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Thought for the Month

Ramadhan is the (month)
In which was sent down
The Qur-an, as a guide
To mankind, also clear (Signs)
For guidance and judgment
(Between right and wrong).
So every one of you
Who is present (at his home)
During that month
Should spend it in fasting,
But if any one is ill,
Or on a journey,
The prescribed period
(Should be made up)
By days later.

Al-Quran- 2:185

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FOCUS

Brother in Islam! Essentially every work which we do has two components. The first is its purpose and spirit; the second, the particular form which is chosen to achieve that purpose. Take the case of food. Your main purpose in eating is to stay alive and maintain your strength. The method of achieving this object is that you take a piece of food, put it in your mouth, chew it and swallow it. This method is adopted since it is the most effective and appropriate one to achieve your purpose. But everyone knows that the main thing is the purpose for which food is taken and not the form the act of eating takes.

What would you say if someone tried to eat a piece of sawdust or cinder or mud? You would say that he was mad of ill. Why? Because he clearly would not have understood the real purpose of eating and would have erroneously believed that chewing and swallowing constituted eating. Likewise, you would also call someone mad who thrust his fingers down his throat to vomit up the food he had just eaten and then complained that the benefits said to accrue from taking food were not being realized. Rather, on the contrary, he was daily getting thinner. This person blames food for a situation that is due to his own stupidity. Although outward actions are certainly necessary, because without them the bread cannot reach the stomach, the purpose of eating cannot be achieved by merely fulfilling these outward actions.

Perhaps you can now understand why our 'Ibadah' has become ineffectual and empty. The greatest mistake of all is to take the acts of the Prayer and Fasting and their outward shape as the real 'Ibadah'. If you do so, you are just like the person who thinks that merely performing four acts – taking a piece of food, putting it in the mouth, chewing it, and swallowing it – make up the process of eating. Such a person imagines that whoever does these four things has eaten the food. He, then, expects that he should receive the benefits of eating irrespective of whether he pushed down into his stomach mud and stone, or vomited up the bread soon after eating it.

Otherwise, how can you explain, that a man who is fasting, and is thus engaged in the 'Ibadah of God from morning till evening, in the midst of that 'Ibadah, tells a lie or slanders someone? Why does he quarrel on the slightest pretext and abuse those he is quarrelling with? How dare he encroach on other people's rights? Why does he make money illegally and give money to others illicitly? And how can he claim, having done all these things, that he has still performed the 'Ibadah of Allah? Does this not resemble the actions of that person who eats cinders and mud and thinks that by merely completing the four requirements of eating he has actually done the job of eating?

How, too, can we claim to have worshipped Allah for many long hours throughout Ramadan when the impact of this whole exercise in spiritual and moral upliftment vanishes on the first day of the next month? During the Id days we do all that Hindus do in their festivals, so much so that in some places we even turn to adultery, drinking and gambling.

Contd. on page-11

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Lecture on “Usury to Interest: History and Possible Lessons”

A lecture on “Usury to Interest: History and Possible Lessons” was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at its conference hall on July 30, 2016. Delivering the lecture, Dr. Kaleem Alam, Researcher, Islamic Economics Institute (IEI), King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, observed that usury meant excessive interest charged on the borrower which was illegal and was prohibited. With the passage of time, those who traded or practised usury were disliked by the society. This brought the clergy face to face with the rulers who became more assertive leading to the development from usury to interest. He explained that those

business of usury “usurers”. The Jews were known to be dealing in usury, though it was prohibited to them by Judaism. They continued to do the business as usual by interpreting religion in their own interest which, according to them, was permitted. They practised of usury while dealing with non-Jews. He maintained that Christianity was opposed to the practice of usury.

