



# IOS NEWSLETTER

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## Thought for the Month

O mankind! We created  
You from a single (pair)  
Of a male and a female,  
And made you into  
Nations and tribes, that  
Ye may know each other  
(Not that ye may despise  
(Each other). Verily  
The most honoured of you  
In the sight of Allah  
Is (he who is) the most  
Righteous of you  
And Allah has full knowledge  
And is well-acquainted  
(With all things)

Al-Quran- 49:1

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## FOCUS

The Muslim population, according to the first census (1951) was 9.93% of the total population. As per the latest census (2011) it stands at 14.23% of the total population. As per the 2011 census, the literacy rate of Muslims is 68.5% (Male-74.5%, Female-62%) and the India average is 73% (Male- 80.9% and Female-64.6%). In 2001, the Muslim literacy rate stood at 59.1%, below the national average of 64.8% in that year.

In 1983, the Gopal Singh report, often alluded to as the earliest one carrying a report on the status of Muslim minorities, spoke of a "sense of discrimination prevailing among the minorities" and that it "must be eliminated, root and branch, if minorities are to form an effective part of the mainstream. In 2006, the Sachar Committee Report established the Muslim community as the most backward community among all socio-religious communities (SRCs) including Hindus and Other Minorities. Around the same time, the Justice Ranganath Mishra Committee Report also established Muslims as the most backward community despite their rich cultural heritage and strong numerical presence. In 2014, the findings of the Kundu Report on implementation of the Sachar recommendations revealed both progress and several gaps that need to be addressed. A just released 'South Asia State of Minorities report', 2016, in its India chapter reports extremely poor outcomes for Muslims on all development indicators implying severe violation of minority rights of the Muslim community. Finally, at the 6<sup>th</sup> National stock-taking of implementation of RTE Act, 2009, organized by the RTE Forum, the Honorable Vice-President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari highlighted the relevance of inclusive education, particularly for disadvantaged groups and called for "Vibrant Partnerships among the departments and organizations concerned with children of Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and educationally backward minorities".

This report critically examines the status of Muslim education (School education) in India and proposes next steps. There are nine sections in the report. Section 1 is the Introduction. Section 2 looks at key constitutional and legal provisions having a bearing on Muslim Education. Section 3 covers policies on Muslim Education. Sections 4, 5, and 6 present the National, State/UT and District level scenarios. The analysis covers Muslim literates (All India) by levels of education and the Index of Educational Attainment (under section 4), analysis of Muslim literacy rates by State and Union Territory (under section 5) and analysis of literacy rates in the Minority Concentrated Districts (MCDs) before and after interventions (under section 6). Against this backdrop, section 7 examines the status of school education among Muslims. It covers statistics relating to performance of Muslim children on key school education indicators. Section 8 supplements the quantitative analysis under section 7 with a qualitative analysis of some major issues in Muslim children's education. Section 9 covers case studies of success from the field. Finally, section 10 proposes some critical recommendations for strengthening school education among Muslims in the country.

**From Status of Muslim Education and the Way Forward  
by Naaz Khair, p.iii**

**Activities of the IOS Headquarters**

**Ninth IOS Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Maulana Hakim Mohammad Abdullah Mughesi**

The ninth IOS Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred upon Maulana Hakim Mohammad Abdullah Mughesi, Chancellor, Jamia Arabia Gulzar Husainia, Ajrarah, Meerut, and President, All India Milli Council, for his enormous contribution for promoting education in society as well as social services, in a function organised by the Institute of Objective Studies here on December 24, 2021.

The function commenced with the recitation of a Quranic verse by Hafiz Mohammad Athar Husain Nadwi.

In-charge of the Urdu section, IOS, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi traced the history and purpose of the award. He said that the award was instituted to honour and recognise the contribution of those who made their name known in different fields. The shortlisted names were processed by a screening committee that took a final decision on the name, he added.

