



News Journal

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Miscellaneous Notes:

- This issue of the News Journal includes an article about a visit to a Mosque in Andijon, the city in Uzbekistan near its border with Kyrgyzstan; the city where Zaheeruddin Babar spent his childhood, and latter formed the Mughal Empire in India.
- We invite the community members, mosques, and other institutes to contribute articles to the News Journal.
- Please [DONATE](#) to the project.

May you and your community be blessed in the new 2020 decade.



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A Piece of Heaven on Earth

This Eid-ul-Azha I was in Kokand, a beautiful city in Uzbekistan. It has such generous people, with gracefulness emanating from their mannerism. The Eid prayer was offered very early in the morning, at 5:30 Am, few minutes after the sunrise. That was an unusual timing in my experience, and I realized that there is no one universal way, even within the boundaries of the same religion.

My hotel window overlooked the main square with a beautiful park. through the window, I could see the crowds returning from the Eid Prayer. It was an inspirational scene, one that will be in my memory for a long time to come; an experience of a life time. I decided to step out and breathe in a bit more of the experience. I walked indecisively, stepping out of the hotel and wondering which way to turn. I had been to the area to my right; it led to a magnificent park and a historical Palace. It was also the direction from where the people were returning from the Mosque.



The Historical Palace (under restoration)

Instead I turned left, and took another left into a local market that looked like a Farmers Market. However, it was too clean and tranquil for a casual Farmers Market. As I walked from shop to shop, a little kid smiled at me and greeted me in his own way. He quickly became friendly and gave me a piece of fruit and I gave him some pieces of candy. The parents looked on as this was happening; they had their shop in the market. I did not want to engage the child for too long, and therefore I walked on, away from the market.



My friend at the Farmers Market

I decided to take a bus to randomly experience the town. The people were dressed for the Eid; and they were going around, perhaps visiting friends and family. Some neighborhood (Mahalla) children were just getting together having fun.



Children in the outskirts of Kokand city.

By the noon time I decided to move on, and experience Eid in another city, Andijon. This is the city where Emperor Zaheeruddin Babar spent his childhood, and he grew up to lay the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. I decided to stay at a Soviet Era hotel, because of its very central location. My window opened into the Ali Sher Navoiy Park. The park had a grand central fountain, with a picture of Babar nearby, and a grand Theater to the right. The city was lit up in Eid celebration.



Even the trees in the parking lots were beautifully decorated.

Next day to the Eid, I decided to visit the central mosque. The taxi took me to the mosque, and when I tried to pay the fare he refused to accept it. You meet many exceptional people in these Central Asian countries with a Turkistani culture. It is a grand mosque; however, it was under renovation. The entry gate is detached

from the mosque and it serves to host the congregation. After the Salat I decided to go in, but could not find the gate into the mosque (the main entrance was blocked by renovation). Then I was shown the make-shift entrance that the renovation crew was using.



The Central Mosque, Andijon, Uzbekistan.

Inside the mosque I saw the renovation crew still working after the Sunset. The architect who was renovating the art work and calligraphy showed me around and explained how the restoration works. I had met him in the Maghrib congregation, and he had shown me the entrance. After some time he took out the Eid Biryani that he had brought with him to work. We both enjoyed the dinner together. It was delicious with the fresh meat in it. As is often the custom,

we both ate from the same plate, which was rather huge. This is the Muslim way of sharing the meal in these cultures. He invited me to his home for a more elaborate reception, to which I politely declined because I had rather limited time.

Mosques are spiritual places, and the Muslims in there are very welcoming, offering exceptional values of hospitality and gracefulness. It is not so because I myself was a Muslim. I have met non Muslim travelers from diverse places like Germany and Japan. They shared similar stories with me, actually their stories were more remarkable. I myself have been generously treated in many mosques that I visited in various cities like Tirmiz, Samarkand, and Bukhara. I was left with a soothing impression that each mosque is a place where the Muslims make it a piece of paradise. In a Muslim country a traveler is never alone or stranded. Anywhere a traveler goes, he or she finds a welcoming generosity and a gracious hospitality. This is unique to Muslims; I have not experienced it in Europe or USA.

Each mosque in USA is also potentially a place which ought to create a piece of paradise on Earth. In some respects they already are. Often times, while representing a piece of paradise they also represent trouble in paradise. Such troubles are the results of misunderstandings and misconceptions, despite all the best intentions.

Let us eliminate misunderstandings by promoting communications among ourselves. We need to communicate in order to understand each other; and thus eliminate misunderstandings among ourselves.

Let us purify our concepts in order to remove misconceptions. Let us discuss these concepts to remove misconceptions about them. Let us come together and

hammer out a pristine understanding about all the concepts. All the concepts and practices that make us the Muslim community, they are worth a deeper understanding that is deeper than the skin deep, and that is calmer than the emotional outbursts that we sometimes deploy to express ourselves, and to express what we hold as the defining ideals.

Let us come together. There is no other way. There is only one rope that God dangles in front of us. And then God asks us to hang on to it, hang on to it all of us; all those who call themselves Muslims must hang on to this ONE and the SAME rope because it is the rope of God. If we hold on to a different rope for our group, different from other groups, and yet all groups claim to be Muslims – then the truth is that none is holding on to the rope of God, and everyone is holding on to a rope that is not the rope of God. Let us become One Ummah – One Unified Muslim Community.

This is the mission of the Muslim Planet Project. Please join us. Together we will unify the 3000 mosques in USA into a coherent Network. And when we do, America will listen when the Muslim Community speaks. Let us be a prominent voice in the main street USA.

Let it be your New Year Resolution.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles are those of their authors and contributors; they do not necessarily represent the views of the Muslim Planet Project.