



IOS NEWSLETTER

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Thought for the Month

Just in the same way,
Whenever We sent a Warner
Before you to any people,
The wealthy ones among them
Said: "We found our fathers
Following a certain religion,
And we will certainly
Follow in their footsteps"
He said: "What!
Even if I brought you
Better guidance than that
Which you found
Your fathers following?"
They said: "For us,
We deny that which you
(prophets)
Are sent with."

Al-Quran- 43:23-24

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FOCUS

From the Muslim perspective, the most important hurdle in the appreciation of Islam in the contemporary Western society is its attitude toward God. In a society which has discarded God, can religion- any religion- have any room? Yet, it is a contradiction of the modern West that while apparently it maintains an irreligious posture, it remains deeply rooted in the rituals of a Christianity which has hardly anything to do with the noble messenger of God, son of virgin Mary, upon whom be peace.

But our concern here is with those who have realized that there is more to life than what the materialistic world has offered. There is need to open certain avenues to Islam for these seekers truth.

An average educated westerner in search of genuine Islam still finds it impossible to have access to sources which can tell him or her what it is all about. Most try to go directly to the Quran and after struggling with this or that translation for a while, come back empty handed. They fail to benefit from the Book because the Quran does not communicate with a non-receptive heart. Likewise, there are very few avenues open to them which lead to the Prophet. Most biographies of the Prophet, written by Muslims, presuppose a receptivity on the part of the reader which is not present in this case. The veneration which a Muslim has for the Prophet becomes the first stumbling block for the Western reader who lives in a society which has simply forgotten such things.

What is needed is a new, large scale effort in the sciences of the Quran (*ulum al-Quran*)- an effort which will help western readers of the Quran to gain from the Divine Book. Such an effort shall take into consideration the prevailing conditions in the West, the intellectual make up of the perceptive readers and their social and moral conditions. Likewise, meaningful avenues should be opened for access to the life and practice of the noble messenger.

There is work to be done in removing certain prejudices toward Islam which forestall any serious effort by Westerners to understand the religion of one quarter of the humanity. Muslim response to the question of polygamy, status of women, terrorism and other related issues has not answered these concerns adequately. There is no need for the apologetic literature so characteristic of an ingrained inferiority complex. Instead what is needed is a learned discourse on these issues by well qualified Muslims in a language which contemporary Westerners can understand.

Islam is meant to be a religion for all humanity and for all times, therefore Allah must have incorporated enough flexibility in it so that an Alaskan can practice it as easily as an Arab of the desert. What is needed is *ijtihad*, in the spirit of early centuries when the Muslim scholars faced a formidable task of explaining the religion to people as diverse as a former Hindu of Sindh and a worshipper of fire from Khursan. When Muslim scholars discuss questions related to the direction of prayer which would be faced by a future human settlement on moon, they have already opened the door of *ijtihad*, which allows them to answer questions related to more immediate problems of prayer timings in those zones of the earth where the sun does not set for six months. It is this spirit of *ijtihad* which can show positive results in creating a better understanding between Muslims and the West.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Discussion on The Communal Violence Bill-2009: Development & Some Obstacles

The controversial bill on communal violence that was passed by Rajya Sabha in 2005 is yet to become a law. The reason for the delay has been strong objections from human rights and Muslim organizations. The bill kept in pending five years ago was revised in 2009 and then a few cosmetic changes were made. However, the groups concerned are still not satisfied. They still want crucial changes to achieve the real purpose.

A discussion held on Communal Violence Bill 2009 at the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi on July 24, 2010 was part of a chain of efforts made by the All India Milli Council (AIMC) and Institute of Objective Studies (IOS). The participants rejected the bill terming it purposeless in its present form and unanimously demanded amendment in it to make it effective to control the violence and provide justice to the affected people.

