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Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come
 There can be no doubt
 About it, or about (the fact)
 That Allah will raise up
 All who are in the graves
 Yet there is among men
 Such a one as disputes
 About Allah, without knowledge,
 Without guidance and without
 A Book of Enlightenment,-
 (Disadainfully) bending his side,
 In order to lead (men) astray
 From the Path of Allah:
 For him there is disgrace
 In this life, and on the Day
 Of Judgement we shall
 Make him taste the chastisement
 Of burning (fire)

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

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FOCUS

Balban, like other contemporary Turkish nobles was fond of a gay life, but when he ascended the throne he changed his ways completely and adopted almost a stoic attitude towards life. It was his sense of royal duty which acted as a great restraining force on his passions. He offered his prayers regularly and kept fasts during the month of Ramazan. He used to keep vigils frequently. Besides the five obligatory prayers, he offered *ishraq, chasht, awabin and tahajjud* prayers and recited certain litanies (*aurad*) regularly. He did not miss his prayers or *aurad* even when on journey. Bughra Khan's remark that no scholar or saint could offer so many prayers or keep so many fasts as Balban did, though a bit exaggerated, shows the extent of his interest in prayers. Even a man like Sheikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya could not help praising his religious devotion and his regularity in offering prayers. The great Sheikh, it may be pointed out, praised only two medieval monarchs for their religious views – Ilutmish and Balban, both of whom had succeeded in winning the sympathies of the Muslim religious classes due to their religious devotions. Sheikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya further narrated a story about the keenness of Balban in offering supererogatory prayers. Once he asked his *Qazi-i-Lashkar*: "What was the significance of the last night"? The Qazi replied: "This is known to you also". "Yes", said the Sultan. The Sheikh had narrated the story so far that Amir Hassan Sijzi interrupted and said: "The night referred to must have been shab-i-qadr." "Yes", continued the Sheikh, "both of them (the Sultan and the Qazi) knew each other's affairs."

Balban dealt very strictly with his sons so far as obligatory prayers were concerned. If he ever heard that Bughra or Muhammad had missed a single prayer or had remained asleep in the morning and had not offered prayers in congregation, he would not talk to them for a whole month. Whenever the defaulter appeared before him, he angrily turned his face from him. He exhorted his sons to remember the following sayings of the Prophet: "Offering prayers in congregation is my practice, whoever gives it up is a hypocrite." "Whoever gives up prayers is condemned."

Balban was on the best of terms with the theologians and saints. He invited them to his meals and discussed religious problems with them. Notwithstanding his high notions about the dignity of kings, he visited their houses also. He was keenly interested in religious sermons (*tazkir*) and often attended such gatherings and wept profusely. Whenever he heard about the death of any saint, Sayyid or scholar of the city, he attended his funeral and offered funeral prayers; joined the function on the third day of his death, consoled the bereaved family and granted stipends to survivors.

Of the Ulema to whom Balban showed special respect, Qazi Sharaf-u-din, Maulana Siraj-u'-din and Maulana Najm-u-din Damishqi may be specially mentioned. He regularly visited Maulana Burhan-u-din Mahmud bin Ali al-Khair al-Balkhi after the Friday prayers. He had great faith in Sheikh Farid-u-din Mas'ud of Ajodhan. Before ascending the throne he went to see him and presented a dishful of coins to him, with a view to receiving the Sheikh's blessings. Hagiologists have referred to his respectful relations with Sheikh Ali Chisti and Sheikh Shamsuddin Panipati. He prevented the former from quitting Delhi and threatened to abdicate and accompany him to Chist if he decided to go there. A later writer says that Balban had become the disciple of Sheikh Ali Chisti. This statement is not confirmed by earlier authorities.

Balban evinced great interest in religion so far as his personal life was concerned, but, as Barani very correctly remarks, he never cared for the laws of Shari'at in dealing with those who defied his authority or who were found guilty of any political crimes.

Balban's successor, Sultan Mu'izzu-u'-d-din Kaiqubad, plunged headlong into pursuit of pleasure. He neglected his obligatory prayers and ignored obligatory fasts.