Dr. Alam pointed out that the Jews used to serve as bankers to the rulers. Usury was considered as an evil while interest had a different connotation. He said that the Jews and kings were looking for a way out of the impasse that was created due to usury. Thus came into focus interest which was

defined as an extra amount paid on the principal borrowed amount. Tracing the history of interest, he noted that it was allowed as putting a limit on usurious charges. The charges were gradually reduced and eventually usury was abolished in 1854. Referring to the translation of both usury and interest in Arabic as “Riba” and “faiyedah” respectively, he sought to know why “Riba” should be replaced. He said that the term “sood” means in Urdu what “riba” did in Arabic.

Introducing the topic, Prof. Javed Ahmad Khan of the Centre for West



L-R: Prof. Javed A. Khan and Dr. Kaleem Alam

doing business in India in accordance with the Islamic banking system which was based on profit and loss sharing. He pleaded that in modern times when the global economy was based on inter-country trading, Islamic banking could not be viewed in isolation. He said that Islamic banking system attracted the attention of the developed countries in the wake of world financial crisis in 2008. He said that the fundamentals of the financial system had not changed as there was not much difference between conventional and Islamic banking. As far as India was concerned, there was no question of one community or the other but the rationality that was more

important for introducing such a banking system.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman, IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, said that like any business, interest-free banking too required official permission in the country. Then there was the question of underhand practice which existed in the absence of proper permission from the government. But, in the case of micro-financing there were minimum conditions to secure permission from the government. Perhaps that was the reason why micro-financing turned out to be a flourishing business. The Islamic banking did not take off in India because the government did not allow it, he said. There was no dearth of hawks in the government to oppose the move.

Commenting on the popularity of Islamic banking in today’s world he said that an eminent economist had predicted that there would be interest-free banking everywhere in the next 50 years. He

the previous government at the time had agreed in principle to allow Islamic banking in the country, but those with a communal bent of mind opposed the move and it remained a non-starter. While admitting that the real test of interest-free banking would come only when the licence to do business was granted, he said that the Islamic banking system had not as yet become fully operational even in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Bahrain, had, however, emerged as a country where experts in the field of Islamic economics were engaged in framing rules for interest free banking. He wondered where the system was not being honestly pursued in Muslim countries. Might be there were threats from certain influential countries to

desist from introducing the Islamic system of banking. In our country where the Constitution guaranteed right to freedom of various kinds, a beginning could be made. Gujarat was said to be considered as the first destination of Islamic banking. If that happened, it would pave the way for other places in the country to follow suit, he added.

Earlier, Hafiz Nazeerul Hasan recited a verse from the Quran. The lecture was attended by economists, researchers, university students and teachers, social activists and prominent citizens, including Chaudhary Nasir Ahmad, Md. Asad, Dr. Md. Ahsan Qureshi, Dr. Tariq Ashraf, Mumtaz Ahmad, Dr. Riyazuddin, Fasih Ahmad, Md. Mohsin, Ajmal Farooque Nadvi, Asrar Jamai and Safi Akhtar.

Strong Urge, a Must for Benefiting from Quran:

Dr. Md. Akram Nadwi

Presenting the correct interpretation of the Quran in the comparative study of Taimiya and Allama Farahi at the Committee Room of the IOS on July 21, 2016, the Islamic scholar and a research fellow of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Dr Md. Akram Nadwi said that the urge to benefit from the Quran should be strong. Besides, he said, it was necessary to understand how the one to whom the Quran was revealed as well as we understood it. He clarified that while Ibne Taimiya considered the Quran as the word of Allah, Allama Farahi treated it as a book.

Secretary, Publishing Academy of Jamat-e-Islami, Dr. Razi Islam Nadwi opined that the better method to write a

commentary on the Quran was to do it in the light of its commands. Then the guidance must be sought from life of the Prophet (PBUH). He said that Imam Ibne Taimiya's *Tafseer-o-Quran* (exegesis of the Quran) has been published in 36 volumes. Three volumes are devoted exclusively to the methodology of exegesis. The organizational principle of the Quran presented by Allama Farahi is unique and distinctive. Every ayah is related to other *ayahs* and every *surah* is related to other *surahs*.

