

Charity and Beggars – Message from Nasimco President, Ghulamabbas Sajan

There are two purposes for giving aid to people. One is to uplift the community receiving financial support. The other is to make the community dependent on handouts.

We find that established institutions like World Federation, Africa Federation and Nasimco fall under the former category. The intent is to ensure that the community or the individuals helped remain proud, stay on their own feet and are fairly independent. This is achieved through providing means of education and repayable business loans. It is never the intention to give handouts. Financial assistance when given is with the clear view of ensuring that this does not create dependency. We all believe in giving the means to fish, not the fish. Dependency is a disease which destroys families, communities and even nations. (Look at all the nations that receive Foreign Aid).

Now let us look at what happens when the funds are channelled through individuals. First of all they are a hindrance in the path of the organizations for these individuals create confusion. Secondly, they make the recipients dependent on the regular handouts. Those who hitherto sweated to earn their bread and butter, now find that they can get subsistence without putting any effort. The sweetness of the sweat is gone instead the bitterness of laziness creeps in. In other words, these type of handouts create a community of beggars in respectable communities.

We are told that these individuals disburse the funds quickly. They do not hold on to the funds. The supporters of these individuals do not realize that to carry out effective distribution, there is planning. How conveniently “Haste is waste” forgotten. Do they make the same haste in their business planning? Definitely not. I will give two examples of how dirty dependency is.

Case one: At the beginning of every school term, a parent would contact the official appointed for giving School Fee Assistance. That Jamaat had directed the official that he was not to question the integrity of the parent.

When there was crisis that country, this person had enough funds to pay for the airline tickets for the family and had enough money which would cover the salary of a bookkeeper for two years. The man had lost integrity and self-respect because this was easy money.

Case two: Funds were sent to Kutch on a regular basis for many years. The Kutchis, hitherto proud, gradually started becoming dependent on the handouts. Maximum number of Khoja Ithna-asheris in the entire Kutch was not more than 950 individuals – say 180 families. Many of these 180 families were independent but gradually started relying on the handouts. The proud Kutchis, many of them, now became dependent.

This would definitely not have happened if the contributions were through organizations like World Federation and Nasimco.

Therefore, when we appeal for centralization of funds, we intend the dollar to go a long way. We do not want the dollar to disappear in the creation of nations of beggars.

Case in point, again Kutch. This time the earthquake. Ask anyone, the best service received in terms of whatever – immediate assistance, temporary accommodation – was from World Federation, an organization for the community.

Kutch – Muharram 1422, March/April 2001

Following report is from Al Haj Muhsin Dharamsi, on various parts of Gujarat:

After the earthquake of January 2001, the first period of Azadari was observed in Kutch in makeshift Imambaras. The mumineen worked very hard placing banners and sabeel stands in different parts of the town, cleaning debris off the roads where the Julus was to pass, putting up the temporary Imambaras etc.

In Nagalpur, Majalis were held in the street under the open skies. Mumineen sacrificed their comfort by taking down their temporary shelters and slept in the open after the Majalis every night. Sunnis throughout Kutch held Majalis in Kutchi every night. In Nagalpur most of houses and all Religious Centres are damaged very badly. In the Julus on Roz-e-Ashura Shias, Sunnis and Hindus walked in the procession and did Matam together.

On 17 Rabi' al Awwal 1422, 10 June 2001, mumineen of Bhuj celebrated Meelad un Nabi out in the open at their new Al mahdi Society. This land of 3300 sq yds was specifically bought in April 2001 to temporarily house all the 80 families of Bhuj affected by the earthquake. 15 families have already moved in. Others will follow shortly and inshallah all 80 families will be accommodated by the end of June 2001.

Update from The World Federation on the Resettlement of Mariya And Kutch Communities

The earthquake of 26th January 2001 affected our communities in Mariya and Kutch. There was complete devastation in Mariya, Nagalpur and Bhuj and to a lesser extent in Kera and Mundra. The numbers of families affected are: Mariya 28 families; Bhuj 80 families; Nagalpur 32 families; Kera 7 families and Mundra 7 families. Following the earthquake, the first phase in our assistance was to ensure that immediate relief in terms of shelter, food, water, medicines etc. was available. In conjunction with the Council of Gujarat and other Voluntary Charitable Organisations, the World Federation was able to ensure that this reached the areas within 24 hours.

The second phase of our effort was to provide temporary housing and income support. Since February 2001 monthly income support is being given to each family through their Jamaats and by the middle of June 2001 every affected family in Kutch will have been housed in temporary housing.

The third phase of the work involves the rebuilding of permanent housing, religious centres and economic upliftment of the community. The master plan for the rebuilding

programme is now being finalised. This work will take longer to complete and will require huge financial resources.

For economic upliftment, discussions are now being finalised to make available interest free business loans. It must be emphasized that the thinking behind loans as opposed to handouts is to encourage long term self sufficiency and eradication of dependence by the community. Also, the repayment of the loans will be reutilized for on going economic upliftment of members of the Jamaats.

