for their dedication and efforts in organizing the lecture.

Prof Abu Sway started his lecture with the theme of equality and humanity. He observed, "Our humanity is given, although not all members are treated as equally human, for they are denied some of the basic rights! Colonialism and neo-colonialism, ongoing occupation legacies that shamefully continue to plague our human family; and in the order of their gravity, state, group and individual terrorisms that take away life or keeps the living lifeless; socio-economic injustices that are rampant with widening gaps between the rich and the poor, be-

tween the north that enjoys and the south that subsists!"

Expounding on injustice, hope and building bridges across religions, Prof. Abu Sway noted, "It is quite unfortunate that there are those who cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel because the light was stolen, and those who cannot see the light because they have been blindfolded by their own worldviews or because of the very harsh conditions that they endure. Yet, we recognize those, from all religions and walks of life, who continue to selflessly build bridges of understanding until they themselves become a light unto others."

Discussing the opposition to truth and humanity, he observed, "And let us remember that no prophet was ever received with open arms, and those of us who attempt to follow the prophetic path, should not expect a different reception by those who made a profession out of hate! It is in this light, that I find it rather beautiful and comforting to confirm our humanity through the very same worldview that Islamophobes try to undermine. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the 4th Caliph, said: 'People belong to either of two categories, either your brother (of course, sister) in religion, or your brother in humanity.'"

Expounding on the theme of security and justice, Prof. Abu Sway said, "We build high walls because we do not want to share or because we are afraid! There is an organic link, in the case of the latter, between security and justice. When an emissary came to see 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Caliph, he arrived at a time when 'Umar was sleeping under a tree, alone, with SPIRITUALITY, P20

Top LA County Sheriff's Official Resigns

■ By Alene Tchekmedyan and
Cindy Chang

A top Los Angeles County sheriff's official has resigned amid mounting criticism over emails he sent mocking Muslims, blacks, Latinos, women and others from his work account during his previous job with the Burbank Police Department, the Sheriff's Department announced Sunday.

After previously saying that he had no immediate plans to discipline his chief of staff, Sheriff Jim McDonnell said in a statement that he had accepted Tom Angel's resignation and intended to turn the controversy into a "learning opportunity" for his department employees.

"This incident is one that I find deeply troubling," McDonnell said. "Despite the Sheriff's Department's many recent efforts to fortify public trust and enhance internal and external accountability and transparency, this incident reminds us that we and other law enforcement agencies still have work to do."

McDonnell said he would introduce random audits of employee email accounts and would meet with community groups to "share thoughts and ideas about improving our understanding of the varied cultures and orientations and deepening our appreciation of the many ethnicities and religions that are part of the vibrant fabric of the population we serve." The department would also examine its training and existing policies for "ensuring accountability and enhancing cultural and ethnic sensitivity," he said.

Angel's resignation came after The Times published emails obtained under the state's open records act. The forwarded emails prompted numerous civil rights advocates to call on the sheriff to discipline his chief of staff. By Sunday, the consensus was that Angel should step down or be fired.

Angel did not respond to messages seeking comment. He previously told The Times that he did not mean to embarrass or demean anyone. He said it was unfortunate that his work emails could be obtained by the public under the state's records laws.

It is unclear what lasting effect, if any, the controversy will have on McDonnell's standing among local civil rights advocates.

McDonnell was elected in November 2014 as an outsider promising to steer the agency past an era in which some deputies beat jail inmates and others were found to have singled out African Americans and Latinos in the Antelope Valley for harassment. He brought Angel, a veteran sheriff's official, back from Burbank as a key member of his reform administration.

Angel's resignation was welcomed by many of the civil rights advocates who had called on McDonnell to act, though some said the sheriff should have done more sooner. McDonnell had previously said he was disappointed by the emails but didn't have plans to take action because Angel sent the messages while working for Burbank.

Salam Al-Marayati, president of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, said Angel's resignation was not a moment to rejoice but to "roll up our sleeves and help the sheriff develop a culture of partnership and accountability and transparency within his office."

Haroon Manjlai, a spokesman for the greater LA chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said the sheriff's decision to accept his chief of staff's resignation sent an important message going forward...— Courtesy Los Angeles Times

California Muslims Sue over Hijab Discrimination

Los Angeles, CA: Two lawsuits filed in California on Monday claim that Muslim women were discriminated against in separate incidents because of their religion and for wearing the hijab.

One of the suits claims that police in Long Beach forcibly removed a suspect's headscarf while another suit alleges that a group of women were kicked out of a Laguna Beach coffee house for being Muslim.

According to the complaint against the city of Long Beach and its police department, Kirsty Powell and her husband were pulled over by two officers while driving home in May of last year.

