



IOS NEWSLETTER

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Thought for the Month

Those who devour usury
Will not stand except
As stands one whom
The Satan by his touch
Hath driven to madness
That is because they say:
"Trade is like usury,"
But Allah hath permitted trade
And forbidden usury.
Those who...
Desist, shall be pardoned
For the past;...
But those who repeat
(The offence) are Companions
of the Fire:...
Allah will deprive
Usury of all blessing,
But will give increase
For deeds of charity:...

Al-Qur'an-2:275-276

EDITOR

Prof. Sanghasen Singh

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Syed Arshad Karim

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

162, Jogabai Extension
Jamia Nagar, New Delhi
PIN-110025
India

Phone 26981187, 26989253,
26987467
Fax : 91-11-26981104

E-mail: manzoor@ndf.vsnl.net.in
Website: www.iosworld.org

FOCUS

Islam is ... Islam is ... Islam is ... Islam is many things. Just as there is no single America or Europe or the West, a seamless caption etching diverse groups and persons with the same values and meanings, so there is no single place or uniform culture called Islam. There is no monolithic Islam. There is a Muslim world spanning Africa and Asia. It is as pluralist as the West, outstripping both Europe and America in the numerous regions, races, languages, and cultures that it encompasses. The Afro-Asian Muslim world is also internally pluralistic, containing multiple groups who might be said to represent Islamic norms in each Muslim country. And Muslims themselves are aware of how necessary, and how difficult, it is to specify differing notions of Islam. An Indonesian friend of mine once quipped: "There are three Islams: the popular Islam which anthropologists are fond of studying, mostly as curious spectators; the public Islam with which political scientists, journalists, and policy makers identify, mostly as adversaries; and the academic Islam in which Orientalists delight, whether as art historians, linguists, or religion scholars, each studying artefacts esteemed by their guild. In Indonesia we try to provide our visitors with all three."

If Islam is so diverse and Muslims so accommodating, then why has Islam so often been viewed by non-Muslims as alien at best and violent at worst? I suggest that the principal reason for the negative view of Islam is the predominance in popular thinking of the second view: public Islam. In that view, Islam emanates from a hostile, "Arab" Middle East. Most journalists, and many policy makers, continue to discount any but Arab Islam, or what is conjured up as Arab Islam in projecting the orthodox face of puritanism and militancy. In the 1990s most Euro-American journalists continued to echo the sentiments that drove European kings and their subjects to launch their crusades almost a millennium ago, crusades whose enemy was Arab Muslim. In the aftermath of the Cold War the enemy, once again, has become the one Islam, the militant, unyielding, violent face of "Arab" Islam. Whether one picks up a popular book claiming to represent "Western cultures and values" under attack from Islam, or lead articles of *The New York Times*, such as the recent "Seeing Green: The Red Menace Is Gone. But Here's Islam," the message is the same: Islam is one, and Islam is dangerous.

The Muslim enemy is invariably male, whether a foreign warrior conjured from the past or a potential terrorist stalking modern America. The fierce Kurdish anti-Crusader Salah ad-din Ayyubi, known popularly as Saladin, seems to have multiple contemporary look-alikes. Whether it is Ayatollah Khomeini denouncing the United States as the Great Satan or the Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman plotting to bomb the World Trade Center and other New York public buildings, Muslim leaders continue to be newsworthy principally for their adversarial words and deeds.

**Activities of the IOS Headquarters
Lecture on Challenges Before
Muslim Women**

Muslim women are faced with a number of difficult choices in a fast globalising world as they have to make their personal and public decisions in the light of “the Islamic paradigm”.

Dr Zainab Alwani expressed the above views here this evening in her lecture held on 15.10.2009 in the Institute of Objective Studies auditorium. Dr. Alwani is programme director Arabic Language Studies, North Virginia Community College, USA.

In her thought-provoking lecture attended by many young women, young men and some elders, she elaborated upon her idea of the Islamic paradigm. “The paradigm’s core ideas are based on *istikhlaf* (vice regency)”. That, in short, means, human beings (men and women) are God’s viceroys on earth.

Quoting the Quran’s *Surah Al-Baqrah* and *Surah Taubah* she said men and women were here to “bear witness” to God’s Will. “A witness is always present, active and involved to be a real witness”, she explained. The viceregent has to ensure a balance and sense of proportion in both the private and public, personal and political domains.