In his welcome address, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, said that he knew Maulana Mughesi personally and saw his work in the field of education in the Meerut district. Since he belonged to the area, he knew of his work. Referring to the selection process of the nominee for the award, he noted that it was a tedious task as the shortlisted names were considered by various committees. Thus it was not based on one person's choice. He observed that

it was a matter of satisfaction that the acceptance of the work of IOS was growing. Letters of recommendations for various projects and other things were being regularly received. The Institute had signed MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) with several foreign universities. This ostensibly meant that the area of its activities was expanding. He stressed that the issue of national integration needed to be taken up for further study and analysis.

On this occasion, the scroll of honour for Maulana Mughesi was read out by the ex-All India Radio presenter, S.M. Shafique. This was followed by the presentation of the scroll of honour to Maulana Mughesi

field of education had been recognised. He also praised the IOS for honouring those who carved out a niche for themselves. Maulana Mughesi was such an *alim* who made ceaseless efforts to spread Islamic education coupled with modern education, he added.

As the guest of honour, Prof. Emeritus, Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof. Akhtarul Wasey, thanked Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam for taking an apt decision to honour Maulana Mughesi with this prestigious award. Referring to Maulana Mughesi's services, he said that he (Maulana Mughesi) did everything to hold the head of the Muslim community high.

In his educational institution, he imparted Islamic education with modern education, keeping in view the needs of the time. This was aimed at making the students self-reliant after completing their education. He said that he had been visiting his madrasa and saw for himself the work being done there. He was all praise for the IOS,

which was the only think-tank in the country in its own right. Owing to its pioneering work in research and dissemination of ideas, the IOS received both praise and brickbats. But its sincerity was never in doubt, and the caravan of the Institute waded its way smoothly. He lauded Dr. Alam for instituting an award in the name of the great Islamic scholar like Shah Waliullah and the IOS Lifetime Achievement Award. He used the occasion to congratulate Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani for being formally nominated as the General Secretary of AIMPLB. He said that Allah eased the difficulties and opened doors of success to those who



Prof. Z.M. Khan (on the podium) delivering his welcome address  
On the dais (L-R): MI. Asghar Ali Imam Mehdi Salafi, MI. Hakim Mohammad Abdullah Mughesi, MI. Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and Prof. Akhtarul Wasey

by Amir-i-Jamiat, Ahle Hadith Hind, Maulana Asghar Ali Imam Mehdi Salafi.

A cheque for Rs. 1 lakh as the amount of the award was presented to Maulana Mughesi by the Chairman of the IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam. General Secretary of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani presented a memento to Maulana Mughesi.

Speaking as the chief guest, Maulana Asghar Ali Imam Mehdi Salafi congratulated the IOS for conferring the award on Maulana Mughesi. It was a happy augury that his services to the community in the

remembered their benefactors. He prayed to Allah to enable the Muslim community to remember its benefactors. He held that under the stewardship of Maulana Mughesi, Jamia Arabia Gulzar Husainia was flourishing.

The Vice-Chairman, IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, said that he was a part of the committee that finalised his name. He involved himself in a campaign to spread education as ordained by Allah. Maulana Mughesi was being rewarded for his services to the community. His services were worthy of emulation. He suggested that the profiles like the one written on the Maulana should become a part of the syllabus in schools.

Addressing the function, Maulana Mohammad Muhammad Abdullah Mughesi expressed his gratefulness to the IOS for choosing him for the award. He said that one's basic purpose was to please his Creator by his good deeds, and he used his entire life for the sake of it. He maintained that he was gladly accepting the award and thanking God for the honour. He announced to distribute the amount of the award in four parts. This included Rs. 25,000 each to the AIMPLB and the Islamic Fiqh Academy (IFA). Praying for the good health and longevity of Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, he said that the latter promoted the thought of national and international understanding. He raised the status of the IOS among scholars by honouring several famed personalities. He also congratulated Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani for being nominated as the full-fledged General Secretary of the AIMPLB and expressed confidence that he would

continue to raise the issues that confronted Indian Muslims.

Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, in his speech, pointed out that the Muslim community could not face challenges without knowledge, and it could not be acquired without education. When it comes to knowledge, it should be acquired without going into its classification. Knowledge might be religious or fundamental. He asked the young generation to realise the importance of knowledge. He renewed the pledge of the IOS to continue its pursuits to knowledge and its dissemination for the benefit of humanity.

In his presidential remarks, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani

be made at the grass-root level. Before moving forward, one should make a beginning at the ground. He called for investing the Muslim community with Deen and Islam because they enunciated moderation. The Maulana pursued this course and earned the respect of every section of society. He praised Dr. M. Alam for identifying people who could play an active role in the promotion of knowledge and created an institution like IOS to provide a platform for them. Referring to Islamic knowledge and philosophy, he said that it was Shah Waliullah who first recognised machinations of anti-Islam forces. Following this, he wrote books on Islamic knowledge. He urged the Muslims to adopt a moderate approach to Islam and work for the unity of the *Ummah*. He said that the IOS was working on the foundations of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). IOS was the only think-tank of its kind that worked in the field of research on a variety of subjects, he concluded.

The function ended with a vote of thanks proposed by the Assistant Secretary General, IOS, Prof.

(Ms.) Haseena Hashia.



Maulana Hakim Mohammad Abdullah Mughesi receiving the Memento

observed that it was the duty of the community to perpetuate the memory of its forefathers. But today, instead of remembering them, they were being made targets of criticism. This was caused by social media. Praising the services of Maulana Mughesi, he said that Maulana Mughesi initiated the process of providing modern education to madrasa students along with religious education at a time when only a few could think of it. This was one of his major contributions to the field of education. His work deserved appreciation due to its beginning in the most backward rural areas. He said that the beginning in any field should

**IOS online Lecture on Constitution, Democracy and Participation in India: A Citizenship Initiative**

An online lecture on “Constitution, Democracy and Participation in India: A Citizenship Initiative” was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on January 8, 2022.

The lecture began with the recitation of a Qur’anic verse by Naseem Ahsan, IOS. The Assistant Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Haseena Hashia, who introduced the topic, said that this was the first lecture of a series

started by the IOS. She observed that India adopted democracy soon after its Independence and the leaders of the freedom struggle had made all efforts for democratic governance even during the colonial rule. The major purpose before the leaders was to take up the responsibilities and administer power without any discrimination and exclusiveness. She held that this was well documented in the debates held in the constituent assembly of India, which prepared a blueprint for political equality, freedom, justice and fraternity in the country. It was in this context that the IOS took the national initiative to provide a meaningful and deliberative platform of academicians and intellectuals to deliberate on the challenges, issues and problems and to find out achievement solutions, she added.

Delivering the lecture, Professor, Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Prof. Arshi Khan, said that the topic was contemporary and a part of the syllabus in universities. Quoting the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, he observed that laws were unnecessary unless they were strictly enforced. He discussed briefly the political and social situation that prevailed during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment in Europe. Then happened the French Revolution that paved the way for the voice of freedom and human rights. India was colonised by the Britishers, who ruled it for two centuries, and the end came only after resistance by the united political community. It became possible after a long-drawn-out freedom struggle with the participation of all the Indians. He said that India was a multi-cultural society and its demographic composition differed from the west as it was religious.

Religion played an important role in the socio-political life of the country. It was unique in the sense that federalism, democracy and electoral manifestations contributed to the country's strength. The relationship between people reflected the true spirit of a plural society, he remarked.

Prof. Khan observed that double safeguards to multi-cultural society had been provided in the Constitution by way of the reservation to OBCs and SCs/STs. While recognition of regional languages had been restricted, Article 15 prohibited discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, etc. There were a number of good

wake of the emergence of Hindu religious fanaticism. The year 1989 marked the second departure of the party when V.P. Singh left the party to become the Prime Minister with the help of some opposition group. He was followed by Chandra Shekhar, who had a stork term as the country's premier. He maintained that corruption and family rule weakened the Congress party exhaustively. Mandal and Kamandal issue marked the emergence of new political alignment and area of coalition governments in states started, he added.