She was subsequently arrested on two outstanding warrants — one linked to her sister allegedly falsely using her identity and one in relation to a 2002 shoplifting incident at a grocery store.

Powell, who is African American, alleges that while being booked at the police station, one of the officers forcibly removed her headscarf in view of other male officers and inmates, telling her she was "not allowed to wear her hijab" and that policemen were "allowed to touch women."

The suit states that Powell "suffered and continues to suffer extreme shame, humiliation, mental anguish and emotional distress" as a result of her experience.

"The actions taken by the Long Beach police officers were unwarranted and a serious violation of Mrs Powell's bodily integrity," said Yalda Satar, attorney for the Los Angeles chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which filed the suit on behalf of Powell... AFP

OPEN FROM P17

Virginia Woolf and her intellectually avant-garde Bloomsbury Group, the chairman of a life-insurance company, later a director of the Bank of England, married to a ballerina, John Maynard Keynes - tall, charming and self-confident - nonetheless transformed the dismal science into a revolutionary engine of social progress."

Keynes was clearly a very smart man. His ideas of modern Capitalism have created unprecedented wealth and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. And his ideas may still help save capitalism yet again. However, what Keynes couldn't have imagined are the new heights of avarice and wickedness of the modern political-industrial elite in America that has threatened the very foundations of the system that brought them wealth and power. During recent decades, the behavior of American capitalists and politicians has been unbelievably self-destructive.

What can Silicon Valley do? I think it's in the best interest of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, particularly Pakistani-American entrepreneurs, to pay attention to the economic difficulties being faced by many Americans who are losing jobs to automation and globalization. These difficulties lie at the root of growing xenophobia and Islamophobia. The Pakistani-American entrepreneurs need to think of new ways to help people who are being left behind. They need to explore ideas such as helping build new skills needed for the new economy, promote policy discussions on the idea of universal basic income, and expansion of safety nets and development of new gig economy to ensure full employment with decent incomes. Failure to do so could lead to significant social strife and cause irreparable damage to the very foundations of the system that has brought great wealth and power to America as a nation.

Green & White Day in Sacramento with Ambassador Jilani



Ambassador Jilani made his presence felt at just about every table in the hall by personally walking to each group and greeting them (instead of the other way around). He also presented awards to key members of the Pakistani-American community, including lifetime achievement recognitions to Bashir Choudry, Major Hussain, Rashid Ahmad, the late Aslam Khan (his grandson accepted) and a local journalist, plus a handful of other individuals - Chaudry Amin, Shahid Hussain and the Ranis - who dominated the evening

■ By Ras H. Siddiqui

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Jalil Abbas Jilani was recently on a tour of Northern California during which he took the opportunity to visit Sacramento on Saturday, April 23, 2016. He is possibly the first Pakistani Ambassador to make an appearance in California's capital city in over two decades.

Jilani assumed his responsibilities as Ambassador in Washington on January 2, 2014. Prior to this appointment he served as Foreign Secretary of Pakistan from March 2012 to December 2013. He is a career diplomat and has also served as Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union (2009-2012) and as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canberra, Australia (2007-2009).

Mr Jilani, who is a relative of former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani (PPP), was appointed foreign secretary in March 2012 and has also served in various non-ambas-

sadorial capacities outside Pakistan, including a stint in New Delhi (1999 to 2003).

In Sacramento, Ambassador Jilani was an honored guest for late afternoon tea at "Pakistan House" where he took part in its official Pakistani inaugural ceremony. And a bit later he took the opportunity to meet and greet some key members of the local Pakistani-American community at a hall in nearby Elk Grove where close to 200 people attended in true Pakistani style with snacks and dinner menu to match (from Spice of Life Restaurant). As a matter of fact, it was a real "Green and White Day" for all of us in the community of the Greater Sacramento area, with participants from as far away as Butte County, a celebration of March 23rd Pakistan Day albeit a month later. The Pakistani community of this area is possibly the oldest settled group of Pakistanis in the US, with ancestors that go as far back as the early 1900's.

Rana Akram was the emcee for the dinner event, coordinated by the

NAMC group with Nasir Choudry and Shahid Hussain in the lead. The formalities were started with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Imam Aamir Hussain from Woodland followed, with a translation. Imam Aamir also surprised us with a wonderful Naat. And soon after that, Professor Emeritus of California State University Chico Dr Nasim A. Jawed presented a scholarly take on the birth of the idea of Pakistan and the significance of the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. Dr Nasim also touched upon the direction that the vision of Pakistan has taken since independence. Our community needs to hear more from academics like Dr Nasim who remains a very important resource in his retired life.

