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Thought for the Month

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

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

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FOCUS

The ninth report of Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf reveals that there are 9,995 cases relating to waqf properties pending with different courts in various states. Since many states failed to provide information to the Committee, the numbers cannot be taken as exact but it is an indication as to the volume of cases pending in different courts. The disputes regarding waqf properties as mentioned in section 6 (1) of the Waqf Act of 1995 essentially revolve around two questions. One, whether a property specified in the list of auqaf as waqf property is Waqf or not, second, whether a Waqf specified in the list is Shia or Sunni waqf. A suit in this regard may be filed with the Waqf Tribunal whose decision shall be final. The Tribunals while trying a suit, executive a decree or order will have the same powers as those of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908). However, a High Court suo moto or on the application can examine the case for legality or propriety and may confirm, reverse, or modify the order of the Tribunal as it may think fit. Although section 85 of Waqf Act provides for the bar of jurisdiction of Civil Court, Revenue Court and any other authority in respect of any matter which is required to be determined by the Tribunal under the Waqf Act, 1995 it does not in any way affect the appellate jurisdiction of District Court. Despite the existence of Waqf Tribunals the adjudication process is not satisfactory. The process of litigation is both expensive and time consuming. The State of Waqf Boards are financially weak to afford an effective legal machinery to fight the cases. This has become a major impediment in the development of waqf properties. For the establishment of a strong legal cell, state governments may provide necessary assistance to Waqf Boards as is available to other government departments. The Waqf Amendment Act, 2013 inserted section 104B which requires government agencies to return any waqf property under their occupation to Waqf Board or Mutawalli within six months from the date of the order of Tribunal. The government may become tenant or pay compensation as decided by Tribunal. It is expected that this will benefit auqaf in India. Syed Khalid Rashid favours Alternative Dispute Resolution through negotiation, mediation, arbitration etc. which will encourage out of court settlements, however, he cautions not to take this root in serious matters involving ownership of waqf properties. Regarding properties under occupation of State, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf recommended that such property be jointly developed and revenue proportionally shared by state government and Waqf Board. Since waqf properties are heavily encroached, the emphasis of scholars and society has been on the preservation of waqf assets. However, there has been a shift from preservation to development in recent past. The development leads towards preservation of waqf properties by safeguarding both property and benefits of that property. Section 32(4)(5)(6) deals with the development of waqf properties. Waqf Boards are authorized to develop a potential waqf property as an educational institute, shopping centre, market, housing or residential flats etc. and for this purpose it may direct the Mutawalli concerned to develop the property. If the Mutawalli fails either of reluctance or incompetence, the property can be taken over by the Board for development and will be returned to the Mutawalli after all expenses incurred by board are recovered along with interest from the income of the property developed. However given to the weak financial condition none of the Waqf Boards could effectively carry out the developmental programme.

From Exclusion of Muslims in India by Arshi Khan (ed.), PP. 275-276

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS –CDPP joint webinar on “National Education Policy and India’s Minorities”

An on-line seminar on “National Education Policy and India’s Minorities” was jointly organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, and the Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP), Hyderabad on September 14, 2020. Initiating the discussion, Riaz Shaikh from the CDPP said that a closer look at the new education with special reference to the minorities had become imperative in view of the apprehensions expressed in different circles. The policy was being discussed by both educationists and its practitioners, he noted.

Sanjida Akhtar from the TISS, observed that the first national education policy unveiled in 1986 was modified in 1992. Then came the Right to Education Act (RTE) and now the New Education Policy had been formulated with a claim that this will address most of the issues. Highlighting the key proposals of the NEP, she said that academic structure had been changed from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4 format. Similarly, the undergraduate degree would be of four years with multiple options of exit. The regulatory bodies for higher education, like university Grants Commission, AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education) has been replaced by the Higher Education Commission (HECI). Master’s degree would henceforth be of one year with

the discontinuation of Master of Philosophy programme.

In schools the focus on education has shifted from examination to multilingualism. According to her, promising postulates of the new education policy were multi-disciplinary courses, entry/exit, experimental learning, teacher-student ratio of 30.1/25.1, learning how to learn and breakfast along with the mid-day meal.

She concluded that by the new system, undue autonomy would be given to self-governing colleges.

Abdul Shaban from the TISS, who spoke on “NEP: A New Beginning”, said that the new education policy should be seen in Muslim perspective

education would open floodgates of privatisation, this could also offer an opportunity to Muslims to set up schools and create institutions of global standards. Reshmi Sengupta from Flame University, Pune pointed out that the new education policy spoke of education in a broader perspective. Thus the issue of the education of the minorities should not be seen in isolation.

The Sachar Committee Report, the Evaluation of Sachar Committee recommendations and the Kurien Committee Report had red-flagged the plight of Indian Muslims. Due to a variety of reasons, Muslim students were generally enrolled in public institutions. Opening of private educational institutions had serious implications for the marginalised communities, she said.

Another problem to which she drew attention was limited accessibility of girl students to digitalisation.

John Kurien, an education activist, held that the NEP-2020 had nothing to specially offer Muslims. Compared to Hindus, Muslims had the

lowest enrolment in schools and institutions of higher education. He said that Muslims had been deliberately omitted from the policy document, though the SC/ST found a mention. Quality of school education was not up to the mark and the situation of drop outs was bad. He called for making available free education and text books. The situation of Muslims was bad because they were facing an existential crisis. He also emphasised the need for looking at the life trajectory of the groups and focusing on social, mental and moral development of students of each



Speakers of the Webinar

as far as its futuristic utility was concerned. It should also be examined whether it would be based on multi-cultural identity or diversity. In the context of pathetic condition of the quality of education the teacher was the main focus. Welcoming vocational education policy he observed that all colleges would have uniformity in standard. But minority institutions had been missing lending credence to the apprehension that the federal structure had been undermined.

This was corroborated by the fact that madarsas and Urdu found no place in the policy. Though the new

school. He favoured working closely with government and creating a rich cultural and natural environment.

Prof. Pankaj Jain from GyanShala focused on school education and described as incorrect the figure of 3 percent of the GDP being spent on education. Instead, 6.5 percent of the GDP was being spent on it. He said that one teacher for 45 students was the norm. As far as enrolment in elementary education was concerned, it stood close to the universal norm. NEP goals should be consistent with the salary of teachers. The implementation of NEP also depended on financial and functional viability. A politically, technically, financially and administratively viable solution was needed. He also called for protecting NEP and RTE extension from unviable design errors.

Sanjeev Gupta from the E&H Foundation, shared his experience at the ground level and pointed out that 72 per cent poor children from the first generation failed to make it to the school. The rate of drop outs stood at 50 percent. Main challenges before the extension of education were poverty and the quality of education being imparted to children with poor economic background. He also red-flagged the security issue of girls above 7 or 8 years of age. He affirmed that Hindu-Muslim binary did not matter; what mattered was poverty.

Osama Manzar from Digital Empowerment Foundation observed that we had failed at large, though we had a vibrant democracy, the Constitution and the NEP. There was nothing positive as we did nothing worthwhile during the past 70 years. He questioned if education was accessible to children, particularly those belonging to SC/ST, who could not sit in the same room in which upper caste students sat. Referring to the ground reality with regard to our work on digital facilities, he said that it was almost non-existent in rural areas.