Prof. Khan observed that the phase of coalition governments dominated the political scene till the BJP emerged as the single largest party in 2014. Riding the crest of Hindutva mobilisation, BJP became a force to reckon with. It called the change the beginning of a new era. A new wave of violence against Muslims started, and dozens of them were brutally killed in lynching by Hindutva goons. Open humiliation of Mahatma Gandhi and anti-conversion laws

were some of the steps of the new dispensation to write a new narrative. While OBC, SC/ST had certain safeguards against their victimisation, Muslims had none. This raised question as to who were the beneficiaries of government largesse in a multi-cultural society where Hindus constituted 90 percent of the total population. He referred to the Gopal Singh Committee Report, 1983, which was a grim reminder of the educational and economic conditions of Indian Muslims. In this connection, he also mentioned the Sachar Committee Report, which declared that Muslims were worse than Dalits as they were under-represented in every walk of life. Rang Nath Misra Commission



A view of the lecture programme

things in the Indian Constitution that made it one of the best constitutions of the world. He said that though the first elections to the Indian parliament took place in 1952, majoritarianism started ever since the Indian National Congress was founded. Democracy gave power to parliament to pass laws, but there too, the majority ruled. India was fortunate that the transfer of power from the British rule was peaceful. He noted that for most of the time, the Congress was in power and during its rule, majoritarianism grew. Owing to its departure from the path it adopted during the national movement, Congress became weak. By 1978, it became more vulnerable, and after 1985, it was further weakened in the

also concluded that Muslims needed more empowerment. He said that democracy in a multi-cultural society demanded more participation of the minorities and other weaker sections.

Commenting on the role of the ruling party in a democracy, Prof. Khan said that everything was decided by the party. Democracy is based on progress and development, equality and civil rights. Currently, the country is governed by the dictum-Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan. The ruling BJP was busy implementing its agenda. Today's India was identified with one country and one religion in a multi-cultural society. Thus the legitimacy of such a government was in question because the participation of all did not exist. One did not find health centres, schools and community centres, parks, etc., in Muslim dominated areas. He said that due to the lack of infrastructure, Muslims lived in slums. Since Muslims were not a bargaining community, they were not given facilities like the ones available in other countries. They were also not a participating community. Referring to the rule of law, he said that an independent judiciary could uphold the majesty of law by interpretation and playing the role of a guardian to safeguard the rights of citizens. Mutual consultation, which was one of the features of the British parliament, did not exist in India. Certain questions regarding the proportionate representation of minorities in various institutions arose. Their representation proportionate to the population was a necessity in vibrant nation-building. He opined that India was a society of communities, and the majority was not a threat unless there were religious considerations. He held that Indians were pre-political and pre-constitutional, and India could not be understood by ideology. The majority was not the people, and hence, they could not call to change the Constitution. Constitution was not a problem but the mind was certainly a problem, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z. M. Khan, said that the country was passing through a transitional phase with trials and tribulations. This was reflective of governance with regard to secularism and human rights. Democracy could not be understood in a particular perspective where only the majority dominated. The context in which democracy functioned was important. Unfortunately, the democracy was losing its colour as envisaged by its protagonists. He observed that the right of a citizen in a democracy should be protected at all costs. The idea of equality should be cultivated and shared by all groups. The current political leadership was not conducive to India's composite culture. India was a very peaceful society, and while focusing on other issues, this fact should be taken into account. He concluded that big business houses were also involved in mobilising people along religious and caste lines.

At the end of the lecture, Assistant Secretary General, IOS, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, extended a vote of thanks to the attendees.