Opening the discussion, renowned economist Dr Abu Saleh Sharif said that Communal Violence Bill was an appreciable step towards assurance of security to the lives and properties of the poor people generally affected during communal violence. "However, it will be dangerous if the present Bill in its present form becomes act because it will not curb the malaise but will make oppressor more powerful and increase injustice with the oppressed section of the people," he said. He said the bill was passed by Rajya Sabha in 2005 but in the wake of the severe opposition from the civil society it could not become a law. In 2009 it was revised but it still could not satisfy its opponents. The civil society wanted a new draft, he said.

While discussing the partisan role of the judiciary, former Police official and Agra University vice chancellor Manzoor Ahmed said who could deny the fact that eleven persons were killed

inside the Meerut and Fatehgarh prisons after the Meerut riots of 1987 while they were still in the judicial custody. He emphasized upon the point that the actual problem was of political will and determination. He opined that in such incidents sanction from the government for initiating cases against the officers concerned should not be needed, he asserted. In this connection, he recalled that permission was sought to initiate legal action against 70 persons in the incidents of Maliana and Hashimpura but sanction was made only against 19 persons and after much difficulty the case could be transferred to the courts of Ghaziabad and Delhi.

He cited the example of former



L to R: Mr. John Dayal, Prof. Manzoor Ahmad, Mr. Y.H. Muchala, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and Dr. Abusaleh Shariff

Gujarat minister of state for home affairs Amit Shah. He held responsible the legislators too along with bureaucrats and administrators. He also raised the issues of cases pending and rehabilitation and compensation of the internally displaced persons.

In his speech, noted journalist and civil rights activist John Dayal appreciated the UPA government to draft the bill to provide a strong weapon to the minority against communal minded people but he stressed to revise the bill. "It is a matter of concern that bill is silent on action against spreading the communal poison among people which leads to the violence," he added.

He alleged in Kandhamal (Orissa) the country's Constitution was defunct for 40 days. He said it was ironic that the persons known for communal mentalities were appointed as judges of the special courts to deal with the cases of communal violence.

Speaking on the occasion, Delhi ACP (Retd) and Treasurer of AIMC Mauji Khan said: "If police and security forces sincerely take action, violence can be controlled within 24 hours."

Recalling so many cases dealt by himself, Khan said he himself dealt on many occasions sternly and prevented communal violence.

An NRI working in Kuwait narrated his own gory tale to elaborate how an innocent person was sometimes harassed and spent a number of days in the custody and demanded that a person should be taken into custody only after full investigation.

Rafeeqe Ahmed, Secretary, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, said such kind of a discussion was a must before its taking shape of a legislation. According to him, it was necessary to make solid and collective effort before giving it a right direction. Highlighting the motive behind organizing the discussion, Dr Manzoor Alam, General Secretary, AIMC said: "The purpose of the program is to ponder over the communal violence bill seriously so that we can play our roles as a responsible member of

the civil society and make our contribution to curb the communal hatred and spread the justice and truth all over the country." He also suggested for constituting a working committee to ponder over the issue.

In his presidential remarks, well known legal luminary Yusuf Hatim Muchhala said that the communal violence bill was of extraordinary importance. "Therefore, there is a dire need for a comprehensive and non-partisan home work over it. Only then we would be able to check it," he asserted.

The discussion was participated by intellectuals, academics, social activists and representatives of various organizations. They included Prof K A Siddique Hassan, Naib Ameer, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind; Maulana Neyaz Ahmad Farooqi and Abdul Hameed Nomani from Jamiat Ulema Hind; Maulana Abdul Wahab Khilji, Assistant General Secretary, AIMC; Prof Z M Khan, General Secretary, IOS; Prof Ausaf Ahmed, Editor, Urdu Quarterly