Digital accessibility was a must for achieving the goals of modern education and the NEP was poised to provide such facility, he added.

Sanjiv Phansalkar from Vikas Anvesh Foundation summed up the research done in the field of higher education. He said that the presence of institutions of higher education belonging to Muslims was 10 percent. Kerala had the maximum number of minority institutions controlled by Muslims and Christians. Who controlled the institution was not as important as the quality of education. He regretted that the number of Muslim teachers was very small and it needed to be raised with a view to creating the best thinking and a secular outlook in them. Compared to Kerala, West Bengal lacked the facilities of education. Though in Kerala, Muslims were backward, yet they took a lead in setting up colleges due to the dominance of trading class, he concluded.

The chairman of the IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, pointed out that structural bias of the bureaucracy against Muslims came in the way of opening new educational institutions. He cited the case of Bihar during Lalu Prasad Yadav's regime. Despite clear orders of the chief minister, a proposal to set up an educational institution was shot down by officers, though all the requirements were fulfilled. On the other hand, all such proposals made by non-Muslims were okayed. Similarly, he said that in West Bengal, schools in Muslim-dominated areas were subjected to neglect. In such circumstances, Muslims were in a fix and undecided about where to go, from whom to seek help and what to do. Communal biasness were discernible at both state and national level, he remarked.

In his concluding remarks, the secretary general, IOS, Prof. Z M Khan, said that the NEP was not very conducive to the system. NEP did not take into account the vast structure of

education. Quality of teachers was another area of concern that had not been addressed. He observed that hegemonisation and homogenisation was the new policy of the powers that be, which was far away from fair. He held that the new education policy was all about future situation. It was anybody's guess if the present situation of the disadvantaged would improve, he concluded.

IOS Lecture on "Sustainable Living – The Way Forward" (for Earth Sake)

A lecture on "Sustainable Living – The Way Forward (for Earth Sake)" was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on September 9, 2020. Introducing the topic, Shaikh Nizamuddin, senior member of the general assembly of the IOS, said that the Institute had the distinction of holding several symposia on issues relating to science and technology. These lectures had been inspiring, educating and creating awareness about the dangers inherent in the excessive use of technology. Describing Dr. Sultan Ahmed Ismail, Director of Eco-science Research Foundation, Chennai, who delivered the lecture, as a "proactive environmentalist", he noted that Dr. Sultan Ahmed Ismail is an Indian soil biologist and ecologist known for the use of vermitech to recycle organic garbage into valuable fertiliser utilising local varieties of earthworms. It is also applied in soil bioremediation.

In his lecture, Dr. Sultan Ahmed voiced concern over the environment being degraded by solid waste, effluents, encroachment, climate change; etc. Every NGO claimed to restore natural habitat, but the fact of the matter was that their own legs needed rehabilitation, he remarked.

Dr. Sultan Ahmed observed that it is God and nature only that restored the ecological balance by way of air, soil and water. These were the basic needs of human creature that formed

important components of the ecosystem. In nature, nutrients cycled and energy that flowed also posed the question if an elephant or a dog ate more. He said that we were predominantly vegetarian and when it came to ecology, it meant a house to live in. With the growth of technology and industrialisation, ecology came into conflict with economy.

Vegetarianism could be explained in terms of the diversity of vegetables. Referring to Beltsville sexing technology, he said this was called bio-diversity by which poultry could be grown in 48 days in place of 78 days, which was the normal time. This also applied to fish. Natural habitat of birds had been disturbed and the relationship of birds suffered. A situation had developed in which a sparrow says, "I am vanishing from cities". Ecological imbalance thus had a cascading effect on our flora and fauna. Another aspect of the ecological imbalance was human-animal conflict as a result of depleting space for wild animals like elephants, lions, tigers, bears; etc. Referring to elephant corridors created to ensure their safe passage, he said that they required a larger area, so that they could move freely in groups in search of fodder and water.

Zoonotic diseases posed another danger which could spread viruses to humans through animals. Commenting on the ill-effects of mechanised farming, he said that a tractor might till land, but not produce dung to increase fertility of the soil. He suggested that the IOS could undertake a study on the economy of ecology. With deforestation and felling of trees, the oxygen produced by them too had

diminished. The economic value of ecology could be determined by the fact that 61 percent of the rain water went to rivers, 10 percent was utilised by dams and 29 percent went waste. So was the case with micro-organisms that converted the dead body of an animal into soil after its decomposition in a pit. Excessive use of urea weakened the sustainability of the soil and the consumption of such crop by humans led to adverse effect on our digestive system, respiratory system and circulatory system. Soil had mind of its own as it decomposed everything put into it, he added.

Dr. Ahmed held that there was the question of soil fertility versus soil health, adding that no precaution was taken while using pesticides. Due to indiscriminate use of pesticides, only



Dr. Sultan Ahmed Ismail delivering the lecture

about a fifth of the nutrients reached the target plants and the rest evaporated into the air. He said that unchecked use of fertilisers and pesticides resulted in water contamination, particularly in rural areas. Several million people were suffering due to consumption of contaminated water.

Dr. Ahmed pointed out that today bio-diversity had been linked to biotechnology due to water becoming scarce. Rain harvesting had become necessary to cater to the needs of

drinking water and irrigation. Sharing his concern about the use of plastic as a health hazard, he said that one should take home a tri-colour bearing blue, yellow and green colour everyday to demonstrate their harmful effects on human health. He advised the people against using plastic bottles without a number. Microplastic should be avoided at all costs. He said that even the dessert was unsafe for human consumption. He also opined that digitisation classes would widen urban-rural divide because the majority of rural population did not possess digital devices. Besides, power supply was erratic in villages and internet connectivity was not available. Compared to physical classes, digital education put economically weaker students in a disadvantageous position, he concluded.

**IOS Lecture on
"Can Religion
Survive in the Age of
Science?"**

The Institute of Objective Studies hosted an online lecture on "Can Religion Survive in the Age of Science?" on September 5, 2020. Prof. M R N Murthy, a distinguished professor at the Institute of

Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, Bengaluru, delivered the lecture. Prof. Murthy was a professor of molecular biophysics at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. He was given the prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award for his outstanding contribution to physical sciences.

Shaikh Nizamuddin initiated the discussion.

Dr. Imtiyaz Hasan, who conducted the proceedings.

Prof. Murthy observed that science was completely a divine and marvellous experience. Since its advancement from the 10th century, science had come a long way in making wonderful strides. Did anybody ever imagine that a plane can rise as high as 10 kms above the land with a payload of 183 kgs? Similarly, one of the marvels which the world could boast of was BurjKhalifa complex that was as one km tall. Nobody had imagined earlier that a tablet, an exhibit in a US city would say, "Please touch". This was a stone brought from the space. He said that human intellect had a GPS which told one where to go, whither to turn. There were various things, like nuclear technology that had been brought to humans by science.