**.... A LIGHT AT THE END OF  
THE TUNNEL  
(On the demise of Professor Qazi  
Ashfaq Ahmad)**

Saddened beyond words on the passing of our venerated brother Professor Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad OAM, I don't know how to express my feelings of remorse and grief at this moment. Anyway, following the custom, I must say that given his family background, temperament, and deep human sensitivity, he was always willing to go extra miles to help people in distress. It's a fact that Ashfaq Bhai devoted his entire life to serving the impoverished and marginalised in the society by extensively contributing to the betterment and meaningful existence of the younger generation in the society. He endeared himself to his close as well as distant relations by

being their patron, mentor and well-wisher in the real sense of the word. He supported my elder brother to secure a suitable placement in the Indian Army at a time when there was no one else to vouch for him. However, despite making all out efforts to rehabilitate so many of us, he never claimed or liked to be credited for his support and patronage. Though he had doctorate in Mechanical Engineering, his insight into Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence alongside his profound knowledge and command over Urdu, English and Arabic language and literature, was highly amazing. Once in early 70s during a short stay at my home town, he taught me at my request the poems of the English Romantic poets. His in-depth elaborations of the subtle metaphorical nuances and poetic thoughts are still ingrained and reverberating in my memory. Advising me not to be dismayed in view of the inevitable impediments, he personally ensured my support and sustenance at Aligarh for higher education. Its now through his benevolence, moral support, encouragement that I could pursue my education and secure a better position in life. Ashfaq bhai never believed in one time charity. He always discouraged it as it was against the human dignity. He wanted the younger generation to earn the art of living through constant struggle and earn a distinct dignified place in the society. He was a great source of inspiration to me because of his lifelong enormous contributions and commitment to reform the human society and create a congenial atmosphere for mutual trust, love, understanding and harmonious co-existence. Ashfaq bhai who also suffered at the hands of the pygmies envious to his intellectual stature and prominence in the academic world, could never succeed in their nefarious design to desist or dither him from his ideological moorings and chosen path of guiding humanity and spreading eternal values by advocating the turmoils of the suppressed and

downtrodden. He was a great social and political thinker who raised his voice against ignorance, injustice and all forms of brutality and violence in the world.

I am told that Ashfaq Bhai was known and impressed by Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Founder Chairman, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi. He met this revolutionary personality a few times in Riyadh and had wide ranging discussions about the status of Muslims and Islam world over.

Remaining in Australia for most of his life, he started a crusade against the perpetrators of crime against humanity on the ground of race, colour, language, etc. His sincere and constant endeavours in the direction of establishing peace and order in the world were widely recognised and appreciated. In fact, he was a beacon of hope and light at the end of tunnel. A great testimony to this fact is that millions all over the world mourn the death of such an ardent lover of humanity and saviour of mankind. He groomed his children also to carry on like him this prophetic mission to the present and next generation. Professor Ziaul Islam who himself is an acclaimed scholar in his own right, is a great successor of his father's laudable legacy of human love and compassion.

-Qazi Obaidur Rahman Hashmi

### Obituary

#### Professor Rajesh Kochhar

All the members of the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi feel saddened to know that Professor Rajesh Kochhar, who was always keen to help the IOS in its researches, has passed away, after a brief illness, on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 in Chandigarh.

Author of the much acclaimed book *The Vedic People* (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2000) and the co-author of *Astronomy in India* (New

Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, 1995), Professor Rajesh Kochhar was honorary professor in Mathematics Department, Panjab University Chandigarh. An astrophysicist by training he published original research in a number of fields: history and sociology of science, technology and education in the Subcontinent during modern period; Western science and the non-West; science and education policy; world history of astronomy through ages; ancient Indian history; and modern astronomy and astrophysics.

His papers and articles have been well-cited by researchers; policy and opinion makers; as also by the on-line Wikipedia. His views have been sought and published by magazines like Science and Nature as also by BBC Radio.

He lectured extensively in India and abroad including at Harvard, Cornell, University of Texas at Austin, Belfast, Brighton, Royal Dublin Society, Tübingen, Copenhagen University, and National Museum Copenhagen. Professor Kochhar has been a Jawaharlal Fellow, a Fulbright Visiting Lecturer, a Visiting Scholar at University of Cambridge Department of History and Philosophy of Science.

He was Fulbright Visiting Lecturer, Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, a visiting scholar at University of Cambridge, and President of International Astronomical Union Commission on History of Astronomy.