Ambassador Jilani made his presence felt at just about every table in the hall by personally walking to each group and greeting them (instead of the other way around). He also presented awards to key members of the Pakistani-American community including lifetime achievement recognitions

to Bashir Choudry, Major Hussain, Rashid Ahmad, the late Aslam Khan (his grandson accepted) and a local journalist, plus a handful of other individuals, Chaudry Amin, Shahid Hussain and the Ranis who dominated the evening. Hafeezur Rahman and Rana Tariq Khan in turn presented a shield to the honored Ambassador.

The Ambassador in his short delivery commended all the Ranis present. He said that the invitation of the hard-working and proud Pakistani-American community of the area brought him to Sacramento and that he should have come here a lot earlier. He added that the people in Pakistan are proud of this community and its achievements, mainly because it is contributing a great deal to the United States and also because it always steps up for Pakistan whenever a tragedy strikes there, like floods and earthquakes. He congratulated everyone present for making this fine evening dedicated to Pakistan successful. The Ambassador spoke of the trials and

tribulations of the Pakistani people since 1940 and said that today's Pakistan is going through a pleasantly prosperous change. He added that adversaries are currently looking at Pakistan differently because of its strong defensive capabilities. He also said that Pakistanis are making good economic progress with a strong growth rate which is expected to increase to 5% or greater by next year. He added that Pakistan is also addressing the issue of extremism and the Pakistan Army has sacrificed many lives in the battle against terrorism.

He also highlighted the good relations between Pakistan and the United States. Ambassador Jilani closed his speech by praising our music and food and said that he was looking forward to sharing both with everyone present.

An official from the City of Elk Grove also presented a memento to the honorable Ambassador to welcome him here for the first time. A short Q/A session, dinner and music closed the evening.

Glowing Tributes Paid to Amanullah Khan in Washington

Springfield, Virginia: Kashmiri American community in Washington metropolitan area paid glowing tributes to Marhoom Amanullah Khan Sahib, Chairman, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front. "Amanullah Khan Sahib, an iconic and charismatic leader, was a symbol of sacrifice, humility and decency who struggled tirelessly for the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu & Kashmir," said Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General, World Kashmir Awareness.

Aman Sahib's message to the Kashmiri Diaspora was to disconnect themselves from Kashmiri political parties and become Kashmiris and Kashmiris alone to gain their right of self-determination, Fai added.

Fai stressed that Aman Sahib's straightforwardness and selfless contribution to the cause of Kashmir will inspire generations to come. Marhoom's demise is a colossal loss for the entire nation of Kashmir. We will continue the mission of Aman Sahib till the people achieve their internationally recognized right of self-determination.

"Pakistan has more right over Kashmir than India under the principles governing division of the Sub-continent but the will of the people of Kashmir must prevail," Fai quoted from a letter which he received from Aman Sahib.

Ishaq Sharif of JKLF said that Aman Sahib had always tried to highlight the international dimension of the Kashmir issue by writing to the head of states of various countries and reminding them that the Kashmir issue was the bone of contention of the nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan. Aman Sahib had made it clear to the government of Pakistan that the recent moves to integrate Gilgit Baltistan into Pakistan will have serious political implications. Such moves will undermine the peaceful struggle of the people for their right to self-determination.

Sardar Imtiaz Khan, New Jersey, mentioned that Aman Sahib always stressed that unprejudiced resolution of Kashmir was not only in the best interest of the people of Kashmir but also in the interest of both India and Pakistan who are spending billions of dollars on their military might. Imtiaz Khan informed the audience the role Aman Sahib played in the



internationalization of the Kashmir dispute. Aman Sahib's formula suggested the demilitarization of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, ceasefire by all parties, reunification of the whole State, formation of an independent form of Government and a

liberation of our homeland; nobody should even think of ignoring us." Sahibzada stressed that the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the Ceasefire Line should be given the choice of whether they want to join India or Pakistan or remain in-

hib had proposed an eleven member "International Kashmir Committee" including five Permanent Members of the Security Council, who could explore the different options to solve the Kashmir dispute. Aman Sahib proposed that the divided State of

terests of any neighboring country.

Professor Irshad, Maryland, said that Aman Sahib had always emphasized that the involvement of the people of Kashmir in any talks was imperative. He underlined that his Kashmir formula was a workable and realistic roadmap to resolve the long-standing international conflict of Kashmir.

Sardar Zarif Khan said that India and Pakistan should let the people of Kashmir decide their own affairs. There will be no peace between India and Pakistan without resolving the Kashmir dispute, Zarif continued.

Sardar Zubair Khan said that Aman Sahib had always rejected the status quo as an option. He underscored that the interests of the people were always more important to Aman Sahib than his personal interests.