In his presidential remarks,



L-R: Mohd Wasim Fahmi, Dr. Nikhat Nadvi, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Dr. Mohd Akram and Mr. Khalid Nadwi

knowledge was bound to crop up. In the absence of the difference of opinion, it was difficult to keep track of the times and its challenges. The Quran commanded the faithful to come to it with the problems as it offered complete solutions. He held that the difference of opinion was obvious and if this was not so, it would do injustice to the Quran. He said that the IOS was considering ways how to acquaint people with the Quran. He informed that the IOS had formed the Quran and Science Forum with a view to popularising the teachings among the young minds.

Earlier, Maulana Khalid Nadwi introduced the honoured guest as also the subject. Dr. Nakhat Hussain Nadwi conducted the proceedings.

IOS organises Discussion on 'Liberty and Fraternity in the Constitution: A Review' in collaboration with DPLA, CFD and AIMC

The Institute of Objective Studies organised a discussion on "Liberty and Fraternity in the Constitution: A Review" on July 16, 2016 at Nehru House, Jamia Millia Islamia in association with the Democratic People's Lawyer Association (DPLA), Citizens For Democracy (CFD) and the All India Milli Council (AIMC).

Introducing the theme, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Professor, school of Law & Legal Studies, G. G. Singh Indraprastha University and Asstt. Secretary General, IOS stressed that it was was cardinal for unity. It strengthened

the belief that all human beings belonged to the same earliest parents. In the absence of basic traits of humanism, human vision got narrower. If that happened, man would destroy everything before being destroyed himself. Referring to the Quranic teachings, "Best among you is one who performs best" he said that this was also applicable to our Constitution which set for itself the goal of fraternity. Violation of the Constitution meant violation of humanity. Noting that the Prophet (pbuh) established norms of humanity, he maintained that global humanity was possible only by promoting fraternity.

Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Prof. M. Aslam, lamented that even after more than six decades of the adoption of the Constitution, we were still discussing its finer points. We failed to educate people about liberty and fraternity that were the corner-stone of our Constitution. It would have been better if students were also taught about the basic features of the Constitution. Commenting on the situation obtaining in the country, he laid emphasis on the need for inter-community dialogue between Muslims, Christians and among other minorities. He also suggested inter-community dialogue between Muslims and the majority community in order to reach a consensus on broader issues confronting the nation. Calling for starting the process of dialogue without loss of time, he said that reconciliation, not confrontation was the need of the hour. Giving a wakeup call, he said that we must act before it was too late. He also stressed the need for legal literacy at the grassroots level for better understanding of Constitution.

Eminent journalist and human rights activist, John Dayal assailed the new education policy which he said was laced with saffron colour. He objected to the use of rites according to the customs of a particular religion at foundation-laying on government's inaugural functions. In this connection, he cited the function held at Amravati to lay the foundation for the new Capital of Andhra Pradesh where Sanskrit hymns were chanted in complete disregard of the secular character of the state. Similarly, Shri Vedic shlokas were chanted at a ceremony organised to mark the

induction of the indigenously-built Tejas fighter plane into the Indian Air Force.

He said that there was a bagful of contradictions in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution. While ban on cow slaughter was being vigorously pursued, other finer points in it did not attract the attention of the protagonists. He accused the Central government of squeezing out the non-governmental organisation (NGOs) by arbitrarily using provisions of Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA). This had forced several of them to

had integrated us with the rest. We claimed to be a religious country but if we violated fraternity, we would be violating the Constitution. Thus as concerned citizens we cherish certain values which enjoin upon us a duty to love our countrymen irrespective of their gender, caste and creed.