He had been the recipient of Indira Gandhi Award for Popularization of Science, 2014. He had held the prestigious position of Director of National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (CSIR) New Delhi, and had also served as Professor at Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore.

The association of the IOS with Professor Rajesh Kochhar goes back to February 18, 2019, when the IOS organised his lecture on "Aryans in

India and Iran" in collaboration with the Department of History & Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia. He had also agreed to deliver the Fifth Ibn Khaldun Lecture on "Indian Muslims and British Education". He was keen to visit the Institute to deliver this lecture. However, due his health issues, the event could not take place.

Professor Kochhar's death is a great loss to the academic world and particularly to the Institute. He gave the IOS many ideas on which IOS Centre for Historical & Civilisational Studies could conduct researches. He was willing to extend all his support in this regard. But nature had something else in store for him.

The IOS expresses heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family, his friends and students.

### Announcement

#### International Conference on Muhammad Asad

In its furtherance of the programmes on International Personalities, the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi (India) in collaboration with the International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA, will be organising a two-day Online International Conference on the "Personality and Contribution of Muhammad Asad as an International Journalist, Linguist, Political Theorist, Mufassir and Scholar of Religions in 20th Century" on May 28-29, 2022 at New Delhi (India).

#### About Muhammad Asad

Muhammad Asad was born at the end of the nineteenth century, on 2nd July 1900, in Austria, in the home of a Jew Lawyer, Akiva Weiss. By choice he had opted to be a lawyer, though he was coming from a well-established lineage of Jewish Rabbis. Asad was named Leopold Weiss. He received traditional primary education and education in religion, studying textual versions of the religious scripts

of *Talmud* and the related commentaries. As gifted child of the family, Asad could master eloquence in Hebrew and Aramaic languages besides his own native German and Polish languages just at the age of 13, at the time when the First World War was to get in, in 1914, with senseless death knell to 6 millions of people and leaving many more millions in distress and devastation. At that human juncture of colossal loss of senses by misguided people in power pushing humanity into crisis, Asad left the school and joined Austrian Army without the knowledge of his family. He adopted a false name to cover the information of his joining army from his father, though he got back to join his family when the fact was disclosed.

Asad could stir up as the one of the most cogent youths with journalistic skills responding logically to unconvincing and demotivating social and political environment of Europe. He travelled and tread into the quest for his life which he himself was not knowing as to which shape that could take. While in Mandatory Palestine, which was a territorial arrangement made by occupiers between 1920 and 1948 in Palestine as per the resolutions of the League of Nations, he had his own reservations about the Zionist Movement and used to vehemently question its leaders, including Chaim Weizmann. He accepted Sunni Islam in 1926 (in Berlin); adopted the name "Muhammad Asad, retaining the roots of his earlier name as regards its meaning. He had observed: "Islam appears to me like a perfect work of architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other; nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking; and the result is a structure of absolute balance and solid composure."

Asad in his travels got to visit Arab, moving across that land, which had been cradling for long a faith whose most prominent features are clarity and certainty, that is, Islam.

When in Saudi Arabia, he spent enough time with tribal people. He was, however, acquainted with the royals, as with Ibn Saud, who was the founder of the kingdom. The King had a good knowledge of the talent and skillfulness of Asad. He gave him the confidential assignments also to work for the sustenance of his kingdom mainly to protect it from the revolts, posing a threat to the establishment. Asad's prominence was then obvious from his reference in the newspapers across nations of the region.

Asad visited India also, which was then united and under British occupation. He met Dr. Muhammad Iqbal. In his meeting in India with Dr. Iqbal he developed the idea of not proceeding further to east of the world but rather work giving his intellectual contribution for building an edifice for a future possible Islamic establishment.

In British India, Asad had an opportunity to meet Chaudhry Niaz Ali Khan, a philanthropist and agriculturalist, the founder of the Dar-ul-Islam Trust Institutes at Pathankot and Jauharabad. On Iqbal's suggestion, Asad initiated translation of *Sahih al Bukhari* and completed its two chapters in Kashmir which he visited during that period.