It was due to the advancement of scientific knowledge that China was going to double its atomic arsenal. Today, it was amazing to see a machine that could see your whole body. He noted that science dealt with the physical world based on observations. Different from other fields, science was quantitative. Science could be 100 percent sure though scientific laws were tentative and based on assumptions. Science was a world of believables as knowledge from senses was believable. It was the belief on which we thought that having a number of children would lead to the problem of survival. Here logic came into play as everybody believed that a balance of population was necessary to feed people. Humans had material comfort today that was unimaginable in earlier times, he said.

Referring to the destructive aspect of science, Prof. Murthy said that due

to scientific power, the Britishers exploited India to the hilt. There were certain aspects that went against religion. Science gave isolation. Religious knowledge was only qualitative and not quantitative as in the case of science. In religion, there was a demarcation between true and false. For instance, Islam was based on the Quran which was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH). In Hinduism, no particular scripture was prescribed for professing religion. He remarked that actually religion was not progressive, adding that by and large there was big difference between reality and practice among its adherents.

Religion gave one a sense of purpose. He said that people were intolerant and violent because they practised religion. Giving the example of Goa, he observed that Christian



Prof. M.R.N. Murthy delivering the lecture

missionaries were forcing people to convert to Christianity. Several cases of torture of those who refused to become Christian had been reported. In China's Xinjiang province, Muslims were being stopped from performing their religious rituals and forced to shun religion. In Bangladesh, they pretended to be religious, but in practice they were intolerant. As against this, science had nothing to do with such things. He said science does not recognise the existence of God. This was also a distinctive aspect of science. Most of the religions of the

world were founded before the development of modern science. He admitted that there existed conflict between religion and science. Today, the world had become a global village where a man could have breakfast in Mumbai, lunch in London and dinner in New York, he observed.

Prof. Murthy maintained that the change was so fast that the world today was different from what it was nine months ago. The whole world would look like a small unit from the prism of technological advancements. Its cosmopolitan character was manifested in the composition of population in different cities of the world. For instance, one could find people from many ethnic groups in New York. He said that science had confronted religion throughout history. That was the reason why Socrates had to

consume hemlock due to his adherence to morality and ethnics. Similarly, Galileo had to face persecution from the Church. Science had made physical and biological gazing easy. The Sun's family was our only home, though separated by 150 million kms. It was science that discovered the age of the universe

which was supposed to be 13.8 billion years old.

Listing other inventions, he said that bacteria were seen when microscope was developed. It was advantage science that most of the power needs of France were fulfilled by its atomic energy. Another feat made by science was the discovery of Molecule of our DNA which separated skin, colour, eye, hair, etc.; of one individual from the other. He observed that long, long ago, our earth was devoid of life. The most amazing thing

on the earth was the human brain which showed that man occupied a central place in God's concern. He pointed out that lately Darwin's theory had been challenged. Prof. Michael J. Behe was one such scientist who challenged Darwin's theory of evolution in his book "Darwin's Black Box". He said that influence of science vs. religion spurred humans to look at life. Study of science came in the way of religion and the latter needed to reconcile to scientific discoveries. Herein lay the question of the survival of religion. He opined that science education was bound to become universal.

Laying emphasis on the need for empathy mutual respect and understanding between Hindus and Muslims in India, Prof. Murthy said that this was the only way out of the current impasse.

Dr. Imtiyaz Hasan, made an impassioned plea for coming together of the educated people of both the communities to find solution to vexatious problems. He said that the caste system penetrated deep into Indian society with the result that it had taken the form of an institution. But talent knew no religion or caste; it was universal. He held that science did not contradict everything in religion, but certain things one learnt in childhood were in conflict with religion. Shaikh Nizamuddin pointed out that religion did recognise science and both of them were complementary to each other. The Quran itself talked about science and urged the humankind to respect morality and ethics, he said.

In his concluding remarks, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z M

Khan, held that man was not guided by utilitarianism. It was the ethical values that decided what was good and what was bad, because these values were universal. If one wanted to understand religion, he must go into the essence of it. Since ethical and moral values were universal, they should be recognised by the scientific community, he concluded.

IOS on-line Lecture on Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life: A Review of Dr. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's Book

As part of a series of on-line lectures, the Institute of Objective



Prof. Mohd. Fahim Akhtar Nadwi delivering the lecture

Studies organised a lecture on "Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life: A review of book written by Dr. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi" on August 29, 2020. Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi conducted the programme. Giving his talk on the subject, head of the department of Islamic Studies, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, Prof. Mohd. Fahim Akhtar Nadwi, said that Maqaasid-e-Shariah (purposes of the Shariah) was the area of Dr. Raji's specialisation.

Dr. Raji, who died in 1986, had studied at Jamia Al-Azhar, Cairo and universities in the US, and delivered lectures on Islam in several countries.

Prof. Fahim Akhtar noted that the book elucidated Akhlaq (etiquette), Ummah and the family which had a bearing on different aspects of life. He explained how the spirit of Tawhid came to Islam and how disastrous it could be to abandon this. He made a comparative study of other religions and explained the basic tenets of Islam and its philosophy. Commenting on the Islamic Ummah, Dr. Faruqi admitted that it was full of contradictions. Owing to such contradictions, Muslim countries, despite having abundant resources, commanded no position of consequence in the world today.

The Quranic injunction that "God never alters the fate of those who do not take an initiative themselves", held true in the case of Muslims all over the world. He said that Dr. Faruqi attributed the present state of affairs in the Islamic world to the abdication of Muslims' responsibility as a balanced Ummah.

According to Dr. Raji, it is only Islam that leads the way to success in this corporeal world and the life after. The whole creation is the handiwork of Allah who created the world and blessed human beings with a system of governance that controlled everything on the earth. As against the Islamic faith that every creature derived its strength from Allah, the West believed that the human being was at war with God. According to this belief, human beings were all powerful. Islam presented a concept that emphasised that it is only Allah, who equipped this mundane world with vast resources, so that His subjects could benefit from them. Man was commanded to follow the system created by Allah, which means thereby

the entire creation belongs to Allah only and none else, he said.

Commenting on Dr. Raji's approach to the essence of religious experience, Prof. FahimNadwi said that the Quran endorsed Christianity, the pre-Islamic Abrahamic religion. He noted that the religion diluted the significance of Allah. This belief put the status of Allah even below man. He said that Islam for the first time established the entity of Allah as separate from humans and explained how this religion erroneously conceptualised Allah and His subjects. The concept which Islam preached offered easy entry to an individual into Islamic faith. Tawhid was the soul of Islam, essence of Islam and source of knowledge.

Referring to DrFaruqi's views on the principles of metaphysics, Prof. FahimAkhtar said that according to Hindu belief, the entire temporal system was faulty and required separation from the world. Christians too believed that God had to get Himself crucified for this fault. But DrFaruqi did not endorse such theories and believed that the kaynat (creation) was Allah's gift to the mankind. Allah created the cosmos all alone for the benefit of His subjects. According to Islamic thought, every creature on earth fulfilled His purpose and functioned in tandem with each other. Every creature was in place to benefit human species, he said.

Commenting on the principles of ethics as propounded by DrRaji, he pointed out that Allah made man the best among all the creatures on earth. In fact, He appointed man as His representative and ordained him to be courteous to others. By doing so, Allah placed human beings above the angels. This was due to the importance of courtesy that Allah assigned man a big responsibility.