Calling for the evolution of national solidarity, he said that we must put our mind and concern together. Chairman, Democratic People's Lawyer Association, Arun Kumar Majhi, advocate, opined that the Indian Constitution was based on lofty ideals, but the ruling class had taken all the three branches of government in its control. He cautioned that liberty and fraternity were in jeopardy due to their usurpation by the ruling class. He held the Brahminical order responsible for destroying the liberty of Muslims and Dalits. He brought home his point by saying that Muslims and Dalits constituted 90 percent of jail inmates in the country. He said that they were languishing in jails for want of access to



L-R: Mr. John Dayal, Mr. N.D. Pancholi, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. M. Aslam and Mr. M.D. Thomas

(VHP), asking for putting restrictions on their leaders in order to circumvent them from vitiating the atmosphere of peace and harmony. He said he would drag them into a court of law if they incited people to violence.

Founder Director of the Institute of Peace and Harmony, MD Thomas held that we were part of a process that was on for the betterment of society. Quoting Dr Ambedkar he said, "If we live by the Constitution, it is good and if we do not live by it, it is bad." He explained that the core of our existence was freedom and it was fraternity that

regulate.

The Chancellor of Bharti Shree Peitham, New Delhi, Swami Sarvanand Saraswati, held that religion never came in the way of the promotion of humanity. He said that the one who promoted humanity and human values was dear to God. He called upon the people to rise above caste and creed and strengthen humanity.

Secretary General, Citizens for Democracy, Dr. ND Pancholi, said that we had to go deep into history in order to understand the true meaning of liberty and fraternity. Man had

struggled hard to attain freedom. Thus freedom was of utmost value. He said that obstacles to liberty, freedom and fraternity were placed by bringing in harsh laws like TADA, POTA and UAPA. He stressed the need for awakening the people against the curbs on freedom and for building up a campaign against UAPA.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman of the IOS, Dr M. Manzoor Alam, exhorted the youth to come up and define their role in the present context. He quoted a line from the famous poem of Dr Iqbal, *Mashriq-o-maghrib mein teray daur ka aaghaz hai* (this is the beginning of your time from east to west). He said that we had been debating Fundamental Rights under the Indian Constitution for the last 65 years and this debate would last till the Constitution lasted. Echoing views of Prof. Aslam, he said that the All India Milli Council had already been organising such inter-community dialogues. He held that the course would be further pursued. In order to take the course of inter-commu forward, he informed, a two-day function in this connection would be organised in Gaya (Bihar) on September 24 and 25, 2016 in collaboration with the Magadh University, Bodhgaya.

Gaya had been advisedly selected as the venue of the meet on religious understanding because of its significance as one of the most important seats of Buddhism, he said.

He was at pains to explain that a hate campaign in the form of Islamophobia was being spread through the width and length of the world. This misinformation campaign

could be put to an end by concerted efforts of enlightened people of the communities other than Muslims. He complained that on hearsay Muslims were judged and no action was initiated against those who openly promoted hatred and ill-will against a particular community. Though the recorded statements of such leaders had gone viral, no action against them was forthcoming. He said that the law meant for the protection of Muslims and Dalits seemed to have become null and void. He urged intellectuals of all hues to sit, think and work together.

On this occasion, a seven-point



A view of the audience

Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, said:

1. This meeting reaffirms the right to liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship as guaranteed in the Constitution.
2. The said freedoms can only be guaranteed on the basis of non-violence. The concept of liberty is directly connected to democracy as observed by one of the fathers of the Indian Constitution, Acharya J B Kripalani.

3. These minimal rights are to be enjoyed by every person for free and civilised existence in society.
4. This meeting asserts that the right to liberty and personal freedom is an important fundamental right given by the Constitution of India under the articles 19, 20, 21 and 22 and is a tool for ensuring a democratic framework.
5. The term “fraternity” added to the Preamble of the Constitution, is in the spirit of brotherhood with the feeling that all people are children of the same soil, and is the cementing factor of the inherent diversities, and is not possible unless the dignity of each individual is preserved and mutually respected.
6. This meeting strongly feels that any proposed steps to deprive the educational institutions established by the minority communities, as per the of the Constitution, of the right of governing and running with minority character, are denial of the basic rights of the minorities, hence of fundamental rights. It also sees the efforts to raise the demand for a uniform civil code interference in the personal laws of different communities.
7. Democracy, fraternity, liberty can flourish only in an environment of equality, mutual respect and respect of the rule of law. Speech, words, writings and abuse of social and audio-visual media that incites violence and divisiveness,

hate and targeting of communities, must invite action under the law.