“That entails spreading the good, checking the evil and establishing prayer”, she pointed out. To live such life one has to be responsible and enlightened as an individual. Such individuals build a pure society.

The topic of the lecture was “Challenges Before Muslim Women in the Global Scenario”. She restricted her lecture largely to theoretical issues and to her experience as a Muslim woman in the United States.

She said the drift and uncertainties of a post-modern world had once again put women (particularly Muslim women) at the centre of life. “Women are natural teachers, as were the *Ummahatul Momineen* (wives of the holy Prophet PBUH) who imparted Islamic learning to the first and second generation of Muslims”.

That model still works, she pointed out, as mothers are still the first teachers

of children. She talked about the challenges of an appropriate education for young generations. Women have to come forward to meet this challenge and guide their children’s education, she said.

She particularly emphasised the development of an appropriate methodology in Islamic jurisprudence as yesterday’s methodology cannot solve today’s problems. “Sometimes US *imams* in the mosques quote rulings by Arab, Indian and Pakistani ulama, but they may be right for the Arab, Indian and Pakistani situation, not necessarily for the reality of Muslim life in the US”.

She talked about “different layers of US Muslim society”, with their own sets of challenges. First, there are the immigrant Muslims who have to adjust to the realities of US life. Then there are the local converts to Islam who have to learn the ways of Islam and adjust to the Muslim society. Above all, there are African-American Muslims who have



Dr Zainab Alwani delivering her lecture

been there for the last two centuries, but have started getting empowered in the last five decades only.

At the centre of all this flux is the Muslim woman in the United States. There are similarities between the US woman’s life with that of her sisters everywhere. In the midst of so much change it is the Islamic paradigm that holds everything together.

At the end of it there was a lively question and answer session. Chairman of the IOS Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, who for a change was sitting in the audience all through the proceedings, came up to the lectern to propose a vote of thanks.

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He had an advice for the many young women and young men to involve themselves in the Ummah’s affairs and also contribute to the continuing discourse on Muslim life.

Governing Council Meet

The 23rd annual meeting of the Governing Council (G.C.) was held on 10.10.2009 at 10:30 a.m. in the Committee Room of the IOS, 162, Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-25.

The following were present:

1. Dr. M. Manzoor Alam in the Chair
2. Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Vice-Chairman
3. Prof. Z.M. Khan Secretary General
4. Dr. Ausaf Ahmad Finance Secretary
5. Prof. A.R. Momin Member
6. Dr. M.K.A. Siddiqui Member
7. Prof. M.A. Quddus Member
8. Prof. Sangha Sen Singh Member
9. Prof. Mohsin Usmani Member
10. Prof. M. Afzal Wani Member
11. Prof. Aftab Kamal Pasha Special Invitee
12. Prof. M. Ishtiaq Special Invitee
13. Prof. Haseena Hashia Special Invitee
14. Mr. Khalid S. Rahmani Special Invitee
5. Maulana Amin Usmani Special Invitee
6. Dr. S. Fazle Rab Special Invitee
7. Dr. Md. Imteyaz Hasan Special Invitee
8. Mr. M. Zeyaul Haque Special Invitee

Recitation of verses from the Holy Qur’an by Prof. Mohsin Usmani marked the beginning of the meeting. He also explained the meaning and context of the verses for the benefit of

all.

Before taking up the agenda items and starting the business, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS welcomed the members for attending the meeting and dwelt upon the history, purpose and objectives of the Institute; its long journey of 23 years in respect of fulfilling its basic objectives; its achievements; and its future course of action. Further, he emphasised the need for identification of young scholars to associate to the IOS.

Then condolence resolutions on the sad demise of Prof. Z.A. Nizami (G.A. member) and all others who were associated with the Institute

were adopted and *dua* for their *maghfirat* was made by the Governing Council of the Institute of Objective Studies.

Thereafter the agenda of the meeting was taken up.

The minutes of the Governing Council (G.C.) meeting dated 14-3-2009 were presented and confirmed.

The Follow-up Report (Action taken Report) on the last G.C. meeting dated 14.3.2009 was also presented before the Council and the same was approved.

The 23rd Annual Report of the IOS for the year 2008-2009 was presented before the Council. The same was considered and after deliberations it was recommended to the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS for approval.

The Audited Financial Report of the IOS for the year 2007-2008 (assessment year 2008-2009) was presented before the Council, which was also considered and recommended to the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS for approval.