Prof. Nadwi explained DrRaji's interpretation of social order as outlined in the Quran. He said that

social order meant social life which included performances like Namaz and Hajj. It was Tawhid that spoke of a society in which relationship of love and brotherhood could be established. This was one of bases on which a political or social system rested. Islamic political thought stemmed from this very idea of social cohesion. Masjid, according to him, became the epicentre of social and religious activities.

Commenting on DrRaji's views on the principle of world order based on Islamic philosophy of Tawhid, he said that the entire world community was related to each other as brothers and sisters. Tawhid was the best way to connect with the people. Elaborating the point, he observed that the rights enjoyed by the Jews were the same as were enjoyed by other communities, like Christians, Parsis, Hindus, etc. He quoted the Quran in this connection, and held that all the people were commanded to enter Silm (peace). Islam asked the Ummah to accomodate the adversaries if they negotiated peace. He said that Islam prohibited forcible conversion to the faith. Nor should money play a role in bringing non-Muslims into Islamic faith.

Prof. Nadwi pointed out that calligraphy received a boost due to the concept of Tawhid as propounded by the Quran.

The on-line lecture was presided over by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish and attended by several Islamic scholars in different parts of the country and abroad. The lecture concluded with a vote of thanks by Shah AjmalFarooqNadwi.

IOS Lecture on Rejuvenation Biotechnology: Why Age May soon Cease to Mean Aging

An on-line lecture on "Rejuvenation Biotechnology: Why Age May soon Cease to Mean Aging" was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on August 22, 2020.

The lecture was delivered by Dr. Aubrey de Grey, a biomedical gerontologist based in Mountain View, California, USA. He is also the Chief Scientific Officer of SENS Research Foundation, a California-based biomedical (research charity that performs and funds laboratory research dedicated to combating the aging process). In addition, he is the Editor-in-Chief of Rejuvenation Research, the world's highest-impact peer-reviewed journal focused on intervention in aging.

He began his talk with professing love for India and its people. He said that the aging problem was not confined to a country or continent. But precautions by those who were over 65 years of age could slow the process of aging. This was particularly applicable to the citizens of the United States of America. It was a happy augury that in India, the average age of an individual was increasing. But as compared to India, spending on health care was much higher in terms of the GDP in the US. By 2040, spending on healthcare in US was estimated to be 34 percent of the GDP. In 2010, the US government spent about 1.16 trillion dollars on healthcare of the people of 65 years of age. One of the reasons for aging could be imputed to poor spending on healthcare, he said.

Dr. Grey held that infectious diseases had been prevented due to better sanitation, vaccination, proper intake of antibiotics and disease carrier control. He said that age-related diseases had not claimed many lives. Thus if the halting of the aging process was not impossible it was at least intractable. Aging was the combination of some bodily processes. Metabolism played an important role in maximising longevity. Damage to metabolism could cause infertility and a range of diseases. He noted that diseases were of two kinds - communicable and congenital. TB, Malaria and HIV fell under the category of communicable diseases

whereas tay-sachs and measles came under congenital diseases. Alzheimer's, cancer and atherosclerosis were chronic diseases. Prescribing measures to prevent aging, he said that proper diagnostic procedure should be adopted.

We should intervene and try to correct increase metabolism to prevent damage. It was due to a better metabolism that some animals lived longer than others. Aging was a machine and not designed to last 100 years, but only 10 years. He said that aging was a phenomenon of physics, not biology. Comprehensive preventive maintenance was how we already kept simple machines. Referring to implementation progress, there was need for total synthesis of every type of endeavour. He clarified that whatever the press might tell the world, he and his team did not work on longevity. Besides, there were ethical considerations, like over population, unequal access to facilities, immoral dictators, boredom and collapse that led to cuts in longevity, he said.

Dr. Grey pointed out that there was nothing to say about slowing the aging process. There might be pathological prescription and damage repair. With the repair of ovary, women might bear child at any age. But its fall out might lead to a spike in population. He hailed India for doing some research in the field. Thus the country was apportioning a big responsibility in taking the research forward. Explaining the complexities that created roadblock to research, he said that medicines were costly and were feared to affect economy. Calling for the use of anti-aging proteins, he said that a lot of proteins had important

role. We could maximise the behaviour of proteins, he concluded.

In his concluding remarks, Secretary General, IOS Prof. Z M Khan, who chaired the event thanked Dr. Grey for giving a pleasant surprise to aging people. Religions of the world too had offered prescriptions for living a longer life and these should be taken into account while conducting research.



Dr. Aubrey de Grey delivering the lecture

IOS Lecture on "Challenges and Opportunities of Modern Civilisation"

An on-line lecture on "Challenges and Opportunities of Modern Civilisation" was organized by the Institute of Objective Studies, on August 22, 2020. Delivering the lecture, Dr. Sudhir Singh, professor of Political Science, Dayal Singh College, Delhi University, observed that human civilisation was considered to be six thousand years old. It was industrial revolution in the 16th century that led to expansionism in Africa. Many theories of human civilisation came up but all of them received recognition after industrial revolution. One of the theories about India were put forward by Chinese travelers - Hiuen Tsang and FaHien who wrote extensively about the country, its culture and people. He also referred to Prophet Mohammad

(PBUH) who experienced the gentle breeze of knowledge coming from the East-India.

Referring to globalisation, he remarked that a number of regional and international economic cooperation had been reached by the countries for economic cooperation. One of them was BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) outside the European Union that looked after the interests of European countries. In this connection, he especially mentioned the name of an American citizen of Indian origin, Prof. JagdishBhagwati, who is a Professor of Economics at Columbia University and an ardent supporter of globalisation. He said that there was rat race among developed nations to exploit natural resources of less well-off countries. Africa being a virgin continent, not much of its natural resources had been

exploited so far. But, there was a race now for taking possession of its natural wealth. A new international economic order controlled by developed nations had emerged leading to a new wave of industrialisation in Africa and Asia. But the fall-out of heavy industrialisation had resulted in disastrous effect on human health. Owing to unchecked industrialisation in China, about one million populations was suffering from bad air. He complained that the Paris Agreement on the control of pollution was not being followed in letter and spirit.

Dr. Singh described the agricultural crisis in developing countries all over the world as very serious. Whether it was Latin America or Asia, situation remained the same. He said that a huge number of Latinos could be seen working as domestic hands in US cities without enjoying citizenship

rights. They left their countries as they were poor and did not possess land to perform agricultural operations. Instead of setting up agriculture-based industries, farmers were losing interest in agriculture and giving land to multinational companies. Compared to the US which contributed a bare 5 per cent to GDP in terms of agriculture, India and other Asian countries' contribution was 25 per cent. He said that developing countries were weak and did not resent the imposition of certain obligations of international agreements by developed nation. Commenting on the looming nuclear threat over human existence, he pointed out that the number of legitimate nuclear weapons stood at 13,000. If at all a nuclear war broke out in future, it would be multilateral and involve many nations. About 40 million populations was feared to suffer due to such hostilities. The situation in war-ravaged Syria was a grim reminder to the sufferings that the civilians faced. About one million people had been killed in Syria and a large number of kids was seen begging in Turkey. Similarly, hunger and malnutrition were taking a heavy toll of men in Africa where 10 million people were dying of starvation, he added.