(From *Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* by Khaliq Ahmed Nizami pp. 119 – 121)

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Book Release

Readings on Minorities: Perspective and Documents – Vol. IV

The release of late Prof. Iqbal A. Ansari's *Readings on Minorities* (Vol. IV) turned out to be an occasion for renewal of commitment by his colleagues to the values he cherished.

The misgivings created by vested interests among the people over conversions to Islam must be addressed promptly, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Mr. K. Rahman Khan, said in his remarks.

Mr. Khan was speaking at a function organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at the Constitution Club on January 6, 2010 to release late Prof. Iqbal A. Ansari's book, *Readings on Minorities: Freedom of Religion*. It is the fourth and the last volume in Professor Ansari's classic *Readings on Minorities*.

Echoing the concerns of Prof. Ansari, Mr. Khan said that law alone would not remove misgivings on such emotive issues, and the society as a whole would have to take initiative. Prof. Ansari wanted a fresh Hindu-Muslim covenant on contentious issues like Ayodhya, cow slaughter and religious conversion to assuage hurt sentiments and accommodate each other's sensitivities.

Freedom of religion was not confined to conversion alone: it covered a wider gamut of issues related to freedom of belief and worship, Mr. Khan explained.

The book was released by Justice V.N. Khare, former Chief Justice of India.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, Mr. Shahid Mehdi, said

Prof. Ansari's work was of enduring value. Mr. Mehdi sought to put the United Nations perspective on minorities' rights. The international organisations focused more on ethnicity (like the Australian aborigines, the South American indigenous people, the North American Red Indians etc. being called

that the irritants in Hindu-Muslim problems were pretty small and could be managed. Justice Sachar quoted from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to emphasise that the propaganda about forced conversion to Islam was not correct.

He also quoted from Swami Vivekananda that Islam conquering India by the force of the sword was a lie. It conquered people's hearts by emancipating the marginalised castes from serfdom, the Swami had observed.

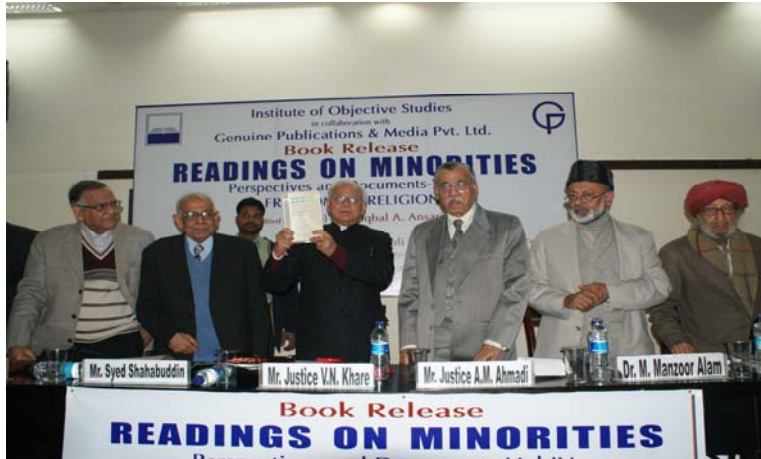
He also explained that his friends in the human rights movement had sent five persons each to South Asian countries who stayed there for sometime and studied their minority issues.

Former MP and diplomat Syed Shahabuddin observed that Prof. Ansari, who taught English literature at Aligarh Muslim University, ended up as a jurist who could have a dialogue with "both the bench and the bar" with great ease and confidence.

Syed Shahabuddin said Prof. Ansari was deeply perturbed over rising violence. He also advocated affirmative action to lift Muslims out of their present difficulties. The majoritarian perspective in the treatment of minority concerns was yet another source of worry for Prof. Ansari, he added.

Journalist Siddharth Vardarajan said that Prof. Ansari was deeply committed to human rights. He was always in touch with developments in cases like Maliana and Hashimpura massacres in UP, which were hanging fire even 23 years after those horrid episodes.

Mr. Vardarajan supported Prof. Ansari's insistence on equal compensation to be paid to the kin of people killed in riots. For instance, the compensation paid to 1984 anti-Sikh riots victims should be the standard. In Gujarat some of the Muslim victims



Hon'ble Justice VN Khare releases the Book "Readings on Minorities"

minorities), while in India it was more a case of religious and linguistic minorities.