Earlier, a verse from the Holy Quran was recited by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadvi with translation in Urdu to mark the opening of the meet. In his welcome address, Prof. Eqbal Husain, Deptt. of Law, JMI cautioned against the lurking danger of fascism to society. The meet was attended by a good number of social activists, academics, researchers and prominent citizens.

Lessons from the Quran

The IOS Headquarters, as per its tradition, organized several Dars-e-Quran during the month of Ramadhan. On June 29 the IOS Chairman Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam explained some verses (18-24) of Surah Hashr. He emphasized that believers should always be ready to sacrifice everything they have including their wealth and lives. He further said that the Quran has addressed four kind of people: the believers, the infidels, the hypocrites and Mushrikeen those who associate deities with Allah. There is no ambiguity

believers (Ahle Iman) and the infidels (Kuffar). But the hypocrites and Mushrikeen are not necessarily distinct groups; they may be present among the believers as well. It is to be emphasized here that the hypocrites and Mushrikeen are of two kinds: the hypocrites in faith and the hypocrites in practice. A true believer cannot be a hypocrite in faith but in practice he can be. In this Surah, Hashr, those hypocrite 'Muslims' have been mentioned who were helping the Jews. The difference between the believer and the hypocrite is that the merits and characteristics of a believer's faith are

permanent whereas those of the hypocrites are not permanent and change colour with changing time, said Dr. Alam.

Dr. Alam also urged the audience to introspect and find out if we too are hypocrites in practice. We are in the month of fasting which is also known as the month of Taqwa. We can attain Taqwa through good deeds. Satan is always present in us and tries his best to misguide us. We have to frustrate and defeat the satan within and without. And this we can do by attaining Taqwa and by fulfilling our duty of preaching good to the people and preventing them from doing evil.



A view of the Dars-e-Quran

develop this quality in us that God is seeing us all the time. This is the way to attain Taqwa the far that springs from the love of God, said Dr. Alam.

In the first Ashra (ten days) of Ramadhan Maulana Muhammad Abdullah Tariq had delivered the Dars-e-Quran. He recited and explained verses 183-185 of Surah Baqra. He said that fasting, in some form, is practiced/observed by the followers of all religion. In Islam fasting is observed for one whole month. The fasting begins from the time of *Sahur* in the last part of night and ends with the sunset. Fasting is not only

abstaining from eating and drinking; it is also spiritual training which is called Taqwa. In Islam Taqwa means to save one self from something which could be bad for you. It is to prevent oneself from wrong deeds of all kinds. Maulana Tariq said that fasting and Taqwa are closely associated. Fasting develops in believers the quality of Taqwa. You avoid eating and drinking even when no one sees you. But you know that God is seeing you all the time and this feeling prevents you from doing wrong things. This is what we call Taqwa. He also said that fasting and Taqwa develop in believers the quality of Frqan. In other words

Furqan is that quality to distinguished between right and wrong. Maulana Tariq urged all the present to observe saum, fasting properly.

On June 20, Dr. Nikhat Husain Nadvi also delivered a Dars-e-Quran. He recited some verses from Surah Saff and explained them.

here are three hypocrite. These are: when he opens his mouth, he speaks a lie, when he makes a promise he breaks it and he tampers with Amanat. Dr. Nikhat also discussed the treatment of Bani Israel in the Quran. At several places the Quran has mentioned the blessings Allah had bestowed on them and then it also mentions what Allah did to them when they disobeyed Him. He warned that Muslims should not expect different treatment if they do not follow Allah properly. And if they have faith in Allah and wage Jihad in His way, He will surely help them, said Dr. Nadwi.