Commenting on Covid-19 pandemic that was currently sweeping through the world, Dr Singh said that in 1918 about 17 million people were killed by a similar epidemic called Spanish flue. He observed that viruses were deliberately created to target population. So far, eight lakh people had died of Covid-19. He also opined that the artificial intelligence would prove dangerous if not controlled before it was too late. He highlighted the human rights violations in China, North Korea, Myanmar and Russia. He

said that gender inequalities still existed and women were not being given their due share. In the US, women candidates remained unsuccessful in elections to vice-presidency due to lack of support. Women enjoyed political power but social and economic power was still beyond their reach. Gap of income among countries and within the countries was very wide. About 30 per cent countries were controlling world's resources. Stressing the need for equal distribution of resources, he wanted the developing countries to unite and raise a voice against the developed



Dr. Sudhir Singh delivering the lecture

nations.

In his concluding remarks, the Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. Z M Khan, said that the growing trend of internationalism was giving rise to solidarity among developing countries. We could not face challenges without cooperation, he remarked.

At the end, ShaikhNizamuddin proposed a vote of thanks.

IOS on-line Workshop on National Education Policy 2020

A one-day on-line workshop on National Education Policy-2020 was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on August 19, 2020. Spread over four sessions, the proceedings of the webinar were conducted by the member of the IOS general assembly, ShaikhNizamuddin. Introducing the topic, he briefly explained the purpose

of deliberations on the important policy document that had wider future ramifications.

The theme of the session-I was devoted to "Vision and Ideational Dynamics". Former Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, Prof. FurqanQamar, who initiated the discussion, held that one should be cautious while going through the New Education Policy-2020 that had just been cleared by the Union cabinet. With the name of the human resource development ministry having been changed to the ministry of education,

no room was left for further consultation or suggestion on the subject. The draft that had been put in the public domain, had several versions and it was very difficult to decide which of them should be consulted. He pleaded that instead of rejecting the policy outright, thought should also be given to what the government intended to do. It had to be decided

whether to go by semantics or the substance of the policy. The formulation of the new education policy had an integrated approach with several positive points having been factored in.

One of the main highlights of the policy was that during the course of education a student would learn everything up to class 12 or 15. The problem of high incidence of drop outs had been addressed by creating a modular structure under which if a student opted out of the course, he would be given a certificate. He said that lessons on ancient cultural and ethical values would be put in place and the vocational course would become a part of the curricula. Undergraduate degree programme would now be of four years duration. Besides, education would be multi-

disciplinary, so that a student could possess some knowledge of other subjects.

However, this would become a reality only when all the institutions were equipped with multi-disciplinary facilities which majority of them were lacking today. He said that the new policy sought to do away with the practice of the affiliation of colleges with universities. They would be empowered to award degrees. He described these measures as progressive and forward looking. Revival of ancient Indian culture was not a new document as it was recommended much earlier by the Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission. The new policy mentioned 46 arts which had been taken from the works of BanaBhatta. These included drama, music, dance; etc.

Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission too mentioned 18 arts in its report. While Muslim education institutions like Aligarh Muslim University and others had been left out, Takshila and Nalanda universities found place in the document.

He observed that while the term minorities had been used at two places, Urdu to which Muslims were emotionally attached, was completely blacked out. The document said that education would be imparted in the mother tongue but there was no clarity regarding home or local language. While madarsas and Muslim or minority educational institutions had not been mentioned, alternative schooling system found reference which triggered the speculation that these institutions might be covered under the new scheme. Though the policy was under implementation, its semantics and substance could still be debated. He advised the community to exercise caution on the new policy.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Magadh University, Bodhgaya, Prof. M. Ishtiyag, observed that every government had its own agenda to implement. This government too had an agenda and the new education policy formed a part of it. No government could fulfill the aspirations and expectations of all the people. Commenting on the state of affairs in schools and universities, he said that many of them were without

final draft of the policy came out after comprehensive churning by a number of organisations and academicians to develop India as a global knowledge super power.

Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, pointed out that the document must be examined in a wider perspective. The new policy was status quoist as the domination of elite classes persisted, leaving marginalised and weaker sections to fend for themselves. Instead of taking education system to the threshold of 21st century, it looked back to centuries old past where the voiceless were denied their democratic rights. He felt that the provisions made in the NEP (New Education Policy) were not reformed. Hence, experts in education must examine them in today's context. He said that the



Speakers of Workshop on National Education Policy 20

organisations representing various communities and their suggestions were not taken into account while finalising the draft. He noted that since the needs of masses in general and communities, regions etc. were not met, the current system should not be left to itself.

While reiterating IOS commitment to keep a close watch on education, he took the government to task for privatising utility services, including higher education, adding that it had become a fashion to privatise everything. He said that public funding to the institutions of higher education was necessary in order to maintain standard. Underlining the need for a thorough exercise on the document, he cautioned that any laxity in this respect might cause irreparable damage to our diverse culture. He said that the will of the government was discernible in the document. Referring to the government's bid to get Indian History re-written on ideological lines, he said

teachers getting their salaries. Highlighting the features of the policy, he held that teaching in mother tongue from class 5 would be introduced. Ten plus two system of education in secondary classes had been replaced by 5+3+4. Similarly, one body had been put in place to look after higher education. Besides, collaborative arrangements would be made between Indian and foreign universities to award joint degrees. Institutions of higher learning would be mandated to become self-dependent by generating their own resources. Cultural heritage of education, the one found in Nalanda and Takshila would be revived by promoting classical languages like Pali, Sanskrit and Persian. Post-graduate courses would be of one year for under-graduates who had completed 4 years. Adult education formulation would be developed and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) would be roped in to perform the task. He said that the

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that it should be taken as a fact sheet. But this government did not believe in it and was going ahead as planned. Opposing centralisation of education, he noted that the country was yet to spend 6 per cent of the GDP on education as the current spending stood at a little over 2 percent. Cultural sensitivity should have been presented in a more sincere manner, he added.

National Convenor, RTE Forum, New Delhi, Ambarish Rai, called for looking at the draft of National Education Policy in a wider perspective. The introduction to the document stated it was the third such education policy. He said that the Kothari Commission report, which came in 1968, took note of social concern. Things took an abrupt turn in 1986 when market economy received a boost on the heels of liberalisation. Current education policy was being unveiled following the recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee. This committee was preceded by the Subramaniam Committee. He observed that by the 86th amendment to the Constitution in 2001, right to education was made a fundamental right. Painting a grim picture of the state of education, he said that today one lakh schools were without a single teacher, with 52 per cent of them without potable water. Besides, posts of one lakh teachers were vacant.

He charged the government with talking more and doing nothing concrete. The government had in a way negated the right to education. In the new educational framework, there was more emphasis on childhood education, realising little that India was too late on this. He expressed reservations about the 5+3+3+4 formula and leaving students to the mercy of Anganbadis. He also expressed dismay over the deletion of

a substantial portion of Kasturirangan Committee recommendations of the Right to Education. As against the opinion of the experts that the spending on education must be more than 6 percent of the GDP, the country was currently spending about 3 percent.