He said that once a colleague of his from the Indian Foreign Service asked him whether it was true that Islam offered non-Muslims a choice between



A view of audience

conversion and slaughter. That showed the extent of misinformation on Islam.

Another pertinent point he made was that South Asia's minority problem too should be studied as a macro picture. He said some efforts were already on to address issues at South Asia level.

Justice Rajinder Sachar said that he was in complete agreement with Prof. Ansari's views. Prof. Ansari believed

were paid as little as Rs. 2,000 for each person killed.

Prof. Ansari's case for enactment of a genocide law in India was also supported by Mr. Vardarajan.

Mr. Vardarajan was emphatic about fixing accountability of police officers. He said laws should be amended to delete the requirement of government's sanction before filing a criminal case against police officers. "A Police officer is discharging no official duty by indulging in rape, arson and murder", he reasoned.

Former Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University, Dr. Amrik Singh, said that Prof. Ansari's family should be requested to lend his papers to IOS for some time so that several of his unfinished works could be completed.

Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) Chairman, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, announced that Prof. Syed Jamaluddin had been appointed editor of *Human Rights Today*. Prof. Ansari was the founding editor of this fine journal, and he edited it till his last days.

Dr. Alam said that the IOS was scouting for young talent all over India to fill the gap left by the first generation of IOS stalwarts who had started leaving for their heavenly abode, one by one.

Judicial reforms were close to Prof. Ansari's heart and the IOS had been working on it for some time. Seminars were scheduled for near future on topics Prof. Ansari deemed important, Dr. Alam said. His legacy would continue to inspire us, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks former Chief Justice of India, Justice A.M. Ahmadi, said, "You rarely come across people of such commitment to a cause as Prof. Ansari. The like of him will be difficult to find".

He said that the religious diversity of the country was not reflected in institutions of authority. Muslim representation in legislatures as well as in officialdom (in fact, across the board)

was so low, and even shrinking, that affirmative action was a need today.

However, he regretted that every time the government thought of some remedial steps some groups bullied it into surrender, "forcing it to give up half way". He wondered as to why the government displayed such lack of backbone.

He said he was not happy with the Communal Riots (Prevention and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill in its present form as it relied too much on states that had often subverted justice. The "Centre must assume greater authority to make the law effective", he added.

Earlier, IOS Secretary General, Prof.



View of Book Release "Maimaron ka Jazeerah"

Z.M. Khan presented a brief description of IOS programmes and policies. Mr Kaleem Alam, CEO, Genuine Publications & Media Pvt. Ltd. (which has published the book) proposed a vote of thanks. The proceedings began with a recital of the Quran by Maulana Abdullah Tariq.

Book Release "Maimaron Ka Jazeerah"

The Urdu translation of Abdul Hameed Abu Suleiman's book *Jazeeratul Bannain* is released with critical acclaim.

"Islam has a long literary tradition that includes different genres of fiction", Prof. Shafique Ahmad Nadvi, former head of Arabic department of Jamia Millia Islamia, said in a function organized on January 9, 2010 to release

the book (Urdu version) written by Dr. Suleiman..

While discussing the contents of the book *Maimaron Ka Jazeerah*, Prof. Nadvi said this book was "a continuation of that long Islamic tradition of fiction righting". The book is an Urdu translation of an Arabic fable (*Jazeeratul Bannain*). Written by Dr. Abdul Hameed Abu Suleiman in Arabic, it has been translated by Dr Nakhat Hussein.

The book, inspired by the Arabic classic *Kalilah wa Dimnah* in its choice of the format of a fable, is a didactic tale that bases its moral teachings on the Quran and the Hadith. Prof. Nadvi dwelt at large upon the evolution of fiction in Arabic over the centuries.

Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, former professor of history at Jamia Millia and presently the editor of *Human Rights Today*, observed that the book likened society to a tripod, whose three legs were family, culture, education-information. "It also says that an individual is significant within the group only, as outside it the individual is rendered irrelevant", he observed.