Then the Annual Budget of the IOS for the year 2009-2010 was discussed at length and was recommended for approval to the General Assembly of the IOS.

The appointment of Auditor/Auditors for the financial year 2009-2010 was considered and it was decided to recommend for approval by the General Assembly that M/s. Chandna Associates may be retained as Auditor of the IOS for the year 2009-2010 also.

To discuss the working of the IOS Academic Committees

The GC resolved that the IOS Academic Committees should form the core area of activities of the IOS. However, to make the functioning effective the Institute should define the objectives and suitable mechanism for the Academic Committees. In this regard the objectives are given in section (i). The mechanism is also to be evolved on the lines as specified in Section (ii) below:

Objectives of IOS Academic Committees:

To select scholars/ experts/ intellectuals in different subjects on the one hand and having knowledge, understanding and desire to learn Islam, in their respective discipline.

To identify scholars/ experts/ intellectuals/ ulema in different fields within and outside India.

To promote human capital through (i) providing financial support (ii) providing books and literature, (iii) inviting in seminars/symposia, and (iv) assisting research projects.

To mobilise scholars/ experts/ intellectuals/ ulema through organising regional/local seminars, discussion and orientation programmes for young talent.

(ii) Mechanism of selection and assistance:

Selection of people may be made carefully through interactive channels. Following points may be taken into consideration:

(a) understanding of both the discipline and Islam;

(b) commitment to Islamic perspective;

(c) pursuit of acquiring

that it meets two ends (a) research and (b) educational activity.

Research in Islamic perspective is the core area but local/regional social, economic, educational and political problems also figure in high priority. Questions before the members was as (i) how to empower the chapters in taking decision about the selection of local research theme? (ii) what will be the process of selection of (a) theme (b) raising funds and implementation? And, what model can be created?

In the same way, as our country is aspiring to become one of the global powers through knowledge industry, following questions are pertinent:

What can the IOS headquarters and Chapters do in the field of education?

Can IOS get benefit from the experience and model of IOS Patna Chapter (MoU with Maulana Mazharul Haq Arabic and Persian University, Patna)?

Can Franchise model or model of holding company with necessary modifications be adopted?

What kind of model may be created for empowering Chapters or centres?

After deliberations it was resolved to constitute a committee to survey and study the nature and locale of the Chapters and put forward its recommendations within one month.

The composition of the Committee is as under:

1. Prof. M. Afzal Wani
Convenor
2. Prof. M. Ishtiaq
Member
3. Mr. Salar Mohd. Khan
Member

The GC resolved that the IOS Chapters should be gradually developed into specialised units/centres on the same lines as discussed

in above. The Chapters should also be trying to become self-sufficient by introducing revenue earning activities.

As the issue of Public Private Participation (PPP) in School education needs to be studied thoroughly in view of given policies, it was decided that this matter should be taken up by the Aligarh Chapter of the IOS and the final report along with proposals should be sent to the IOS Headquarters as early as possible.



A view of member of Governing Council Meeting

knowledge;

(d) financial support may be extended as per necessary understanding and commitment; and

(e) annual meeting of academic committees may be organised for understanding, planning and implementation.

The GC discussed in details the issues relating to the chapters. There are five chapters: (1) Aligarh, (2) Patna, (3) Kolkata, (4) Chennai, and (5) Calicut. Each chapter is to develop in a fashion

As the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) has acquired a stage of recognition and maturity there should be a serious effort to accelerate its interactive activities so that Human Resource (HR) may be identified from the IOS perspective. Hence it was decided that the subject-wise inventory may be made of young scholars and talents through undertaking help from universities, identifying writers and researchers.

The progress of the 'IOS Foundation for Education' was reported in the light of the Foundation Committee's 1. meetings where the points relating to strategy, scheme and preparation of 2. presentation material were considered. The Chairman, IOS explained the feed 3. back he has from prospective donors. 4. This input was about taking up education as the priority area; well-defined areas of investment; expected percentage of returns; criteria to determine profitability; effective review mechanism about investment; method of replacement of members etc.

Taking in view the above it was decided that some prominent names from business and industries should also be included.

Further, the Chairman, IOS is authorised to sort out the questions and take necessary measures to address them.

The details of the progress in respect of land use change were explained by the Chairman, IOS. He informed the members that the matter is being pursued and is expected to be resolved soon.