Mutalleat; Prof Jamaluddin, Editor, **Human Rights Today**; Ilyas Malik, convener of Jamia Minority Coordination Committee; Nand Lal, Dalit leader; Prof Sanghasen Singh, an expert on Buddhism; B L Joshi, social activist; Sikh leader R N Chhatwal, Prof Haseena Hashia, Jamia Millia Islamia academic and woman activist; Dr Syed Abdul Bari Shabnam Subhani, Editor, Urdu monthly Milli Ittehaad; Ilyas Pasha, social activist; Mohammed Yunus; Feroz Ghazi, Advocate; Maulana Gulzar Qasmi from Meerut AIMC; Dr Parwez Mian, Er M

Imdadullah Jauhar and Mirza Zaki Ahmed Beg from Delhi AIMC. The program was conducted by Prof Afzal Wani.

Lecture on Campaign for Electoral Reform in India

Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS, delivered a lecture on “electoral reform” at a seminar organized by Campaign for Electoral Reform in India” in Bangalore on July 31, 2010. Mr. M.C. Raj, national coordinator, “Campaign for Electoral Reform in India” and Mr. Dwarkanath, Chairman, Backward Classes Commission, Karnataka were present on the dais.

Dr. Alam spoke at length on various aspects of electoral reform in the country. He emphasized that electoral process was a major means for empowering the people especially the backward and deprived sections of the society. Unfortunately the electoral process has not been able to empower the people as much as it ought to have done, he said. The Muslim community has especially been underrepresented in Parliament and state legislatures due to several reasons. For centuries the Dalits have been oppressed and they do need reservation to reach parliament and state assemblies. However, we have to analyse if it has achieved the desired goal. There has been a tendency that the constituencies with substantial Muslim population are reserved for SCs and STs. This practice has neither helped the Dalits nor the

Muslims as has been pointed out by the Sachar Committee Report. Now seats are being reserved for women and the Muslims have genuine apprehension that



A view of the audience

it would further undermine or reduce their strength in legislative bodies. The best way to solve the problem and serve all the concerned is to introduce proportional representation system in the country. Vested interests would create all kinds of problems but the deprived and the marginalized, the Dalits and the Muslims must unite to work for reforming the electoral system of the country in order to end their all round backwardness, said Dr. Alam.

Announcements

Silver Jubilee Celebrations

I take this opportunity to introduce you the **Institute of Objective Studies**,



L to R: Mr. M.C. Raj, Mr. Dwarkanath, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam & Mrs. Jyoti Raj

New Delhi, which was established in the year 1986 with the aim of undertaking purposive research and studies on matters and issues of concern for peace,

development, progress and democracy leading to create a humane society, based on egalitarianism and justice. It has gained recognition in all relevant quarters at national and international plane for promoting research, conducting surveys, publishing books and journals in areas of national and international concern and pressing challenges of civil society, actively participating in social welfare, educational and economic fields. The Institute is an NGO in consultative status (Roster) with the ECOSOC of the United Nations.

It is quite encouraging that

the expectancy level of people from within and outside India has been rising at a rapid pace that proves a visible impact of the IOS activities on society at large. Most prominent among them are the areas of research, conduct of surveys, publications; advocacy; outreach channels; networking and linkages with other like-minded NGOs/organizations; institution and conferment of award like IOS Shah Waliullah Award and IOS Lifetime Achievement Award; scholarships; on-line presence on websites and services rendered by various service units at the headquarter at New Delhi along with six chapters as regional centres in different parts of India. In the process, government agencies and noted NGOs have shown active interest and established viable linkages with the Institute in many areas which has added to the recognition of its role and services.

Islamic perspectives and problems and issues related to Muslims constitute the core areas of its activities. International issues, national and community centred view points are special areas of concern and analysis of the Institute.