Prof. Mohammad Noman Khan, former head of the Arabic department, University of Delhi, opined that books on physical and natural sciences should also be translated into Arabic and Urdu as of now very few translation of such works were available in these languages. Talking about intensive translation work in Abbasid Middle East and Renaissance Europe he made the point that translation was a marker of cultural flowering.

The Chairman of Institute of Objective Studies, where the function was organised, released the book. He informed the gathering that more than 50 books had been translated (including the present one) by the IOS from Arabic to Urdu so far. The translation of this book came in for great appreciation by various speakers.

Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani of the Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind placed this book in the context of *Kalila wa Dimna* (which was the inspiration for it) and

Panchtantra, which was the inspiration for *Kalilah wa Dimna*. He also traced the influence of *Katha Sukh Sagar*, another major Sanskrit text, on *Kalilah wa Dimna* to emphasise certain universal human values across civilisations.

In his presidential remarks Prof. Ausaf Ahmad, former senior economist of Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah, and currently editor of the Urdu journal *Mutaaliyaat*, observed that the *Maimaron Ka Jazeerah* should be of enduring interest to today's readers as well as to those who would come in future.

The book has been published by Al-ittihad Publications in collaboration with IOS.

Announcement

The Institute of Objective Studies in collaboration with Indo-Arab Economic Cooperation Forum is organizing an international conference on the theme: "Beyond the Meltdown: Search for Options" on February 3-4, 2010. Here is the concept note.

"Sometimes it's a crisis that forces change."

Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown
– *Time Magazine*

Over six months have passed since the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the demise of Bear Sterns. Newspaper headlines are still all about the downturn and its fallouts – the wealth destroyed and jobs lost. The bad news is still rolling. As national leaders world over at various global fora – the World Economic Forum to G20 – came together to prevent this recession from turning into a full-blown depression – it is time for looking for options to not only restore confidence in the markets, but also rectify the systemic flaws. Amidst all this, there is an even greater need to look at which segments of the economy – which set of consumers, sectors, technologies, strategies would fuel the growth required to halt the current economic contraction.

It is in this context, that we present the following ideas.

- *Infrastructure: Opportunities Abound*

As governments world over announce multi-billion dollar stimulus packages to revive the financial sector, one must not forget that before the revival takes place, it would be imperative to remove infrastructure bottlenecks so that the emerging economies are ready for a high-growth trajectory. Infrastructure indeed would be a prudent long-term investment which would also create the much-needed jobs in the short-run. India had envisaged an investment of \$500 billion (Rs25.65 trillion) in infrastructure for the 11th Plan between 2007 and 2012. The World Bank recently pledged \$2.6 billion to infrastructure development in India. Where would the funds come from? According to the recently released McKinsey report, "Building India: Financing and Investing in Infrastructure", the ports sector achieved 85%, highways 50% and airports 75% of planned capacity. Should India use its abundant foreign reserves to a greater extent in meeting these infrastructural deficits? What regulatory hurdles and public-private partnership models need to be looked at urgently which would give India a head-start once market optimism kicks in?

- *Recession: A Good Time for Entrepreneurs?*

Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Geophysical Service (now Texas Instruments), Polaroid and Revlon were all founded in recessionary times. The same is true for numerous other big and small businesses.

In a survey carried out in eight emerging markets last November for Endeavor (a leading non-profit supporting high-impact entrepreneurs), 85% of the entrepreneurs said they had already felt the impact of the crisis. At the same time, they also predicted that their businesses would grow by 31% and their workforces by 12% this year. They also believed they would hire better in the wake of decreased competition. Entrepreneurs do face financial challenges in such times but the downturn also presents an opportunity to find ways to innovate. Also, entrepreneurs are used to being nimble, responding quickly to market shifts, and

managing cash flow, which helps them weather the downturn better and emerge stronger post-recession. With lower employee-related costs and a decrease in rentals on their side, which sectors should entrepreneurs look at to create viable, sustainable business models? What measures should the government adopt to encourage new start-ups? How do new businesses stay afloat in an environment where spending power is considerably low?