With regard to the project "The Role of Muslims in Indian Freedom Struggle (1857-1947)" the G.C. was informed that the work was in progress. The first volume (Delhi and Haryana) is ready for publication. The other three volumes will be ready for publication after some modifications.

About the project, "Advent and Contribution of Islam in India" the G.C. was apprised that the work on this project was slow. It has now been decided that it should be taken up in different sections (i.e. Agriculture, Architecture, Science & Technology,

Medicine, Ship-building, Maritime Trade etc.)

The members of the G.C. were apprised about the themes of the programmes (11 in numbers) along with the university/ department/ institution with whose collaboration these programmes are being organised by the IOS.

Further, the Chairman, IOS informed the members that four other programmes on the same lines are also in pipeline. These programmes are as under:

Beyond Meltdown – A Search for Option

Concept of Peace and War/Terrorism in different religions

Judicial Reform

Position of Women in different traditions.

After deliberations it was decided that the office bearers of the IOS will participate in the Seminars/Conferences to be organised by the Institute outside Delhi. Further, the Coordinators of various Chapters of the IOS should also try to participate in the said programmes.

The members of G.C. were apprised by the Chairman about the establishment of Multimedia division by

With regard to NGO Partnership System (Partnership for Progress) as per advertisement by the Planning Commission of India the members of the G.C. were of the view that:

The scheme under NGO Partnership System should be properly studied. The Chapters of the IOS should also be approached in this regard.

A cell may be created at the Headquarters so that other Muslim NGOs and experts are informed and are helped to do the needful. And that the Chairman of the IOS would be supervising the developments.

With regard to the Central Madarsa Board Act, 2008 as proposed by the Government of India the members of the G.C. were requested to go through the Act and give their comments at the earliest. Further, prominent madaris will also be contacted for their views so that in the light of the comments from the members of G.C. as well as views of the madaris a draft proposal would be submitted to the Government of India for consideration.

The G.C. approved to publish the revised edition of the book "100 Great Muslim Leaders of the 20th Century".

It was also agreed that a cheaper edition may also be published.

It was resolved that a supplementary edition of the said book may also be published.

The members of the G.C. resolved that the IOS may take up a project to prepare and publish a volume on 1000 great Muslims (thinkers, scientists, inventors, engineers, poets and musicians etc.)

The G.C. approved to undertake another project on 'Islamic Values during the Muslim Rule in India.

The Chairman, IOS informed the members that

IOS Newsletter, IOS Current Affairs and IOS Minaret are already uploaded on its website, while IOS Khabarnama and Human Rights Today are also to be transformed into electronic mode and put them on the website so that expenditure on publication of these two may also be minimized.

Taking in view the above the G.C. approved the proposal for uploading the IOS Khabarnama and Human Rights Today on the IOS website.



General Assembly Meeting L to R: Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Vice-Chairman, Prof. ZM Khan, Secretary General, Dr M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, Dr Ausaf Ahmad, Finance Secretary and Dr Ishtiyaque Danish, Asstt. Secrwrtary General

the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) which was inaugurated during the annual meeting of the G.C. In the first phase the Multimedia division will be able to take up the following tasks from the IOS headquarters:

Live web casting of conferences, seminars, lectures and evening discourse.

Web conferencing

Video on demand

The G.C. approved the proposal for publishing the Hindi edition of IOS publications.

The members of the G.C. were apprised about starting of the fresh column *Nuqta-e-Nazar* in Urdu on the IOS website and that two articles have already been uploaded. Further, this column will be uploaded on a frequent basis for the benefit of the readers.

The G.C. also resolved that utmost effort should be made to update IOS journals namely 'Journal of Objective Studies' and 'Religion and Law Review'.

The Coordinators of the Chapters are requested to motivate scholars for writing articles/papers to be published in these journals.

The Governing Council discussed and approved a proposal for appointing a panel of editors (in English, Urdu and Hindi) for editing various programmes' publications of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS).

After deliberations it was agreed upon that the IOS will celebrate its 25th Anniversary in 2011 and for the details of the programmes the members were requested to send their suggestions as early as possible.

Further, it was decided that the celebrations should be held in a grand way involving the print and electronic media to give coverage of the programmes to be organised by the Institute during its 25th Anniversary celebrations.

In regard to Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2009 the Governing Council resolved to confer the award (for the year 2009) to an individual.