It gives us pleasure to inform you that the Institute would be completing 25 years of its existence in the year 2011. To mark its silver jubilee year, the Institute has decided to organise a series of programmes from April 2011 to April 2012 at Delhi as well as other major cities of the country. The

following programmes have been prepared/ planned:

I. CONFERENCES & PROGRAMMES

1. Theme of the IOS Silver Jubilee Opening Programme 'Towards Knowledge, Development and Peace – Outlining Roadmaps for the Future'

On April 15-17, 2011 at New Delhi

2. Theme of the IOS Silver Jubilee Concluding Programme 'Minority Identities and Rights: Challenges and Prospects in an Unfolding Global Scenario'

On April 14-16, 2012 at New Delhi

In addition to the above opening and concluding programmes at New Delhi, the following 10 programmes shall be organized at major Indian cities as per the details given below.

1. 'Islamic Culture and Art'

On May 13-15, 2011 at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

2. 'Interest-free Institutional Mechanism (Banking, Finance and Insurance) for promoting Investment'

on June 3-5, 2011 at Kashmir/Ahmadabad (Gujarat)

3. 'Judiciary, Ethics and Delivery System'

On July 8-10, 2011 at Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

4. 'Global Trends of Education: Review and Options'

On September 16-18, 2011 at Patna (Bihar)

5. 'Power of Media in a Globalising World'

On October 14-16, 2011 at Bangalore (Karnataka)

6. 'Good Governance in a Globalising World'

On November 18-20, 2011 at Kolkata (West Bengal)

7. 'Challenges Before Youth in Contemporary World'

On December 9-11, 2011 at Chennai (Tamilnadu)

8. 'Empowering Women: Paradigm, Sources and Methodologies (In the light of Maqasid-e-Shariah)

On January 6-8, 2012 at Calicut (Kerala)

9. 'Peace and Progress: Role of Religions'

On February 10-12, 2012 at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (UP)

10. 'Worldview of Development: Challenges and Alternative Paradigm'

On March 10-12, 2012 at Pune (Maharashtra)

II. REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

The following would be brought out on the occasion:

- Release of **IOS 25-years Report** in English, Arabic and Urdu.
- Release of important publications
- Release of Special number on minorities of *Mutaleaat* (into Urdu and Arabic) and Journal of Objective Studies (JOS), Religion and Law Review (RLR), Human Rights Today (HRT); and IOS Newsletter
- Souvenir containing the following:
 - Messages
 - Impressions
 - About IOS
 - Selected articles
 - Associated persons (present and earlier including foreigners) will be included with their photographs and a para about them.
 - Advertisement from individual/companies from within India and abroad

III. A **film** on the activities and programmes taken up by the IOS during last 25- years would be released on the occasion.

IV. **Mementos** to be presented to dignitaries on the occasion.

V. A **special website** for this occasion on IOS website.

VI. An **exhibition** to portray the journey of IOS and art, calligraphy, paintings, books, and manuscripts (*makhutut*) shall be organised.

VII. An **essay competition** for college as well as Madaris level (up to the age of 40 years) under the programme for youth will be organised on the occasion.

VIII. A **certificate of merit** will be awarded to selected persons (Muslims and non-Muslims) across the country in recognition of their extraordinary services in different spheres of social, educational and welfare of the minorities and other underprivileged sections of the Indian society.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Future of Faith in the Age of Globalisation

18-19 September 2010

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Organised by

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS, UK)

The Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)

In Cooperation With

- The HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge
- The Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster
- The Center for Advanced Studies, Sarajevo
- The Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University

Objectives

Globalization has unleashed unprecedented forces in the spheres of politics, culture, economics, science and technology, and international relations. First and foremost, the evolution of the nation-state and its institutions as the most dominant dynamic in global politics and economics – and with national and international security as its overriding interest or motive – poses a major challenge to all faith communities. Second, various dynamics (the homogenization of culture, the operation of market forces, the continuous advent and proliferation of new technologies [particularly in the sphere of communication]), have created a new form of "global" consumerism that has its own logic of operation and secularized value system. These unprecedented dynamics challenge all

faith communities and, arguably, the future of faith itself.