- *Rural Demand: Untapped Market Potential*

It is official that the developed economies of the world would not only experience a mere slowdown but economic contraction that they would take years to recover from. Even in emerging economies of India and China, for whom the recession presents an opportunity to truly arrive at the world stage, urban demand is relatively stagnant and exports markets are contracting. On the brighter side, the rural GDP in these economies has posted significant growth in the last 4-5 years. Companies like Airtel are adding close to 1.68 million customers in rural India monthly, the hinterland does seem to be bucking the trend for the global meltdown. Would the rural demand make up for the sluggishness in the urban areas? How should companies go about tapping the immense opportunity across a plethora of sectors – FMCG, Telecom, Insurance, Health – to name a few – considering the infrastructural impediments? How does Corporate India align their strategies and customise their offerings to connect with the countryside?

- *Islamic Finance: From Niche to Mainstream*

Though Islamic finance still is a relatively small niche within the spectrum of financial services, the opportunity it presents is huge. The Indian government in the last five years has been seriously considering welcoming Islamic banking and finance. Having contributed world over in financing major infrastructural projects, Islamic finance – which is equity-based and not interest-based – could be a significant contributor to sustain India's infrastructural development in times of recession.

Recently, Unit Trust of India launched Shariah-compliant Portfolio Management Services in collaboration with Indo-Arab Economic Co-operation Forum. Unit Trust of India is also having an Overseas Shariah Compliant Fund and by now it has amassed considerable experience in handling Muslim cultural sensitivities in financial matters. Other Asset Management Companies like Reliance Money and Religare have also launched similar Shariah-compliant stocks.

Indeed, as the government is looking for funds to finance various large projects to provide stimulus to the meltdown-hit economy, Islamic banking could help augment fresh funds to the mainstream.

- *Post-Recession: A Search for Greener Options*

As world leaders dwell upon the shortcomings in the global financial architecture and debate on ways to fix the financial system, the recession also provides an opportunity to “green up” businesses and look for cheaper sources of energy. Deutsche Asset Management in its research report on “Investing in Climate Change” observed that the pace at which global warming is accelerating will force governments to invest more in climate change mitigation despite financial setbacks.

The current downturn offers governments world over an excellent opportunity spruce up their spending on ‘green’ infrastructure – both to create jobs and for sustainable development. Investing in carbon trading, cleaner technologies and building a consensus on global environmental norms should be as much a priority as cleaning up the financial mess. With the signing of the US-India nuclear deal, apart from nuclear energy India should also look at tapping the hugely underutilized hydro-power potential. What measures should the government take to initiate greater private participation in looking for greener solutions in infrastructure? How should India adapt the intensive planning done by other Asian giants like Japan and China to

shore up their renewable energy resources?

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CALICUT CHAPTER

International Conference on Islam’s Contribution to World Civilization (16-17, 2010)

Inaugural Session

A two-day International Conference on ‘Islam’s Contribution to World Civilization’ was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), New Delhi in association with IOS Calicut Chapter and the School of Islamic Studies, Manjeri (affiliated to Calicut University) on 16-17 January 2010.

Islam’s Contribution to the world civilization is a continuing and unending process, said Prof. Refaat Ali Khan, Director Academics, IOS. He was inaugurating the two-day International Conference on Islam’s contribution to World Civilization which was organized at MSS Hall, Cherutty Road, Calicut.

There are three major elements in the Muslim contribution to world civilization, he said. While citing examples from history, the former Professor & Head Dept. of History and Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Languages at Jamia Millia Islamia,



Speaker: Z.M. Khan, Secretary General, IOS

New Delhi Prof. R A Khan pointed out that revival of the knowledge of the classical civilization of Greece, India and China is the major element in these contributions. He further said that the

original contribution to science and learning and transmission of the revived and developed science and technology to the East and the West are the other major contributions of Muslims to the world civilization. While agreeing with the viewpoint of Noble Laureate, Amartya Sen, he expressed that “the trend of tolerance and pluralistic thinking” in India had its origin in the advent of Islam and on India “the constitutional secularism and judicially guaranteed multiculturalism” is also a Muslim gift.