IOS Lecture on “Current Conditions of Progress in the Muslim World”

The Institute of Objective Studies organised a lecture on “Current Conditions of Progress in the Muslim World” at its conference hall on June 4, 2016. Dr. Zubair Zafar Khan, Asstt. Prof., Deptt. of Islamic Studies, AMU, who delivered the lecture, dwelt at length on the present state of progress in the Muslim world in the field of education, technology, economy, research and innovation, space science, media, sports, etc. He pointed to certain amazing facts about the standard of development in the Muslim majority countries in comparison to some leading nations of the world. Commenting on the total world population of about 7.068 billion, he said that Christians accounted for 33.39 percent followed by the Muslims who were 22.74 percent. While Hindus constituted 13.8 percent, Buddhists accounted for 6.77 percent, Sikhs 0.35 percent, Jews 0.22 percent, Bahais 0.11 percent and the followers of other religions constituted 10.95 percent. This also included the figure of non-religious people and atheists who accounted for 9.66 percent and 2.01 percent respectively. He held that the Muslim population was 1.65 billion and the Jewish population stood at 14 million Muslims were 117 times the Jews.

Dr. Khan noted that almost three-quarters of the words’ 775 million illiterate adults were found only in ten countries—India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Brazil, Indonesia and Congo. Out of these ten, six were Muslim majority countries. Referring to the number of universities, he said that the Muslim countries were far behind in higher education as the United States of America alone accounted for more universities compared to their number put together in Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco and Iran. The number of the universities in the Muslim world remained at 2621. Similarly, the



L-R: Dr. Zubair Zafar Khan, Prof. Afzal Wani and Mr. M.M. Khan

encouraging. While Tunisia and Malaysia accounted for 1,837 and 1,643 researchers per million respectively, Japan and the USA had 5,158 and 3,979 researchers per million respectively. He held that the average number of researchers per million in Muslim majority countries was 193 against 1,020 in China. The number of Ph.Ds produced by the Muslim countries was much below the number in the developed and developing countries like, China, USA, India and Finland. While China and USA produce 48,987 and 48, 069 Ph.Ds per year, the entire Muslim world could produce a meager 5,933.

Dr. Khan observed that Muslim countries also lagged behind in the collection of books in their libraries. The National Library of Malaysia had 1,300,000 volumes followed by King



A view of the audience

the USA had 34,528,818 volumes followed by the National Library of China with 28,980,777 volumes, National Library of Canada with 26,006,054 volumes, Russian State Library with 17,000,000 volumes, and British Library with 15,500,000 volumes. He said that so far as the number of Nobel Prize won by the followers of different religions was concerned, Muslims won only 13 Nobel prizes since 1901 as against 423 won by the Christians and 193 by the Jews.

The Harvard University produced 150 Nobel Laureates, the Cambridge University produced 91, MIT 84, and Oxford University 27.

Commenting on export, Dr Khan said that the sum total of the exports of all the Muslim majority countries was 2.195 trillion dollars in 2012 while

Arabia with 1,100,000 volumes, Taksim Ataturk Library in Turkey with 600,000 volumes and Punjab University Library in Punjab, India with 1,000,000 volumes. On the occasion of the 10th World Islamic Congress in the USA had 34,528,818 volumes followed by the National Library of China with 28,980,777 volumes, National Library of Canada with 26,006,054 volumes, Russian State Library with 17,000,000 volumes, and British Library with 15,500,000 volumes. He said that so far as the number of Nobel Prize won by the followers of different religions was concerned, Muslims won only 13 Nobel prizes since 1901 as against 423 won by the Christians and 193 by the Jews. The Harvard University produced 150 Nobel Laureates, the Cambridge University produced 91, MIT 84, and Oxford University 27. Commenting on export, Dr Khan said that the sum total of the exports of all the Muslim majority countries was 2.195 trillion dollars in 2012 while China alone exported goods worth 2.021 trillion dollars and USA recorded 1.612 trillion dollars worth of exports. He noted

while 60 percent Christians were involved in industrial production, hardly 16 percent Muslims were engaged in such activities. Similarly, he said, employment conditions in some Muslim countries were worse. While 77 percent population of Burkina Fasso was unemployed, 60 percent in Turkmenistan, 59 percent in Djibouti, 48 percent in Senegal, 45 percent in Kosovo and 35 percent in Yemen were jobless. Referring to poverty among various countries, he said that 80 percent population of Chad was living below poverty line. Similarly, 70.2 percent population of Sierra Leone was living below the poverty line with Nigeria and Comoros accounting for 70 percent and 60 percent respectively.

