

“The Cyclonic Monk - Swami Vivekananda”: Summary of a Speech by Dr. Saquib Najmus at NABC 2013; July 6, 2013

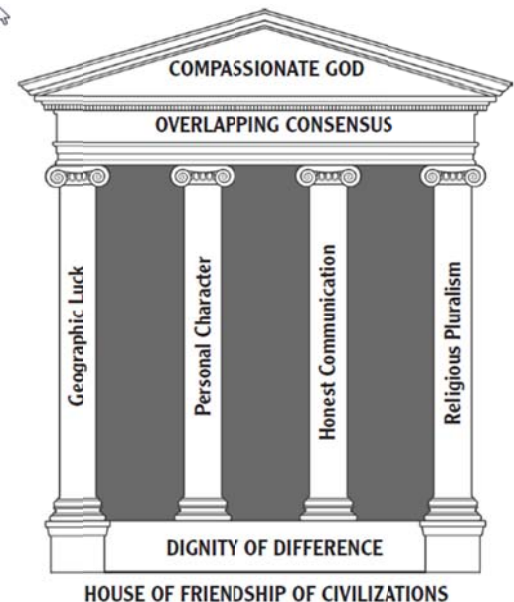
The 33rd Annual North American Bengali Conference (NABC) 2013 was held July 5-7, 2013, in Toronto, Canada. The Literary Forum at NABC 2013 featured the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda among other events. The Vivekananda celebration included speeches by our very own Sacramentan Dr. Saquib Najmus as well as three other dignitaries (Dr. Sitansu Chakrabarty, Writer Ranjan Banerjee, and Professor Dilip Chakrabarty). I was one of the locals from the Greater Sacramento Area who attended NABC 2013 and enjoyed the Vivekananda speeches, especially the one by my long-time friend Saquib. The Vivekananda event was very well attended with a standing-room-only crowd in the seminar room... even though it was the first event in the morning (starting at 11 am).

Saquib kicked off the Vivekananda Seminar by beginning his speech entitled **“The Cyclonic Monk - Swami Vivekananda”** as follows: “Sisters and Brothers of Canada, America, India, Bangladesh, and all other countries: We have gathered here today to salute a great Bengali, Swami Vivekananda, on his 150th birth anniversary.” Having captured the audience’s attention, he highlighted topics such as Friendship of Civilizations, Interfaith Dialogues, etc. using materials from his recently-published book **“God’s Facebook: Creating a Friendship of Civilizations in a Terror-Ridden World”**.

In conclusion, Saquib proposed a new paradigm for interfaith dialogues inspired by Vivekananda, and called it the HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP OF CIVILIZATIONS, which stands on the following FOUR PILLARS (please see the diagram below):

1. GEOGRAPHIC LUCK,
2. PERSONAL CHARACTER,
3. HONEST COMMUNICATIONS, and
4. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM.

Saquib clarified that this house stands on the foundation of DIGNITY OF DIFFERENCE, the brace which binds the four pillars is the OVERLAPPING CONSENSUS, and the roof of the house is the COMPASSIONATE GOD.



Saquib’s model of the HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP OF CIVILIZATIONS is a wonderful lesson for all of us, and it can promote a more peaceful and tolerant world. Swami Vivekananda would be proud of it.

Sincerely,
Biswanath Mukherjee
Professor of Computer Science
University of California at Davis
Davis, CA

To learn more about Saquib’s speech, please visit: <http://www.godsfb.com/media.html>