This went against the election manifesto of the BJP that promised 6 percent spending on education. He said that in order to replenish spending on education, the UPA government had levied a cess. But that was discontinued by the present



Speakers of Workshop on National Education Policy 2020

dispensation. India had emerged as a big education market of the world and multinational companies were anxious to invest in \$18 billion on-line education business. It was a “conspiracy”. That was the reason why the companies with developed technology had conspired to implement on-line education. He also opposed vocational education from class 6. Referring to Urdu, he said that it found no place in the document, adding that the language did not belong to any particular religious community. It very much belonged to the country.

He said that this government was hell-bent on privatising education by way of centralisation and de-regulation of higher education. Government was unwilling to provide funds to universities and other institutions of higher learning. It had asked them to generate their own funds putting the

future of the poor, Dalits and other weaker sections, who had been somehow affording cheap fees, into jeopardy. He held that the new policy had been formulated under the pressure of players in the private sector.

He expressed concern that the children of about 12 crore people who had been rendered jobless due to lockdown in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic were unwelcome to government schools that lacked basic facilities like potable drinking water, lavatory and handwash. In Jharkhand about 40,000 schools were closed down on the ground that they were unviable, he concluded.

In his concluding remarks on the first session, Prof. ZM Khan said that the IOS would discuss the new policy threadbare. All the issues related to the policy would be taken up item-wise so that the views of experts were reflected in the final assessment.

Session-II

The second session focused on ‘Content Analysis of Major Recommendations: Structural and Functional Details’. The session had eminent educationist PA Inamdar as the first speaker who expressed the view that new policy had nothing to do with the minorities. In between, several committees would be formed to suggest ways and means of giving practical shape to it. There was a mention of mother tongue as a medium of teaching. But the process of technology-based education had already begun. People must ready themselves for meeting the new challenges thrown by the policy.

He said that the goal of providing a government school within a radius of one km had not been achieved, and it

would be prudent to go to the court for direction to the government to do so. He wanted to know why the members of the management of colleges sent their children to English-medium schools. They preferred English-medium school over the madarsas because the former assured them a bright future. He suggested that the madarsas should impart education in three shifts. While modern education be imparted in the morning, religious and regulated education be given in the noon and evening respectively.

He asked the Muslim community leaders who were working in the field of education to strengthen existing schools instead of opening new ones. An English teacher could be engaged on a monthly salary of about Rs 7,000 per month. He counselled the Muslim community not to have an inferiority complex, or think negatively. The community should forge ahead by setting negative thinking aside. He said that of late, the value of knowledge had increased leading to decline in the value of certificate courses. Thus, there was need for the community to fully utilise knowledge. Everybody had talent but it could be proved only when the opportunity came along. The community's approach should conform to the circumstances and it should train youth in the use of technology, particularly working on-line, he emphasised.

Prof. Shoeb Abdullah from the Department of Teachers Training and Non-formal Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, raised certain questions on the feasibility of the measures to streamline school education, so that the goal of access to universal education was achieved. While there was no mention of agencies that would provide quality education, anganbadis were set to be especially trained to educate 3-5 age group children who would be handed over to teachers later. This had been named as foundational literacy. He said that the document referred to

trained volunteers without clarifying who would they be to receive children for imparting education. He expressed the fear that a few people would be engaged as teachers with cheap remuneration to them.

There was also a mention of philanthropic organisations as players in the field of education, but their names or nature of their activities, had not been disclosed. Gurukuls, Pathshalas and Madarsas had been referred to as inputs. There would be four stages of education: 5 years, 2 years, 3 years and 4 years. Emphasis had been laid on the development of multi-lingualism. This meant development of mother tongue and the local language. He said that the document also spoke of enforcing three-language formula. National assessment centres were sought to be set up lending credence to the fear that the way for centralisation of education system was being paved. He insisted that thousands of schools had been shut because of non-existence of school complexes. This apparently pointed to the attempt at privatisation of school education, he said.

Prof. Anita Rampal, Professor, Elementary & Social Education, University of Delhi, observed that the policy that took five years to make came out after decades. Referring to quality, equity and flexibility of education as outlined in the policy, she said that the RTE was being dismantled. One of the casualties of this policy had been the state of Rajasthan where about 22,000 schools were being closed down for being "unviable". Holding that learning was different from tutoring, she said the reference to tutor in the policy carried no meaning. It was also futile to link two years of primary schooling to Anganbadis. Similarly, foundational education would be compromised because of the damage it might cause to children coming from backward areas at the initial stage.

Another provision which drew criticism was vocational education to boys after 16 years of age on the plea that it did not recognise exclusion of the backward and deprived communities. She said that this policy amounted to legitimising drop-outs which was being questioned by several science academics. There was lack of commitment to good quality of education. Universal access to education meant nothing today. Privatisation of education too was being questioned in certain quarters. Indian Institutes of Technology had also questioned the NEP, which inter alia left the decision of hike in the pay of the teachers of IITs to the Board of Governors. The setting up of National Testing Agency and the National Assessment Centre for guiding states, also came under criticism. She noted that digital technology was being employed whereas only about 60 percent students had access to this device. She hailed the decision of Hyderabad University not go ahead with on-line education. Summing up the session, Prof. Shoeb Abdullah said that by 2030, teacher education programme would become compulsory. Graduates opting for programme of education (B.Ed.) would have to spend two years for entitlement to the degree. Since 90 percent B.Ed. courses were being run by private institutions, they would face closure. Under the new arrangement, only 10 percent of them would survive, he noted.

Session-III

The third session focused on Issues related to minorities and marginalised sections of society. Initiating the discussion, Controller of Examinations and Director (Admissions), Central University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Prof. Parveen Pandit emphasised the need for context analysis of the document. Teachers were grounded in Indian ethos and being the crux of the entire school system, the administration (principal) should organise workshops

and programmes for the development of leadership. Multi-disciplinary institutes must be put in place to establish proper linkages of the institutions of higher learning with schools. She pleaded for developing curricula designing ability among Ph.D. scholars. She also called for continuous development of faculty of education. While several institutes of teacher education were doing well, experimental schools were yet to receive attention, she said.

Islamic scholar and educationist from Hyderabad, Maulana Omar Abedeen, complained that attempts were being made to privatise educational institutions by ignoring the very nature of India, which was moving towards homogeneity by giving a silent burial to the age old tradition of diversity. Inclusion was much touted since 2011 but the real motive behind this was to deprive the marginalised sections of their rights. A senior RSS leader's statement that 60-70 percent demands of the saffron organisation had been met in the NEP left no one in doubt that the new education policy was heavily tilted in favour of majoritarianism. He said that about 2.5 lakh proposals were sent to the government for consideration but it failed to cut much ice. By and large the suggestions made by saffron outfits were accommodated. For the first time, the NEP was silent over madarsa or maktab, though there was reference to alternative schools, it had not been defined. For higher education, national education curriculum was being designed to make it mandatory for candidates to qualify for it. Similarly, scholarship available to SC/ST and minorities was being abolished. Henceforth, scholarship would be awarded only on merit.