The objectives are threefold: (a) to explore faith-based perspectives that may help in understanding and responding to globalization; (b) to identify common grounds among faith communities that may constitute a basis for collaborative efforts toward globalization, particularly in the areas of education, peace building, poverty eradication, healthcare, international finance, the environment; and (c) to encourage new and critical thinking by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in relation to the issues and challenges of globalization.

Fundamental Questions

1. What is new about the phenomenon of globalization? How does it differ from previous experiences of globalization?
2. What can a faith-based perspective offer to understanding the dynamics and consequences of globalization? Specifically, can the Abrahamic traditions offer intellectual perspectives that are relevant to it?
3. Does globalization have its own moral imperative, derived from its logic of operation? If not, from where does its moral code come?
4. Is a faith-based moral order for global politics, culture, economy, and finance possible? Can the Abrahamic and other religious traditions that claim universality meet all of the moral needs of people living in a globalized society?
5. If such a faith-based moral order is possible, what types of engagement are needed to create synergy between faith communities and a new synthesis – or common ground – to realize this goal? Specifically, what can such an order offer vis-à-vis religious and political extremism, terrorism, drug and human trafficking, social justice, and the nation-state's transgressions of individual, community, and minority group rights?
6. Can faith-based moral alternatives be considered viable for the new financial architecture as well as for production and consumption patterns in overcoming the excesses

and moral deficiency of the current global economic order and financial system?

7. How can faith-based scholarship contribute to the critique of contemporary globalization? Is there an alternative? What practical steps can such scholars take toward "global" engagement?
8. What is the future of faith in relation to the phenomenon of globalization?

Submission of Abstracts

Please write to admin.amssuk@gmail.com with cc to alshing200@msn.com and cns@bih.net.ba for other details.

The organizers will announce, by email, which papers will be included in the conference program by the end of May 2010. Selection of all the papers will be based on quality and relevance to the conference themes.

Registration and Further Information

Attendance is by registration only. For further information, please contact: admin.amssuk@gmail.com, AMSS (UK), P.O. Box 126, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2UD, UK, www.amssuk.com

The 39th Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists of North America (AMSS)

Cosmopolitan Islam: Globalization, Transnationalism and Muslim Diasporas

Cosponsored by:

DePaul University – Islamic world Studies Program & The Journal of Islamic Law and Culture Chicago, IL, September 25, 2010

Islam and Muslim communities face many divides that are reshaping western concepts of nation, citizenship, and belonging, as well as attendant possibilities to construct more explicit cosmopolitan visions of Islam dealing with the basis for Islamic social justice, liberatory spirituality, and cosmopolitan ethics. We invite scholarly papers on the following subthemes.

- Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Identities, Solidarities, and Social Movements

- Muslim Diasporas; Identities, Politics, Challenges, and Possibilities
- Globalization, Empire and the "War on Terror"
- Islam, Human Rights, Social Justice, and Peace
- Mediating Difference: Dialogical Encounters
- Islam, National/Global Citizenship, and Challenges of Governance
- Race, Securitization, Immigration, and State Policies
- Multiculturalism, Religion, and the Public Sphere
- International Development/Peace and Conflict/Refugee Studies
- Bases for Cosmopolitan Identification in the Qur'an and Sunnah
- Manifestations of and Challenges to Cosmopolitanism in Classical Islamic Civilization
- Past and Present Forms of Cultural Pluralism and Religious Coexistence
- Cosmopolitan sentiments in Classical Islamic Poetry and Mysticism
- Islamic Evaluations of the Western cosmopolitan and Humanist Traditions
- Construction of Contemporary Muslim Identity in Muslim Majority and Diaspora Communities (e.g. Puritanism, Hybridity, Traditionalism)
- Gender and Cosmopolitan Identity
- Muslim Responses to Nationalism, Racism, and Tribalism
- Transnational/Diasporic Media

Abstracts: May 31, 2010 (300 words). Accepted proposals announced within 10 days.