In the absence of Dr. Imad Ad Deen Ahmad, Maryland University USA, who was supposed to deliver the keynote address, Mr A.A Vahab, Secretary, IOS, Calicut Chapter, read out the keynote address. In his keynote Dr Imad Ahmad pointed out that “while the mass of mankind has remained completely ignorant of Islamic contributions, the academic world has had two main perspectives. The one that dominates in the West has been that the Islamic civilization was a caretaker civilization that ‘preserved Greek learning’ while the west went through Dark Ages”. He argued, this is, of course, a Eurocentric view and is completely inadequate. Islam did not merely preserve western thought; it discovered and absorbed knowledge from various countries. It synthesized and developed that knowledge and added to it.

Prof. P. Koya, Co-Ordinator, Calicut Chapter IOS, delivered the welcome speech while Abdur Rehiman Baqavi, Principal, School of Islamic Studies, Manjeri, presided over the inaugural session. In his presidential address, Mr. Baqavi said that Islam is the most misunderstood religion in the contemporary world. He expressed the hope that this two-day conference would not only portray the classical contributions of Islam to the world but it would also act as a platform to chalk out strategies to make new and innovative contributions to the contemporary world.

Prof. Z M Khan, former Head Department of Political Science & Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, presently Secretary General IOS, gave a brief profile of the Institute of Objective

Studies, explaining its objectives, initiatives and future plans. His announcement about the establishment of a Civilizational & Cultural Studies Centre at Calicut was received with great applause.

O Abdullah, author and journalist, N P Chekutti, Executive Editor, Thejas Daily, Dr. P Ibrahim of Pondichery University rendered felicitation. A.A Vahab, Secretary, Calicut Chapter IOS proposed vote of thanks.

Dignitaries on the dais also included Dr. Ausaf Ahmad, Financial Secretary, IOS, Prof. S. Jamaluddin, Director Projectos & Research, IOS and Dr. M S Jayaprakash, historian.

I-Business Session

Prof. T.B. Vijay Kumar chaired the session. V.A. Kabeer's presentation was in Malayalam. He spoke on the Islamic concept of knowledge and its impact on the world civilisation. Discussion followed.

II-Business Session

Prof. Z.M. Khan chaired the session. Dr. M.S. Jayaprakash's presentation was in English. He spoke on 'Islam and Social Revolution in Kerala'. He discussed the terms 'palli' (Malayalam word for masjid) and the genesis of 'Mappila'. He argued that the present day Muslims & Christians and the BCs and Dalits belong to one and the same society. Dr. K.M. Anil (University of Calicut) spoke in Malayalam. His theme was 'Influence of Islam on Structural Reform of Kerala Society.

III-Business Session

Mr. Ashraf Kalpetta (Vice Principal, SIS) chaired. Muhammed Velom (Probodhanam weekly) made presentation in Malayalam on the theme 'Islamic Approach to Multi-Religious Society'.

Dr. T. Pavithran (University of Calicut) spoke in Malayalam. His theme was: 'Western Invasion and Islamic Resistance with Special Reference to Kerala'.

17.01.2010

IV-Business Session

Dr. Ausaf Ahmad was in the chair. Prof. A.R. Momin (Mumbai) presented his paper entitled 'Contribution of Islamic Civilization to Globalization'. In his presentation, Prof. Momin made four major points. First, he emphasised that the current discourse on globalisation, which is manifestly Eurocentric or West-Centric, needs to be deconstructed and decentred. Second, he stressed the need to look at globalisation from the perspective of social and cultural history and as the product of cumulative progress and development. Third, he emphasised that a distinction needs to be drawn between modern globalisation and proto-globalisation or incipient globalisation. He added that proto-globalisation involves diverse people and cultures. Fourth, he concluded that Islam made an outstanding contribution to the flowering of the European Renaissance



A view of audience

and to the making of Western Civilisation.

Dr. A.I. Rahmatullah (University of Calicut) spoke in Malayalam on 'Influence of Islam on Literature'. He pointed out how the Holy Qur'an has influenced different languages across the world. Dr. Anil Vallathol presented his paper (in Malayalam) on 'Impact of Islam on Spiritual Revival of Kerala Society'.