Secularism and socialism were being replaced with the Vedic philosophical thought. The period of Muslim rule after 12th century AD had been deleted from courses. Both the Prime Minister and the education

policy laid more emphasis on output than input. Commenting on the on-line education, he said that it was being accorded legal status. But according to a report prepared by the Hyderabad University, only 25 percent students had access to on-line education. In order to give a boost to on-line education, Google had reached a multi-billion dollars agreement with the Reliance Group. Arabic, one of the leading languages and was being spoken all over the world, had been replaced with Sanskrit, which was the language of only 25,000 people. He said that the national curriculum framework would be based on ancient Hindu culture in which Panchatantra would be included. The proposal to form a group consisting of SC/ST and transgenders would give rise to racism in the country. He suggested that Muslim organisations should remain alive to the situation and consider making their own education policy.

Senior journalist, Bhasha Singh, while questioning the time of unveiling new education policy, stated that the secular fabric of the Constitution was being destroyed. This policy sought to make sweeping changes in text books by undoing all finer things that India stood for. Not a single line had been devoted to affirmative action. This simply meant that SC/ST would be given a raw deal. This policy was a multi-layered sugar-coated pill that tasted sweet but had bitter effect. Marginalised and other weaker sections were not going to benefit because the number of 50,000 institutions had been reduced to 3,000. Besides, this was a hundred per cent excluded for women who were not well off. Instead of taking education to the door steps of the poor and deprived sections, it was being marketed to benefit the rich. This had started having a cascading effect on students who could not afford a digital device to attend virtual classes. Several suicides by students had been reported in the recent past.

Describing the stress on awarding diploma in case a student left the degree course mid way as an exercise in futility, she said that a diploma could not fetch a job. Referring to the study of ancient Indian culture, she said that it meant nothing but the imposition of Manuwadi culture that was anti-women. Similarly, there was much excitement over the tie-up with private institutions. These were none else but lakhs of Saraswati Shishu Mandirs run by the RSS across the country. As far as vocational education at an early stage was concerned, it entailed nothing but providing training to students in the traditional vocation of their caste. The slogan of Naya Bharat (New India), Naya Vidhan (New System) went against the interest of Muslims, Dalits, marginalised sections and women. She concluded by saying that on-line education might not benefit 85 percent of the population that consisted of deprived sections, but the Ambanis would be major beneficiaries.

Session-IV

The fourth session was devoted to 'Opportunities and Interventions'. Prof. M Aslam, Former Vice-Chancellor, IGNOU, New Delhi, who was the first speaker, observed that around two lakh suggestions on NEP were received by the ministry of human resource development. He opined that the NEP was a comprehensive and well-worded document that offered a framework for the destiny of the country. He pointed out certain problems that needed to be addressed. One such issue was related to universalisation of education. The second was pertaining to the position of RTE after the new policy was implemented. Still there was a big challenge to the existing 10+2 system. There was not yet any clarity about State intervention. The issue of increasing number of drop-outs too had not been addressed and nobody knew how the government would go about it. While the Centre expressed its

commitment to provide holistic education, the strategy for developing analytical and decision-making skill had not been specified. In order to improve the quality of teaching, four-year B.Ed. programme (multi-disciplinary) was being designed. Commenting on the development of sign language, he said that the IGNOU was credited with introducing it for the first time in the country. He also felt that introduction of vocational education from class 6 would have wider ramifications. Laying stress on equity and access to education, he said that it should be inclusive and equitable. He believed that the NEP was a guiding document for the future of the country. Since education ensured economic and social development, opening good schools was the need of the hour, he added.

Prof. M AfzalWani, Professor of Law, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIP) and Vice-Chairman, IOS, Delhi, explained how legal regime or legal system changed with the change of world order since 1995. Hundreds of laws were amended to offer opportunities and interventions. NEP too was in line with the changes that had been taking place. NEP, he said, referred to plurality, inclusiveness and the Constitution. The new education policy document should be implemented to attain constitutional goals. These goals had been clearly specified in the Preamble to the Constitution, Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy.

He believed that the NEP could prove beneficial for Muslims if they could utilize it. The onus of nation-building devolved on Muslims also. He said that he had explained the relationship between law and education in his book 'Constitutionalism and Education'

some 22 years ago. He commented that it was not always rightful for the Muslim community to tread the course of confrontation, but welcome the new policy and grab the opportunity. At a time when privatisation had become a catchword, why not think of being investors? Privatisation had opened gates for private sector which would require qualified people. Muslims could prepare themselves for the race. Privatisation also offered an opportunity to establish Urdu medium schools. He advised the members of the community against dejection and asked them to learn Sanskrit and excel in that language. Referring to the message of the Qur'an, he said that the Holy Book preached peace, religious tolerance and guided the humankind. A Momin was a person of discernibility and he should not feel pain about other religions. He called

with many important countries of the world.

Presiding over the webinar, the chairman, IOS, Dr. M. ManzoorAlam, recalled an event in 1987 where the veteran BJP leader KR Malkani was present. He said that Malkani was asked why the RSS was always making conflicting and confusing statements. Malkani retorted that it was a part of their policy. Referring to the NEP, Dr. Alam pointed out that its intent was to impose a hierarchical system above all. He indicated that a committee of experts would be set up to go into all aspects of the document and prepare a report. He said that it was a tested formula to abolish language and the history of a community to make it non-existent. Today, Israel was pursuing the same policy. He stressed that similar webinars should be organised at the regional level.

In his concluding remarks, Prof. ZM Khan remarked that by organising a webinar on the most topical issue today, the IOS reiterated its commitment to demonstrate its concern. Indian history had reached a crucial juncture and any reticence on the issue would be called to question, he pointed out.

At the end, Sheikh Nizamuddin proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers as well as those who attended the webinar.

Maulana Amin Usmani Remembered at IOS Condolence Meet

An on-line condolence meeting was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on September 8, 2020 to mourn the death of the Islamic scholar and secretary, Islamic Fiqh Academy, Delhi, Maulana Amin Usmani. Presiding over the meeting, the chairman, IOS, Dr. M. ManzoorAlam, described the death of the maulana as a big loss to Islamic scholarship and the



Speakers of the condolence meeting to remember Maulana Amin Usmani

upon the people of all faiths to come together and make the nation great. It was time to assess the performance of Muslims during the last 800 or 1400 years. He urged the community not to be fearful of change and respond to it in accordance with law.

He stressed the need for promotion of Arabic language to the extent of getting our access to the world's best source of knowledge, the Qur'an. It should become our home language, he said. This can further help us develop international understanding as required by Article 51 of the Constitution of India and give boost to India's relations

Ummah. He would be ever remembered for his services to the IFA as an administrator and planner who popularised it in the entire Islamic world. He was farsighted and ceaseless in his endeavor to see the community live life in conformity with highest Islamic values. He was the moving spirit behind IFA's novel idea of bringing different schools of Islamic scholarship together, he added.