The G.C. approved to create a 'Cell for External Relations and Internal Communications'.

It was also resolved to undertake a project on 'India's Relations with West Asia' and assigned this project to Prof. A.K. Pasha, who consented to take up the project.

The G.C. approved to conduct a 15-days programme on '**Minorities Jurisprudence**' for those who are concerned with referential studies in India.

This programme will be based on the course content as designed/prepared by Dr. Taha J. Alwani.

In the end, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Secretary General of the IOS proposed a vote of thanks.

The meeting ended at 7:30 p.m. with *dua* by the Chairman, IOS.

General Assembly Meet

The 23rd annual meeting of the General Assembly (G.A.) was held on 11th October, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Room of the IOS, 162,



A view of the member of General Assembly meeting

Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-25.

The following were present:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Mohd. Manzoor Alam | in the Chair |
| 2. | Prof. Manzoor Ahmad | Vice-Chairman |
| 3. | Prof. Z.M. Khan | Secretary General |
| 4. | Dr. I. Danish | Asst. Secretary General |
| 5. | Dr. Ausaf Ahmad | Member |
| 6. | Dr. M.K.A. Siddiqui | Member |
| 7. | Prof. M.A. Qudus | Member |
| 8. | Prof. Sangha Sen Singh | Member |
| 9. | MI. Khalid Saifulalh Rahmani | Member |
| 10. | Prof. M. Ishtiaq | Member |
| 11. | Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia | Member |
| 12. | Prof. Aftab Kamal Pasha | Member |
| 13. | Dr. Javed A. Khan | Member |
| 14. | Prof. Shamim A. Ansari | Member |
| 15. | Prof. Humayun Murad | Member |
| 16. | Dr. Nafis Ahmad Siddiqui | Member |
| 17. | Prof. M.G. Husain | Member |
| 18. | Prof. Mohsin Usmani | Member |
| 19. | Dr. S. Abdul Bari | Member |
| 20. | Dr. Syed Shaukat Ali | Member |
| 21. | Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, Advocate | Member |
| 22. | Dr. S. Fazle Rab | Member |
| 23. | MI. Amin Usmani | Member |
| 24. | Mr. Mohammad Muqim | Member |
| 25. | Mr. I.H. Khan | Member |
| 26. | Prof. Syed Jamaluddin | Member |
| 27. | Dr. Md. Imteyaz Hasan | Member |
| 28. | MI. Ateeq Ahmad Bastavi | Member |
| 29. | Prof. Afzal Wani | Member |
| 30. | Prof. Iqbal A. Ansari | Member |
| 31. | Mr. Salar M. Khan | Member |
| 32. | Prof. Naushad Ali Azad | Member |
| 33. | Mr. M. Zeyaul Haque | Special Invitee |

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------|
| 34. | Mr. Mohammad Ali | Special Invitee |
| 35. | Mr. Mohd. Alam | Special Invitee |
| 36. | Mr. Kaleem Alam | Special Invitee |
| 37. | Mr. Ibrahim Alam | Special Invitee |
| 38. | Mr. Ahmad Alam | Special Invitee |
| 39. | Mr. Tanweer Alam | Special Invitee |

The meeting started with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, who also explained the meaning and context of the verses for the benefit of all.

Before taking up the agenda items and starting the business, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Secretary General, IOS welcomed the members.

Then condolence resolutions on the sad demise of Prof. Z.A. Nizami (G.A. member) and all others who were associated with the Institute were adopted and *dua* for their *maghfirat* was made by Maulana Ateeq Ahmad Bastavi.

Thereafter the General Assembly approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10.08.2008.

The Follow-up Report

(Action-taken Report) on the last G.A. meeting dated 10.08.2008 was also approved.

The G.A. then, adopted the 23rd Annual Report of the IOS for the year 2008-2009. It also considered and approved the Audited Financial Report of the Institute for the year 2007-2008 (assessment year 2008-2009).

The Annual Budget of the IOS for the year 2009-2010 was discussed at length and passed.

M/s Chandna Associates has been retained for the year 2009-2010 as Auditor on the existing terms and conditions.

The G.A. also approved the recommendations and decisions taken by the Governing Council in its meeting the previous day.

After the meeting of General Assembly Prof. A.R. Momin, delivered a lecture on the theme '**Reconstructing bridges across Islam and the West**'. Prof. Manzoor Ahmad presided over the lecture.