Final Papers: September 1, 2010

E-mail: Conference Coordinator, Ms. Layla Sein, conferences@amss.org

Program Chair:

Prof. Aminah B. McCloud
DePaul University, Chicago, IL

AMSS is open to Muslims and non-Muslims. For information on events and conference updates, visit www.amss.org

Special Issue on Tradition and Modernity in Muslim Countries

Muslims, similar to other people, cannot escape the process of modernization and the growing

integration and interconnectedness of people and societies around the world. This process can influence people in one of two ways; either, as argued by Fukuyama leading to "... an increasing homogenization of all human societies, regardless of their historical origins or cultural inheritances" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xiv), or people may become even more aware of their differences as seen in the revival of traditional values and/or a rediscovery of indigenous cultures and religion.

The last decade has witnessed a mushrooming of Islamic movements that view themselves as counterforces to cultural domination by the West. While the goal of these groups is to assert their religious identity in the face of what they regard as imperializing ideas like modernization and secularism, many have also turned to radicalism, especially in circumstances where moderate ways of responding are perceived to be ineffective in producing results.

Many Muslim societies are presently caught at such a crossroad between the traditional and the modern, where the old institutions and values are increasingly being brought in contact with modern forces. But, how they have dealt or are dealing with this situation depends on many factors.

This special issue of *Intellectual Discourse* aims to publish papers that will examine how Muslims and Muslim countries cope with changes brought about by modernity to be in line with traditions. The following are some subthemes that can be used as guides:

- Tradition and modernity from the Islamic perspective
- Islam and secularization
- Islamizing modernity or modernizing Islam?
- Responses of Islamic movements to modernity
- Effects of modernity on people's well-being
- Persistence of tradition in the face of modernity
- Modernity and the crisis of identity
- State and religion in the age of modernity

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Author Guidelines and Submission Preparation Checklist:

<http://iiu.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/islam/about/submissions>

Deadlines for Submission: 31st December 2010

Expected Publication: June 2011

Book Review

Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power by Yudi Latif, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008, 544 pages.

Yudi Latif's *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power* provides a broad, interdisciplinary, and long-term study of Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia from the late nineteenth until the early twenty-first century. The book consists of seven chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion.

In Chapter 1, "Introduction," the author discusses his main concepts, previous studies, and his interactive approach and methodology. He distinguishes between "intelligentsia" and "intellectuals," noting that "the term 'intelligentsia' referred to a social stratum and indicated the 'collective response' of a particular collective identity, as a reflection of common educational criteria, psycho-sociographics, value system, habitus and collective memory" (p. 16). Research for both his masters and doctoral degrees contributed to this text.

Chapter 2, "The Formation of the Intelligentsia," focuses on the intelligentsia during the first two decades of the twentieth century while providing the historical context of late-nineteenth-century Dutch colonial rule. He describes how "modernist" and "clerical" intelligentsia expanded the public sphere and formed several proto-nationalist associations.

In Chapter 3, "Making Indonesia, Making Intellectual Political Traditions," Latif describes the second generation of the modern intelligentsia during the 1920s-1940s within the historical context of late colonial rule, the Japanese interregnum, and early political independence. He notes that the intelligentsia, responding to the

increasingly repressive "law and order" colonial state of the 1930s, began imagining "Indonesia" in opposition to the "Netherlands East Indies." Japanese mobilization of militarized organizations facilitated greater link between the politicized intelligentsia and the uneducated masses, which led to the growth of popular solidarity and nationalism. Latif writes that although the archipelago's seven political traditions (viz., Islamic reformist-modernism, Islamic traditionalism, communism, socialism, secular nationalism, and Christian and military secularism) represent significant fragmentation in the Muslim as well as the secular camps, it is exactly these two camps that were often forced to unite within competitive power struggles. Moreover, the marginalization of political Islam under Dutch and Japanese rule left the Muslim camp behind in modern educational and political schooling and at a loss in pre-and post-independence power struggles. Thus, he argues the Muslim camp developed a "minority complex" and spent the rest of the twentieth century trying to Islamize the intelligentsia.