Referring to the number of newspapers published in the Muslim countries, he said that Turkey accounted for the largest number of newspapers among the Muslim-majority countries. While the United Kingdom had 652 local newspapers USA and Turkey accounted for 9,712 and 91 newspapers respectively. He said that till date 27 Muslim countries had won 118 gold medals collectively in Olympics, whereas USA alone won 1,063 gold medals. The USSR, UK, Germany, Italy and France won 473, 245, 244, 235 and 229 gold medals respectively.

Dr. Khan pointed out that there were several sectors, including computer manufacturing, computer software and programming and aircraft engineering, in which Muslims had no representation. He said that there were some other areas where Muslim representation left much to be desired.

Manager (Research), IOS Data Bank and formerly associated with NCAER, M.M. Khan highlighted the activities of the IOS data bank and informed that it could boast of possessing valuable data relating to different subjects. He said that a cursory look at the statistics indicated the Muslims were lagging in almost all fields of activity.

In his presidential speech, Asstt. Secretary General, IOS Prof. M. Afzal Wani held the topic for the discussion was consciously selected in order to know where we stood today in terms



A view of the Eid Milan Programme

of achievements in different fields vis-à-vis the world. He said that the IOS would continue to organise such programmes in future as well.

The lecture began with the recitation of a verse from the holy Quran by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadvi. Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi compered the proceedings. The lecture was attended by a good number of scholars, students, social activists and prominent citizens, including Yasir Basher, Md. Ehtisham, Col. AR Khan, VSM, Prof. Shafiq Ahmad Khan Nadvi, Prof. Hasina Hashiya, Moidul Islam, Mumtaz Ahmed, M. Aquil Khan, Chaudhary Nasir Ahmed, Javed Hasan, Md. Shoeb, Abdul Haq Falahi, Imtiyaz Ahmed Qasmi, Shamsuddin, and Tanvir Alam.

IOS organises Eid Milan Programme

The Institute of Objective Studies organised an Eid Milan programme on July 17, 2016 in collaboration with the All India Milli Council. Important people from different walks of life, including non-Muslims, attended the function. Notable among those who spoke on the occasion included Maulana Asrarul Haq Qasmi, MP, Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. Afzal Wani, VB Rawat, veteran journalist Santosh Bhartiya and Franklin Caesar.

Highlighting the purpose of the Eid Milan, Dr. Md. Manzoor Alam said that peace and justice were basic prerequisites for a good society. Such functions afforded us an opportunity to sit together and exchange views of mutual understanding. In a country like India with its diverse social set-up, such

meets were needed the most. He held that a decision had been taken to “sit, think, work and dine together”.

Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani said that Islam was a natural religion. It had accepted the expression of both misery and happiness. Explaining the meaning of Eid, he said that it meant happiness. He maintained that during the fast, eating drinking and sex was prohibited but allowed on the day of Eid. Fasting on the Eid day was prohibited as it created hurdles in celebrations and hospitality. Expression of joy was part of human habit.

Maulana Asrarul Haque Qasmi described the month of Ramdhan as the harbinger of patience and sympathy.

Editor of the weekly *Chauthi Duniya* Santosh Bhartiya held that he was caught in the vortex of Islam and Hindutva. But there was no harm in sitting together. This could be done over a cup of tea or even a meal.