T.A. Anees Ahmad (Research Scholar, Centre of Comparative Religions & Civilisations, Jamia Millia Islamia) presented a paper on 'Universal Weds Diverse: Islam's Legacy in Our World – Some Reflections on Qur'an Manifested in Psyche and Space'. He expressed the view that Qur'an is a pluralistic text par excellence. He refuted the modern understanding of the

Qur'anic text which has created an impression that Qur'an is the most exclusivist of all religious scriptures. He argued that the historical Islam gives a completely different picture. He added that modern reformist thinkers have advocated freedom, democracy, human rights and civil society. He summed up by saying that diversity is the rule and that the sustaining of diversity should be one objective of Islamic law.

V-Business Session

Dr. K. M. Mohamed was in the chair. In this session two papers were presented. First, Mr. C. Davood presented his paper on 'Islam and Urbanisation'. He pointed out towards a reverse trend that fed up with the tensions of the urban life, people are moving to villages to live a more peaceful life.

Then, Dr. Raja Mohamad presented his paper on 'Maritime History of Muslims of Tamil Nadu'. He pointed out that the hinterland capital cities of the ancient rulers in the Tamil country attracted the Arab Muslim traders and the new converts. Trade was accompanied by missionary work. Muslim population grew in and around the Tamil cities. He said that the social condition of Tamil country was favourable for the continuous spread of Islam. Traditional maritime communities in the coastal area embraced Islam in large numbers. He also pointed out that the influence of the Tamil Muslim merchants impacted on the political fortunes of the Malacca from the 15th century. As a result, the trade of the Tamil Muslim merchants spread in the South Asian countries. This supremacy was shaken by the intrusion of the Portuguese towards the end of the 15th century.

VI-Business Session

Prof. Omanoor Muhammed was in the chair. There were two presentations in this last business session.

First, Mr. A.P. Kunhamu presented his paper (in Malayalam) on 'Contribution of Islam to Indian

Philosophy'. In this paper the scholar pointed out in particular the influence of Islam on Advaitya philosophy. Prof. Syed Jamaluddin presented his paper on 'How Ideas Propelled Islamic Civilisation'. He explained how Muslim conquests in Spain, India and Central Asia were consolidated by the concerns of peace management and how Islamic ideas taken from the Holy Qur'an and *hadith* helped in creating and spreading Islamic civilisation.

Valedictory Session

The session was chaired by Dr. Fazal Gafur (General Secretary, All India Muslim Educational Society). In his presidential address Dr. Fazal opined that the Message of Islam has the same relevance in our times as it had at any point of time in the past. He said Islam cherishes the values of democracy, humanism, pluralism, tolerance, liberalism, peaceful co-existence, etc., and he urged upon the need to revisit these values. He said that he was not aware of the scale of this international conference otherwise he would have hosted the delegates at his place. He offered to sponsor a similar kind of IOS conference/seminar in one of his colleges which are 22 in all. He also volunteered to collaborate with the IOS in academic programmes.

In his valedictory address, Prof. Ausaf Ahmad spoke with particular reference to Islam's contribution to the management of economy. He discussed the evolution of fiscal structure during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), sources of revenue in the early Islamic state, like *zakah*, *kharaj* (land revenue), *jizya* (poll tax), *khums* (one fifth of the booty), *ushoor* (custom duty), *sadaqat*, *kiraal ard* (land revenue), etc. Then, he discussed the heads of expenditure. His main hypothesis was that while Islam encouraged reading and writing in all walks of life, including the commercial sector, its more significant contribution was towards management of economy.

Dr. Ausaf Ahmad concluded by saying that the fiscal apparatus during the early days of Islam is still capable of delivering the goods in a modern industrial society, a theme which needs further elaboration.

Prof. Syed Jamaluddin presented a report of the proceedings of the six business sessions. Mr. Ashraf Kalpetta,

Vice-Principal, School of Islamic Studies, Manjeri presented vote of thanks.

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Another big problem afflicting higher education in the country is its administration. We often see that college/university administrations are at loggerheads with their teaching or non-teaching employees. The problem is that many university administrations attempt to curb internal democracy and impose things which are whimsical, even illegal. Such tendencies, as can be imagined, are not good for India's higher education sector. Such a situation would only discourage merit and promote sycophancy and mediocrity. The condition worsens more when the UGC breaks its own rule and thus encourages absolutism in colleges and universities.