Chapter 4, "Intelligentsia as the Political Elite of the New Nation," discusses the turbulent period from 1945-65, which saw a brief armed struggle for independence, a failed attempt at parliamentary democracy, and the collapse of the first postcolonial state under the secular nationalists' leadership. Latif argues that contrary to Marxist expectations, it was the secular and clerical intelligentsia hailing from various class backgrounds, rather than the dominant economic class, that became independent Indonesia's dominant political elite. The secular nationalist camp's leadership, defeating the Muslim proposal of establishing a formal state-Shari'ah relationship, set out to implement parliamentary democracy. He posits that this "democratic experiment" eventually failed because the lower class and less educated people were not included, the tiny political elite was deeply divided, and collective social learning was absent. He describes how contesting political traditions became power struggles and led to the rise of the secular military intelligentsia. This modern-educated military camp and the Indonesian Communist Party supported President Sukarno as he replaced the embattled parliamentary system with the more authoritarian project of "guided democracy." Rather than emphasizing the shady military maneuvers involved in this

transfer of power to the Suharto (New Order) regime, he elaborates upon the unprecedented growth of Muslim student organizations, asserting that they “played a very decisive role in the student demonstrations of the mid-1960s leading up to the fall of [the] Sukarno regime” (p. 307).

In Chapter 5, “The New Order’s Repressive-Developmentalism and the Islamic Intellectual Response,” Latif concentrates on the period roughly from 1966 to the late 1980s, noting that the military intelligentsia, partnering with socialist and Christian intellectuals, dominated the New Order regime. He observes that the hegemonic military intelligentsia stressed aggressive economic development and modernization and repressed all perceived threats to this project. Islamic political parties were disbanded and reorganized, and Muslim organizations were pressured to adopt the state ideology as their basis. Latif opines that the second-generation intelligentsia largely opted for non-cooperation by furthering their Islamizing goals via education and *dakwah*, while the third-generation was divided into what he labels the proponents of *dakwah* and “renewal.” Although many members of the Muslim intelligentsia considered themselves part of the “renewal” movement, including those in the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, Latif designates only those who espoused “the agenda of liberalizing Islamic thinking” as “the renewal movement” (p. 358). Rather than explicating the intelligentsia’s cultural codes, he propounds this problem by labeling *dakwah* activists as “reactionary Islamists” or “moderate-reactionary Islamists.” Nevertheless, he believes that the *dakwah* and “renewal” movements found common ground in Islamic spiritualism, art, and economics.

Chapter 6, “The Rise and Decline of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia (ICMI),” discusses the new Order regime’s last decade and the beginning of the reform era. Although ICMI’s rise was significant in making the Muslim intelligentsia’s improved educational position, the study would have been better served by a broader examination of the various sectors during this time period, quite notably the military intelligentsia who remained dominant. Latif concludes by summarizing his findings of synchronic and diachronic change and continuity within and across six generations of Indonesia’s Muslim intelligentsia. His broad, interdisciplinary, and interactive approach makes this text

very appealing to historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and those involved in cultural, religious, and Southeast Asian studies.

Reviewed by Timothy P. Daniels

Contd. from page 1

There is an urgent need for the establishment of institutions, both in the West and in the Muslim world, which have religious scholars, natural and social scientists, people trained in humanities, artists and architects, computer scientists, experts in information technology and other branches of science. Such institutions will produce a generation of scholars who will be able to address issues most likely to cause a clash in the next century between Muslims and the West- and help to avert it.