General Secretary of the IFA Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rehmani, emphasised the need for holding a seminar on life and works of the maulana. Unfortunately, this was not currently possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recalling his association with the maulana spanning 25 years, he said that they talked together almost daily either by phone or via e-mail. They had cordial relations and there was no occasion for the estrangement of these relations. He observed that they shared identical views on several matters pertaining to Islamic jurisprudence. Maulana Usmani had a close watch on the affairs of the Islamic world, especially the Arab countries. He had a deep concern for the Muslim community. Principal of the Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, Maulana Saeedur-Rehman Azmi, said that he was an alumnus of the seminary. Besides possessing Islamic knowledge, he had managerial skills.

Asstt. Secretary General, All India Milli Council, Maulana Mustafa Rifai Jilani Nadwi, said that Maulana Amin Usmani had a multidimensional personality which held him in good stead on Muslim issues and the world Islamic fraternity. Maulana Jilani observed that he was a well-read Islamic scholar. Editor of the Urdu quarterly, the Mutaleaat, Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, held that Maulana Amin Usmani had a deep sense of concern for the Muslim community and always thought of its well-being. He had a deep interest in the issues that were facing Arabs and Palestine, Prof. Usmani said.

Held at the conference hall of the IOS, the condolence meeting was attended by Islamic scholars, prominent citizens and many admirers of the maulana. The proceedings of the meeting were conducted by the in-charge of Urdu unit, IOS, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi.

IOS Condole Prof. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui's Death

The Institute of Objective Studies organised an on-line condolence meeting on September 21, 2020 to recall the services of the noted Islamic scholar and the ex-chairman of the Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University Prof. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui who passed away recently. Presiding over the meeting, the General Secretary, IOS, Prof. Z M Khan expressed deep grief over his death and described the professor as one of the best chroniclers of Sirah in India. His work on the subject was widely acclaimed and rated very high. He would be known for his work for ever, Prof. Khan said.

As a special guest, the Vice-chairman of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Umri, remembered his close association with Prof. Siddiqui and said that his warmth earned him many friends and admirers. His monumental work on Sirah needed no introduction. Another special guest, Maulana Nazrul Hafeez Azhari Nadwi said that Prof. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui, earned merit by his exhaustive research on the life of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). The books he wrote spoke of his erudition and deep scholarship, the maulana noted.

The Editor of the Urdu quarterly, Mutaleaat, Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, observed that Prof. Siddiqui's contribution to the study of Sirah could never be overlooked. His books on Sirah would open new vistas of research in the field.

The finance secretary, IOS, Prof. Ishtiaque Danish recalled Prof. Siddiqui's close association with the Institute and said that the maulana was actively involved in its activities. The

IOS had the distinction of publishing several of his books, he said.

Head, department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Prof. Obaidullah Fahad Falahi, described him as an Islamic scholar par excellence. He said that Prof. Siddiqui's books threw light on several less-known aspects of Sirah.

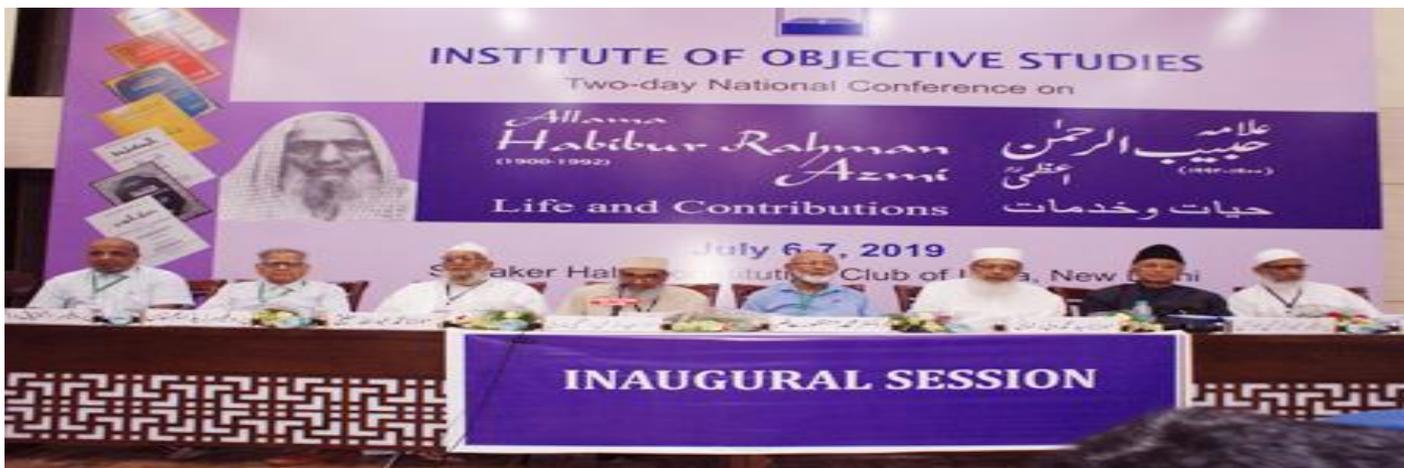
Secretary, Jamat-e-Islami Hind, New Delhi, Dr. Raziul Islam Nadwi, observed that Prof. Siddiqui's works had put him on a high pedestal of research of Islamic studies. Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, JMI, Dr. Md. Mushtaq Tjarwi, opined that he was a doyen among today's Islamic scholars. His books were of high quality.

The chairman of IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, described Prof. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui's death as a personal loss and said that his association with the noble professor went back several decades. He was also a member of the IOS general assembly and several of its projects were based on his ideas. One of the IOS projects, "Intellectual and Cultural Legacy of Islam", was prepared under his guidance. Under the project, 'Masaadir-i-Sirah Nabwi', received extraordinary response in the sub-continent. The second and third volumes of the project named as 'Masaadir-i-Hadith and Masaadir-i-Tasawwuf' respectively had been completed and were ready for release. But, unfortunately, Prof. Siddiqui died before their release. He said that Prof. Siddiqui was honoured by the IOS with the fifth Shah Waliullah Award in September 2005 in recognition of his rare services. He remarked that in his death the IOS had suffered an irreparable loss. The webinar ended with a vote of thanks extended by the convener, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi, in-charge, Urdu Unit, IOS, who also conducted the proceedings.

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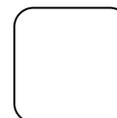
L-R: Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish, finance Secretary, IOS; Prof. Z.M. Khan, Secretary General, IOS; Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Mughesi, president, All India Milli Council; Maulana Saeedur Rahman Azmi, principal, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow; Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, chairman, IOS; Maulana Syed Mohammad Wali Rahmani, general secretary, All India Muslim Personal Law Board; Prof. A. R. Momin, former professor of sociology, University of Bombay and editor, IOS Minaret (a web journal); Dr. Masood Ahmad Azami, Grandson of Allama Habibur Rahman Azmi



L-R: Prof. SMA Rizvi, professor and HoD, deptt. of computer sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia; Prof. M Muzammil, former vice-chancellor, Dr. BR Ambedkar University, Agra and MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly; Brigadier Syed Ahmad Ali (retired), Director of Jahangirabad Institute of Technology, Barabanki-UP; Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, chairman, IOS; Prof. Manzoor Ahmed, former vice-chairman of IOS and ex-director of JIT; Prof. Aquil Ahmed, vice-chancellor of Integral University, Lucknow; Prof. ZM Khan, Secretary General, IOS

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