After the lecture Prof. Manzoor Ahmad congratulated Prof. A.R. Momin for delivering his thought-provoking lecture and gave his presidential remarks.

In the end, Dr. Ishtiyaque Danish acknowledging the full cooperation and active support by all the members of the General Assembly, extended thanks to all of them as well as to Prof. A.R. Momin for delivering such a nice and enlightened lecture.

Condolence Meeting

A condolence meeting was held in the IOS auditorium on October 14. Among the community leaders present on the occasion were Maulana Jalaluddin Umri (President, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind), Dr Zafrul Islam Khan (President, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat), Syed Shahabuddin (former MP and former President, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat) and Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam (General Secretary, All India Milli Council and Chairman, IOS).

Speakers, including the leaders were unanimous in the conviction that the Muslim community had no other person on whom his mantle would fall. They prayed for his soul and for the solace of the bereaved family.

As IOS Chairman Dr Alam announced that the Institute would hold the seminars planned by him and publish his unpublished work. The fourth volume of his classic *Readings on Minorities* was due from the printers within the week.

The meeting also condoled the death of another great scholar, Maulana Ikhlaque Husain Qasmi, who passed away on October 14.

OBITUARY

Eminent Academic and Activist Iqbal A. Ansari Passes Away

Prof. Iqbal A. Ansari, a towering figure of our time, died at Aligarh on October 13, 2009. At 6 a.m. he complained of restlessness and was rushed to hospital where he passed away soon. He was 74. Prof. Ansari is survived by his wife, two daughters, and three sons.

After an illustrious career as a teacher of English language and literature at Aligarh Muslim University spanning 33 years (1962-1995), he largely concentrated on writing and editing to

emerge as a leading thinker and human rights activist.

Prof. Ansari (b. 25 Feb. 1935) after retiring from Aligarh Muslim University as Professor of English in 1995 went on to become a Visiting Professor at Jamia Hamdard (2001-2003) and Jamia Millia Islamia (2003-2004), New Delhi.

Prof. Ansari's major publications include *Political Representation of Muslims in India: 1952-2004*, Manak, New Delhi 2006 and the three volumes of documents relating to minorities.

Prof. Ansari has contributed a large number of articles to books, periodicals and newspapers. He was actively associated with the human rights and peace movement in India. He was a member of the UGC Panel on Human Rights Education and was the founder Secretary-General of the Minorities Council. He prepared a Report on Communal Riots: Prevention and Control for the National Commission for Minorities in 1999.

Professor Ansari was the editor of the quarterly *Human Rights Today*. He was awarded Citation of Excellence in 2008 for his significant contribution in the area of promotion of human rights by the Centre of Promotion of Human Rights Teaching and Research (HURUTER)/ School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), in collaboration with Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies (New Delhi).

He had been associated with the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) and contributed meaningfully to its work. In his death IOS has lost a senior leader and an elder. The IOS Chairman Dr.



A view of the condolence meeting

Mohammad Manzoor Alam in his own

behalf as well as that of the IOS commiserated with the bereaved – his wife, three sons and two daughters. In a message he said he stood with them in the hour of their sorrow. May Allah reward his soul with all the bounties of Hereafter and give solace to his wife and children. From Allah we come and to Him we return.

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Behind the hostile Muslim men, Americans imagine the faces of Muslim women, homebound creatures marked alike by seclusion from the outside world and apparent oppression by their tyrannical husbands. The reality of Muslim women's active participation in their societies is glossed, covered as it were, by a veil that projects the violence of male "Arab" Muslims everywhere. They hate the West and abuse their women.

Both images depend on singularizing Islam and then describing it as both different and violent. That stereotype remains remote from Islam as lived experience. Popular Islam is more than just the remote village or exotic domain of anthropologists. It is also the shared notion of a world view and a pattern of living that characterizes most Muslims in Asia and Africa. It provides enormous challenges and hopes and satisfactions for Muslim women and for Muslim men. Islam offers all Muslims no fewer possibilities than every major religious tradition offers the women and the men who identify with it.

From "Shattering the Myth" by Bruce B. Lawrence, pp. 4-5

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The best approach is to know what one can do instead of asking others to perform this or that. An individual, sincere and humble, knows both his potentials as well as limitations. He is surely better placed to make a realistic assessment of his academic/intellectual prowess and prepare pragmatic programmes accordingly. Such sincere and humble scholars would surely succeed and contribute greatly to their disciplines provided a congenial academic atmosphere is created by the

establishment – the government and the university administration.