When the Second World War broke out, Asad worked with British Government for five years, but became citizen of Pakistan at its birth on 14 August 1947. He served in Pakistan as a bureaucrat and diplomat holding the key positions of the Director of Department of Islamic Reconstruction, Deputy Secretary (Middle East Division) in the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan, and Pakistan's Envoy to the United Nations. He made recommendations for drafting the First Constitution for Pakistan and tried to create good relations between Pakistan and Middle East States.

In 1949, Asad joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the head of the Middle East Division. He is said to

have made efforts to strengthen Pakistan's ties with the Muslim states of the Middle East. In 1952, he was given by Pakistan its diplomatic assignment to the United Nations in New York, which he relinquished in the same year to write the most mentioned book, *The Road to Mecca*. He enjoys eminence as a writer for his books, *The Road to Mecca* and translation of the Holy Qur'an in English, *The Message of The Qur'an*. Himself Asad says:

*The Message of the Qur'an* is "the work which I am now placing before the public is based on a lifetime of study and of many years spent in Arabia. It is an attempt –perhaps the first attempt – at a really idiomatic, explanatory rendition of the Qur'anic message into a European language."

Distinguished, as he is considered, he advocated *Ijtihad* and rationality in interpreting religious texts. With due concern he dedicated his works 'to people who think' so being best described as "Europe's gift to Islam" and "a mediator between Islam and the West". In 2008, the entrance square to the UN Office in Vienna was named *Muhammad Asad Platz* in commemoration of his work as a "religious bridge-builder". Vienna's cultural adviser, Andreas Mailath-Pokorny were present at the unveiling of the square. Mailath Pokorny, while talking to the media said: "There is probably no more appropriate place to honor Muhammad Asad than that in front of the UN-City. Muhammad Asad was a citizen of the world, who was at home, and left his mark, everywhere in the world, especially in the Orient."

Towards the end of his life, Asad moved to Spain and lived there with his third wife, Pola Hamida Asad, an American national of Polish Catholic descent who had also converted to Islam, until his death on 20 February 1992 at the age of 91. He was buried in the Muslim cemetery of Granada in the former Moorish province of Andalusia, Spain.

**Objective of the Conference**

The objective of the conference is to promote academic endeavours of understanding personalities, opinions and cultures across the globe for fostering a critical healthy international understanding in accordance with Article 51 of the Constitution of India and International Instruments like UN Charter.

**Themes for Deliberations**

While it is worthwhile to highlight the life and times of Muhammad Asad in International Perspectives comprehensively, certain suggestive aspects of the broader theme are noted below for deliberations at the two-day online International Conference.

- Muhammad Asad’s personal life, qualities, educational pursuits and literary works.
- Socio-Political environment in Europe (especially Nazi Jurisdictions), Arab and other parts of the world during making days of Muhammad Asad and his emergence as a linguist, theorist and journalist with performance much beyond his home terrain.
- Influences on religious thought of Muhammad Asad and his conversion to Islam and his contribution to Islamic literature and understanding.
- Muhammad Asad’s understanding of nuances of the geo-political scenario in his times across the globe with reference to transformation and resurrection of

Muslim countries through World Wars.

- Muhammad Asad’s responses to Western political thought and encounters to it from East.
- Relevance of Muhammad Asad as thinker, bureaucrat and diplomat to present day Globalising world.
- Any other aspect of the theme as may be found relevant.

**Participation**

Academicians, scholars, administrators, social workers, policy makers, promoters of international cooperation etc. from anywhere in the world can participate.

**Language**

The language of presentation will be English.

**Important Dates**

Last date for submission of abstracts (in pdf & doc. file)

**April 30, 2022**

Notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts

**May 5, 2022**

Last date for submission of full paper (in pdf & doc. file)

**May 20, 2022**

**Submit abstracts**

**at: <https://forms.gle/nBhYhQFVAMmWnoP67>**

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**FORM IV  
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