



THE INTERFAITH INSTITUTE

IFI NEWS

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Board Members (Jan 2021-Dec 2023)

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Zainab Bey
Anu Bindra
Azhar Bhatt
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Sohail Nabi *
Seema Rehman
Benjamin Rifkin
Robert De Sena
Bhadra Shah
Panna Shah *
Tom Suozzi
Rabbi Michael White
Rev Dwight Wolter

* Executive Board Members

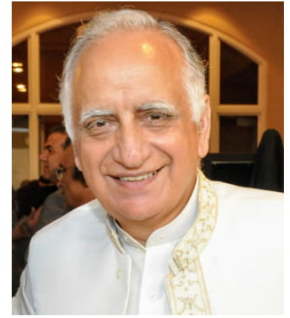
Chairman's Update

It was a year ago on March 8th 2020 the Interfaith Institute had its in person program with a sizable number of attendees followed by social interaction and some refreshments. I recall having a chat with supervisor Judy Bosworth about the 'virus' which had affected many congregants in a Synagogue in Westchester. Soon after, all of us learnt about Covid 19 which has had huge impact on all of us, the 500,000 plus deaths in USA, lockdowns, job losses and social isolation. This reminds me of the Quranic verse 94:6—With hardship comes ease—never lose hope. In fact, one of the programs organized by Rev Dwight Wolter focused on the lessons learnt during this pandemic, please read the summary of that conversation—its an eye opener.

A year ago I had not heard about "Zoom" meetings, well it took a while for me to learn about the intricacies of this virtual platform which has facilitated my virtual participation in the memorial services for my nephew who passed away in Kashmir and my sister in law who passed away in Los Angeles, in addition I have been able to hear some great presentations from around the world on religious and other topics. A Turkish immigrant couple Drs Ugur Sahin and Ozlem Tureci developed the Pfizer Covid vaccine, a great example of service to humanity. This was followed by few other vaccines, thankfully under the Biden administration we in USA will have vaccinated most of the population this year.

The Interfaith Institute has also adopted to the new realities created by Covid-19. Thanks to the great vision and perseverance of the IFI board and executive members IFI has hosted four stellar pro-

grams which have been summarized in this newsletter. The interest and attendance at these programs has been robust, in fact in the program on Slavery IFI had to close



registration after it crossed three figures. During March the IFI facilitated a teaching program in Babylon school district for 9th and 6th graders. Ms Krystle Barnett provides a summary of this unique virtual program in which 750 students participated. IFI provided speakers for the three Abrahamic faiths and Hinduism—details in Ms. Barnett's report.

Interfaith Institute was established in 2015 with a vision of: Being a center of excellence for developing and sustaining a progressive, vibrant Interfaith community and a nurturing environment for the society at large. We hope and pray that the Interfaith Institute of Long Island is fulfilling these expectations.

In closing, my warm welcome to the new board members who joined IFI, thanks to the board members who agreed to stay for a second term and special thanks to the growing number of participants at IFI events. This quarter – Jan-March 2021 IFI has had over a thousand attendees at its various programs. May I also request the readers of this newsletter to provide us your feedback with suggestions for new programs, constructive critique of IFI activities which we always welcome along with your financial contributions.

Prof Faroque A Khan M.A.C.P

Chair Interfaith Institute of Long Island Board