It would not be proper here to discuss the policies and programmes of the government and university administrations as these are outside the topic under focus here. However we must ask the leaders, intellectuals and activists, who are never tired of complaining about the decline of knowledge in the Muslim world, if they have done any thing to create an academic atmosphere in their areas/zones of influence. If they ask these questions and try to answer them sincerely, they would indeed render yeoman service to the country as well as the Muslim community.

Often we hear that our academics should compete with their counterparts in the West. Occasionally we also hear why our scholars excel in Western universities but not here in the East. The reason is simple. Campuses in the West are not as politicized as they are here. External interference is either non-existent or the minimum. The system, central, regional or local, supports the individual scholars, but it creates all kinds of difficulties for academics here. Above all, the academics in the West are not just provided with the state-of-the-art facilities but are also given the feeling that they are important and that they are capable of delivering what is expected from them. They are also free to work according to their interests, and things are not imposed on them. In our part of the globe, however, the academics, barring some exceptions, are normally given a raw deal. Instead of focusing on research and teaching, they are often compelled to fight for their rights and things which should be automatically available to them in order to enable them to achieve academic excellence. It is, therefore, not surprising why our academics, by and large, fail to perform as effectively as their counter-parts do in the West.

Mourning over the decline of knowledge in the Muslim world would not work; instead we need to fully focus on regeneration of knowledge in a sincere, honest and meaningful manner.

SUBSCRIPTION

Annual : Rs. 20/- \$ 5

Five Years:Rs. 75/- \$ 15

How to Regenerate Knowledge? by Ishtiyaque Danish

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

An acute problem of the academia in our time is that most outsiders, who have shallow knowledge of a thing or distant connection with a subject, presume that they are more knowledgeable than the men who matter. For these pretentious outsiders the men on the spot, the trained teachers, the experienced researchers and intellectually far more superior authors carry no weight. So, one thinks that his diplomatic assignment in Saudi Arabia has made him an expert of the country as well as the region. The journalists are not far behind; they feel that their short-term posting in West Asia entitles them to write on any aspect of the region without acquiring any training in the concerned subject. The problem becomes very grave indeed when such outsiders begin to behave as expert of Islam, its history, civilization and culture.

It is not our case that the outsiders have no right to speak on Islamic Studies. But we do demand that they must study a discipline thoroughly and deeply, for this is the only way to become the expert of a subject. Knowledge acquired by reading a book or two would not work.

A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has made it obligatory on Muslims to acquire knowledge. The Prophet is also reported to have said that “wisdom is the lost property of believing Muslims” and has urged them “to get hold of it wherever they find it”. On one occasion the Prophet (PBUH) preferred the knowledgeable believer over the worshipper (*Aabid*) with little knowledge.

The Holy Quran has also highlighted the importance of Knowledge in various ways. It has asserted that the knowledgeable and illiterate can never be equal. In another verse the Quran says that, “God raises the status of believers and men of letter”. Similarly the first few verses revealed to the Prophet in the cave of Hira speak volumes about the importance of knowledge.

The key words in these verses are “read”, “pen” and “knowledge” which cover all the activities of the academia. There are several other blessings of God which the Holy Quran has enumerated in its various chapters. However, the fact that God chose to speak first about reading, writing and learning cannot be missed as it shows the high importance that Islam attaches with Knowledge. This message of the Quran was ably grasped by the early followers of Islam. As a result, they launched an intellectual movement which has no parallel in human history.

Take any branch of knowledge from Tafsir, Hadith and Fiqh to medicine and natural sciences, the early Muslims worked hard to excel in all of them. They toiled in libraries, undertook difficult journeys and burnt mid-night oil to achieve expertise in their chosen subjects. On the contrary, people of our time, specially the Muslims, lack focus, concentration and commitment and want to become scholars overnight. The sadest aspect is that there exists an army of superficial intellectuals who collect easily available data about universities, Nobel Laureates and other related things and complain that the Muslim Ummah is no where

visible on the shining horizon of knowledge.

Well, you are within your right to mourn the demise of Knowledge from the Muslim world. I would just request such people to look within. Why do you ask “others” to excel? Are you really better than the non-performing “others”?

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