Internal democracy is the panacea which every university therefore must promote if it has to excel in higher education. Democracy's role is to promote interaction and healthy debate among various sections of a university fraternity. Democratic discussions, when conducted with sincerity, never lead to impasse: instead they open windows of opportunities, promote understanding and co-operation and, above all, ensure the supremacy of the rule of law.

Absolutism and breaking rules can never take a university to greatness.

SUBSCRIPTION
Annual : Rs. 20/- \$ 5
Five Years:Rs. 75/- \$ 15

IOS Calendar 2010

The IOS calendar 2010 has been published. Agents, shop-keepers and others may place their order with the IOS Headquarters.

The four-page calendar has the following features:

- Page 1** World Spread of Islam (By 1st Decade of 21st Century)
- Page 2** World Health (Life Expectancy) 1990 (A Comparison of 1990-2006)
- Page 3** India: Urban Poverty 2004-5 (In Percentage) A Comparison of various Social Groups
- Page 4** India: Rural Poverty 2004-5 (In Percentage) A Comparison of various Social Groups

The calendar may also be obtained from:

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Higher Education in India

by Ishtiyaque Danish

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The term, university is said to have been derived from the old French word, 'universite' or from Latin 'universitas'. Both, the French and the Latin words mean 'the whole' which is more or less a translation of the Arabic word, *Jam-e- or Jamia* used for a high level institution of education, learning and research. The Arabic Jam-e-, interestingly also means 'inclusive'. That *Jam-e- or Jamia* is the place where all disciplines and subjects as well as views and ideas are taught. The term, university also contains the same meaning. In a sense it can be taken as a compound word consisting of 'universe' and 'city' and thus it may mean a place which includes the entire universe in itself. Understood either way, a university stands for a place of higher learning and academic research. It is a place where broad-minded qualified teachers, described as heirs to the prophets in Islamic tradition, impart quality education to equally eager and enthusiastic students. A university, by its definition and nature, has to be open, inclusive and accommodative, tolerant of diverse views, a house of varied cultures, colours, ethnicities and nationalities, all bound together by the common desire for knowledge. Here the teacher and the taught are to be highly motivated to excel both in acquisition and promotion of knowledge.

The founding fathers of India had a grand vision about the universities of free India. They were highly conscious of the great role that universities and centres of higher education were to play in ensuring all round development of the country. Guided by urgency in some areas, they also set up specialized institutes and councils. It makes a sad commentary, however, that over the years they became India's most pampered institutions overshadowing the universities. It was the victory of the small over the big, and understandably the consequences have been disastrous. There has been no financial - academic auditing of the pampered institutes and councils but there is a growing impression that many of them have largely been India's feeder institutions for foreign universities, a reality normally described as brain drain.

How to redeem the situation is a million dollar question. We have very few critical and creative thinkers who carry influence

with the policy-makers. The political class has just begun to realize the gravity of the matter but some of its initial steps such as conferring 'deemed university' status on private institutions have backfired. It sounds good that there should be co-operation between the government and the private sector to overcome the deficit in higher education. But, as the saying goes, everything that shines is not necessarily a gold coin.

The matter needs further clarification. Some private universities have no doubt excelled in USA and elsewhere. But the economic situation and higher education realities, as they obtain in India, are very different. There is no gap between the standards of the feeder schools and universities in advanced countries whereas in India it is a big problem. As a result the universities do not get the high quality stuff which is so essential for achieving excellence. Another big problem is that private money is available for market-oriented courses only, for the wealthy parents want their wards to get an education that gives them financial rewards quickly.

In India, therefore, the government intervention in higher education is essential. For, a country of grave economic inequalities that India happens to be, cannot afford to increase the cost of higher education by making it private. The private sector must be welcome to open universities of excellence which we all need and desire for. But what we saw recently was that many private universities were eager to make money than redeem or promote higher education in the country. This trend is rightly being checked and curbed by the government now.

The private sector interested in higher education must be first impressed upon that there is a sea difference between a university and an education shop. They must also be told clearly that education must remain education and should not be converted into a profit-making industry. The government is duty bound to regulate higher education with a view to ensuring equality in opportunities of higher education. The government also must ensure that both state and private universities follow the rules which the UGC

and HRD Ministry lay down from time to time.

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