(From Muslims and the West: Encounter and Dialogue by Z I Ansari & John E. Esposito, pp.271- 273)

Contd. from page-8

Can we say that her understanding of the Quran or of the *Hijab* is incomplete because she does not wear the *Burqa* of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India? Obviously we cannot insist that only our understanding of the Holy text was perfect. The point to be made is that the soul and spirit of a text are more important and should never be imprisoned in narrow regional understandings. Islam is a universal religion and can afford diversity in the shapes and designs of *Hijab*. The point is that it has to be observed but we should not insist on one universal understanding of *Hijab*.

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Text, Context and Culture

by Ishtiyaque Danish

The views expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the Newsletter (editor)

Well-crafted and meaningfully written texts have often caused problems for common intelligence. They defy a universally acceptable understanding and are interpreted variously in different contexts and cultures. Contexts and cultures thus play a role in determining meanings of texts.

It is universally acknowledged that knowing the context of a text is always extremely helpful in understanding its real implications. Our commentators of the Holy Quran have developed a whole 'science' of *Shan-e-Nuzul*, that is, the context in which a *Surah* or a verse was revealed. *Shan-e-Nuzul* has always played a vital role in interpreting the Holy Quran. It has helped the modern commentators as well, though some have preferred to rely more on the text than the context.

Cultures and the customs of the society are equally helpful in explaining texts, religious or secular. Language is closely related with culture and custom and therefore the two often provide a background for understanding a text. The Quranic injunction to men, "Live with them (wives/women) in accordance with *Maaruf*", clearly indicates the importance of cultural customs. *Maaruf* is what is regarded as good or fair by the society. It may also be what the human nature considers to be fair. Either way, it means the good aspects of culture and custom of a given society.

The Quran has given clear instructions as to how a woman should behave, live or lead her life.

The Quran has also prescribed a dress code for Muslim woman which is known as *Hijab*. There is no detailed description of what *Hijab* is or ought to be. The Quran has spoken about *Khimar* and *Jilbab*. *Khimar*, in the Arabia of the Prophet's time was a piece of cloth used by women to cover their bosoms/ chests. *Jilbab* was a gown worn by women over their normal clothes. It is not clear if *Jilbab* included the covering of head or not. But it was a normal practice even in pre- Islamic Arabia that women used to cover their heads with a cloth. With the passage of time it perhaps took the shape of what is called *Burqa* or *Niqab*. When Islam spread out of Arabia to Iran, India, Egypt and North Africa, the Muslims living in these regions understood and observed *Hijab* according to the customs of their societies and time. They did not necessarily follow the Arabian *Jilbab* or *Khimar*.

Iranian women, Muslims since the earliest time of Islam, do not veil their face but cover their bodies with a loose cloak over their normal/routine dresses. The Sudanese women have their own *Hijab* but they shake their hands with men whether relatives or otherwise. Similarly the *Burqa* used mainly in Northern India including Pakistan was never the standard *Hijab* for Muslim women in Kerala, Bengal and Assam. The people in Kerala believe that Islam crossed the Arabian sea and reached their shore during the time of the Prophet (pbuh) and some companions are believed to have preached in the area. Should they believe that their understanding of

Hijab is inferior to that of Northern India where Islam reached quite late?

It is obvious that cultural customs have played a role in shaping people's understanding of *Hijab* in various parts of the world. The diversity in the shapes of *Hijab* is not against Islam. It is natural. One must understand the fact that a universal religion like Islam cannot afford to be rigid; it has to be flexible and liable to slight changes provided they do not defy the basic tenets of Islam. Take the example of a lady living in a remote place in Europe or America which has no Muslim at all. She, however, finds the Holy Quran, reads it and is so impressed that she embraces Islam. She reads the verse urging believers to talk to the wives of the Prophet from behind a curtain and abandons her habit of freely meeting and mixing with men. She reads about *Jilbab* and begins to wear a cloak that covers her body from the shoulder to the feet. She reads about *Khimar* and puts a cloth on her chest. She has not come across any verse in the Holy Quran which enjoins her to cover her head and therefore, she does not wear a scarf.

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