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NCPUL 2-day seminar on Dara Shikoh begins

Dara Shikoh started inter-faith dialogue: Senior RSS leader, Dr Krishna Gopal

New Delhi, October 9, 2019: Muhammad Dara Shikoh was an extraordinary talented, gentle and scholarly prince who tried to understand the Indian culture and civilization in its wider perspective and propagated it. This was stated by RSS joint general secretary, Dr Krishna Gopal while inaugurating a 2-day National Seminar on Muhammad Dara Shikoh: Life and Works on Wednesday here organized by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Continuing his speech, Dr Gopal said Dara Shikoh studied all religions holy books and spent his time among the religious scholars and exchange thoughts with them on a host of topics and issues. He also underlined that Dara Shikoh had learnt Sanskrit to study the Hinduism and spent some time with the Brahmins of Banaras (Kashi). He said it was Dara Shikoh who first started the inter-faith dialogue method.

Shedding light on the Mughal prince's different aspects of life, the RSS leader averred that Dara Shikoh was a Muslim and he arrived at the conclusion after much scholarship that there exist many thoughts theories and isms and all would remain in existence but the world cannot survive without love, compassion and harmony.

On the occasion, speaking as a guest of honour, Aligarh Muslim University Vice Chancellor Dr Tariq Mansoor described Dara Shikoh as beacon light of composite culture and he used to give much importance to unity, communal harmony and religious tolerance in his life. He said the AMU has set up Dara Shikoh chair which would do and encourage research work on Dara Shikoh's personality and his thoughts. He also suggested establishing Dara Shikoh center in Delhi in order to spread his thoughts and beliefs.

Echoing his views, vice chancellor of the Jamia Milia Islamia, Prof Najma Akhtar said the seminar on Dara Shikoh is a new beginning to understand this scholarly prince who had spent much of

his time on studying different religions. She also announced of setting up a center in the name of Dara Shikoh.

In his welcome remarks, Prof Shahid Akhter, Vice-Chairman NCPUL said today we are discussing about a prince who appeared to be Sufi or saint more than a prince. He expressed the hope that the seminar would prove a milestone in understanding the thoughts of Dara Shikoh, the saint-like prince and adding that Dara Shikoh had introduced the Indian culture to the other parts of the world.

While delivering the introductory address, NCPUL director, Dr Aquil Ahmad said the seminar on Dara Shikoh is the need of the hour. Eloquently shedding lights on contributions and works of Dara Shikoh, Dr Aquil Ahmad said he was a shining example of Indianness and a sparkling symbol of religious tolerance and harmony and inter-faith dialogue.

If Dara Shikoh had been the ruler of the country, then the history and future of our country would have been different, he said and adding that Dara Shikoh was the first person who presented the concept of 'respect to all religions'. Underlining his human qualities, Dr Aquil Ahmad said Dara Shikoh had a broad vision and believed in spirituality which teaches love, compassion not hatred. Dara Shikoh's charter was consists of service to humanity and respect to humankind, he further said.

The NCPUL director stressed the need of prorogating and disseminating Dara Shikoh's thoughts and beliefs. For this purpose, he said the NCPUL has been publishing all the books written by Dara Shikoh's and their translation in Urdu.

Speaking in the plenary session, Prof Azarmi Dukht Safavi scholarly presented the key note address on the life of Dara Shikoh. She also lucidly underlined the context of composite culture in Dara Shikoh's works.

In his presidential remarks, Prof Mohd Shabbir of AMU said Dara Shikoh had a multifaceted personality. He served on important posts but took out time for study, Prof Shabbir added. Dara Shikoh was best known for translating the Upanishads from Sanskrit to Persian and a preacher of finding commonalities between Islam and Hinduism, he said and added that he believed in religious tolerance and social harmony among the people of different faiths.

There was also a technical session on Dara Shikoh and a host of learned scholars presented their papers on the life and academic contribution of Dara Shikoh and Prof Sharif Husian Qasmi, Prof Azizuddin Hamdani, Prof Syed Ainul Hasan are notable among them.

On the occasion, *Majmuaal Bahrian*, book has been released by the guests which is published by the NCPUL.

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