Among others who expressed their grief and sorrow on the occasion were: Dr. Atif Malik, Mohammad Akbar, Junaid Bashir, Malik Hamid, Zahid Hamidi, Akram Butt, Saeed Khan, Sardar Zahid Khan, Sardar Asghar Khan, Ashraf Gulshan,



referendum, supervised by the United Nations.

Sahibzada Imtiaz Zafar quoted Aman Sahib who said, "Kashmiris are a nation with our distinctive culture and civilization. We have sacrificed over a hundred thousand lives for the

dependent. The popular verdict of the people should be acceptable to all parties concerned - India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

Sardar Zulfiqar Roshan Khan, while paying rich tributes to the deceased soul, reminded that Aman Sa-

Jammu & Kashmir must be re-united as an independent nation which will have friendly relations with both India and Pakistan. According to Aman Sahib, an independent Kashmir must have international guarantees and its soil must not be used against the in-

and Sardar Sabir.

The event concluded with a prayer for the eternal peace of the departed soul. Ameen.

For more information, please contact: Dr Fai at gnfai2003@yahoo.com

SPIRITUALITY FROM P18

no guards! That emissary realized the political implications of what he saw and captured the essence of the scene in three Arabic words: 'You must have been just, therefore you felt safe and slept [like this]: Justice is disseminated when we honor the very humanity of the person in front of us. To this effect the Holy Qur'an shows that the material gifts God gave to humanity are sandwiched between honoring humanity and preferring them to other creatures: And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference. (Sura Al-Isra': 17:70)"

Prof. Abu Sway said that his journey with Al-Ghazali began in 1981, when he studied his Deliverance from Error (Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal) at the hand of a Jesuit theologian, Fr Peter DuBrull, at Bethlehem University. Remem-

bering Imam Ghazali's passion for seeking knowledge, Prof Sway observed, "Within a life journey there are many smaller remarkable ones. One of Imam Al-Ghazali's first journeys to seek knowledge almost ended in a tragic end for his books and notes, when they were stolen by brigands on his way home, to Tus, Khurasan. He followed the robbers who inquired about the reason he followed them and threatened him not to, only to be shocked that it was all about the knowledge he acquired during his trip, and was deposited in one of the bags. Their commander mocked him for how easy it was to strip him of his knowledge. They ultimately gave him his books, which, as a result of this incident and his exchange with the commander, Al-Ghazali committed to memory."

Reflecting on the rights of human beings, Prof Abu Sway said, "Imam Al-Ghazali, in the chapter on hisbah (translated as "accountability") in the Revival of the Islamic Sciences, when he discusses

protecting an insane person against doing evil, though not liable legally because he does not differentiate between right and wrong, it is because he is a 'respected human being'"

Discussing the notion of the clash of civilizations, Prof. Abu Sway said, "To know each other 'li ta'arafu' became the favorite Muslim scholars' antithesis of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations! Civilizations do not clash! They are cumulative, building and fertilizing each other. There is a civilizational continuum that challenges the notion that these civilizations are separate and remote from each other. Dare I say that there is one human civilization and one history that began in the garden and ends, hopefully, in the garden! The Holy Qur'an celebrates cultural and ethnic diversity as positive signs pointing towards God. It means no conflict should be based on this divinely intended human mosaic: And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity

of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge. (Sura Ar-Rum, 30:22)"

Reflecting on the creation of the heavens and the earth, Dr Abu Sway cited the saying of prominent Islamic scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nuri, who said that everything in the Universe has a stamp of God, if people cannot see it, then it's people's problem.

Discussing the aims of Islamic law, Prof Abu Sway said, "The five major aims of Islamic law have been historically and systematically listed as protecting: 1. Religion 2. Life 3. Intellect 4. Progeny 5. Property. There are modern scholars who have added 'freedom,' 'justice' and 'protection of the environment' as necessary maqasid categories." He said that every soul counts! The Holy Qur'an highlights the sanctity of human life and urges us to protect it.

Discussing cultural and ethnic diversity, Dr Abu Sway observed, "The Holy Qur'an celebrates cultural

and ethnic diversity as positive signs pointing towards God. It means no conflict should be based on this divinely intended human mosaic: And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge. (Sura Ar-Rum, 30:22)"

Discussing humanity, human values, love and coexistence, Dr Abu Sway reminisced about how his mother breastfed her Christian neighbor's baby in Jerusalem. He said that it was not that the neighbor could not breastfeed her baby, but my mother wanted to share the "milk bonds" with the neighbor.

Prof Abu Sway concluded his lecture by saying, "And no, civilizations do not clash! Am I my brother's (or sister's) keeper?" The lecture was followed by a Question-and-Answer session. (The video recording of the lecture is available at: <http://muslimsabroad.com/live-event/>)