So far with the generosity of our community world wide approximately £270,000 has been remitted to the World Federation. Efforts are being made to collect the outstanding pledged amounts.

The World Federation has so far spent 9,500,000 Indian Rupees (£140,000), breakdown is as following in Indian Rupees: Immediate Relief (InR 400,000), Medical Assistance (InR 100,000), Monthly Income Support (InR 1,500,000), Purchase of Land (InR 1,800,000), Building Temporary Houses (InR 5,700,000).

Few weeks back a further purchase of land in Bhuj has been finalised for Indian Rupees 500,000 and negotiations to purchase land in Morbi for the Mariya community is being finalized at the cost of Indian Rupees 6,000,000. This will require approximately £97,000.

Also, by the end of June 2001, the interest free business loan scheme, will Inshallah be operational, and the World Federation will require a further £150,000.

Total *collected*: £270,000, *Less*: already spent £140,000, further land purchase £97,000 and business loan scheme £150,000. *The deficit is £117,000.*

Further funds are therefore required to meet the deficit and also for the permanent rebuilding programme to provide houses and religious centres. World Federation and Nasimco are urgently requesting those who have pledged, to send us the funds urgently. We also request those who had been waiting for this phase to now make their donations as soon as possible. Donations can be sent to Nasimco office.

The President of Nasimco Al Haj Ghulamabbas Sajan commented that the donations received has been used for immediate relief, temporary accommodation and reconstruction of houses which is in process, also in process is obtaining permits from the Indian Authorities.

With respect to Business loans, World Federation has indicated that it will provide interest free loans. Therefore, our brothers and sisters will only be repaying the capital. This is for obvious reasons, as the intention is not to provide the proverbial “fish” but the “fishing rod”.

New York community welcomes the World Federation, Friday 18th May 2001

Huseini Madressa, New York was the venue for a three day packed programme organised by the World Federation and graciously hosted by Shia Ithna Asheri Jamat of New York (SIJNY). The World Federation team, numbering over 20 from the UK, was joined by NASIMCO Community Leaders, Officers and Community Leaders from Allentown, Albany, Dallas, Edmonton, New York, Seattle, Stockholm, Minneapolis, Toronto and Vancouver. Also in attendance were Councillors Mohamed Moledina, Dr. Akber Mithani, Dr. Asgher Moledina and Hussein Walji.

The ZCSS Chairman, Al Hajj Mohamed Visram passionately persuaded the audience that no child in the community should ever be deprived of attaining basic education. That was the mission of the Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme, which is now sponsoring over 11,000 children worldwide.

Al Haj Ghulamabbas Sajan emphasized the desirability of close co-operation between NASIMCO and the World Federation and expressed his satisfaction with the level of co-operation between the two organizations. He vocalized NASIMCO's concern on the incompatibility of Aalims invited from abroad with the needs of the community in North America.

Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme – Visit to Hyderabad, in October 2000

Al Haj Ghulamabbas Sajan, President of NASIMCO, acknowledged and took the opportunity to thank the Treasurer of NASIMCO, Br. Safdar Nasser and the Chairman of Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme, Br. Hussein Sheriff Khalfan for their report on their visit to Hyderabad. This report was based on their observations and required response to some issues raised from Imam-e-Zamana Mission (IZM).

The report was prepared and circulated to the Executive Councillors and Jammats. It was also discussed at this years NASIMCO's Executive Council meeting in Allen Town.

One of the concerns in the report was that IZM's costs seemed higher than other schools. A response back from IZM explained many reasons for this and other issues raised in the report. President of IZM Br. Salim Peerbhoy mentioned in his reply "like any charitable organization, it has some problems and that IZM exists for the poor of Hyderabad".

If anyone wished to receive a copy of this report please email NASIMCO.

NASIMCO Conference

Toronto Jamaat has agreed to host the next NASIMCO Conference, this will be held in the 3rd weekend of July 2001 (July 21st & 22nd) at the Bayview Mosque. The Agenda and details will be available later in this month. NASIMCO's election will be held and the three candidates for the Presidents positions nominated are Sis. Noorzehra Ebrahim, Br. Hussein Walji and Br. Mohamed Raza Fazal.

Sis. Noorzehra Ebrahim was born in Pakistan now living in Toronto, Ontario. She is currently Chair of JIBA Ontario.

Br. Hussein Walji was born in Kampala, Uganda. In 1972 when all the Asians were expelled from Uganda he left with his family and eventually ended up in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has a long history of serving our community and is currently an Executive Councillor of the World Federation.

Br. Mohamed Raza Fazal was born in Mauritius and immigrated to Toronto Canada in 1975 to continue his studies and in 1981 moved and settled in Edmonton. He has a long history of serving our community and is currently NASIMCO Councillor and a coordinator of NASIMCO Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme in Western Canada.

We are very lucky as all three candidates have excellent personality and a lot to offer our community with impressive visions to take NASIMCO to the next level. For more information please email NASIMCO.