VB Rawat maintained that the voice of justice and equality should not be allowed to be weakened as certain forces were working overtime to oppress them. He deplored that the media too was not reflecting the voice of the weak under the pressure of the powers that be. Media had only weakened as far as its support to the weak was concerned. He also viewed the events unfolding day after day in the context of the general elections to the UP State Assembly.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

ALIGARH CHAPTER

Does Science Matter for Muslims Today?

A discussion on the above topic was jointly organised by Aligarh College and the Institute of Objective Studies Aligarh Chapter on 18/06/2016

Prof. Mohmmad Muqim welcomed the speakers and the audience and underlined the importance and need of science for the progress of any community in general and muslims in particular.

Prof Amanullah Khan spoke on the contribution of muslims in the field of medicine, mathematics and other branches of science and exhorted the youth to excel in scientific studies and research.

On the given theme Prof Arif Suhail spoke at length as under

The question whether Science matters for Muslims can be answered by looking at the following three aspects at the community level.

1. Scientific attitude/temper in the community, which means continuous struggle for the truth,

not accepting anything without proof, and not accepting any information without knowing its ultimate verified source.

2. Contributions made in science by the community in terms of development of new understanding or new products.
3. A general attitude where science is considered as a means of success.

Muslims, as a community, fail in all the above three aspects: scientific attitude is not seen, contributions in science are negligible in the last 500 years, and science is not seen as means of success of the community.

However, at individual level there are instances of contributions, such as Nobel laureates, namely Pakistani Mohammad Abdussalam (Physics), Egyptian Ahmed Hassan Zewail (Femtochemistry), and Turkish Aziz Sancar (Chemistry).

The level of scientific publications, institutions and R & D expenditure in Muslim nations is very poor. The performance of all OIC countries taken together is less than India. Although Muslims excelled in science in a certain age but it is doubtful whether a scientific attitude was evident in the community even then.

So, in my opinion, Science does not matter for Muslims today. This situation is surprising because Quran exhorts Muslims to do science e.g. in (2:164). At other places Quran provides indications to Muslims to think over a matter and research in a particular direction, such as in (51:47), (21:30), (21:104), (91:7-8). Quran also claims that science will ultimately reveal the truth (41:53).

Prof. S. M. Hadi emphasized on the need for developing scientific temperament among the muslim youth so that their contributions could bring happiness in the life of common people.

After Mr. M. Serajuddin Khan proposed vote of thanks, the program came to an end.

KOLKATA CHAPTER

Panel discussion on the New Education Policy 2016

The government of India has drafted a New Education Policy and has invited suggestions for the improvement of education in the country. A draft has been floated by the Human Resources Development Ministry. To discuss the pros and cons of the new draft policy and to ascertain its effects on the minorities and other backward sections of the society, the Institute of Objective Studies, Kolkata chapter organized a panel discussion at Jibreel International School, Kolkata on July 28th, 2016. Various eminent academicians and educationists participated in the discussions and presented their suggestions. The discussion was presided over by Dr. Khalid Hussain, Head Master Monu Memorial High School. The convener of the discussion Mr. A Basit Ismail read out the important points of the draft New Education Policy and asked for suggestions from the participants. He said that in this limited discussion with limited time, a detailed discussion was not possible. However, it is a small but important effort makes a small contribution to the formation of the new education policy. The ministry has extended the last date for submission of suggestions till 15th August, 2016. That's why this discussion was held so that we could ascertain its effects on the minorities in particular and on the overall learning community.

Dr Shamim Akhter, HoD-Theology Department, Aliah University, Kolkata expressed his apprehension over the real motive behind this draft as he opined that the motive behind it seems more to be saffronisation of the education system than the strengthening of the education system. He said that serious thought should be given to this draft policy as he perceived dangers for the minority community in this new education policy.

Headmaster of Islamia High School, Mr Khalid Raza said that he was not very much optimistic about the new policy because he had seen many changes in policies and curriculum before. The standard of education was deteriorating and the minority students are not provided the best of facilities for learning and developing skills. In civil services also they are not very much visible. He also said that the teacher student ration in schools is very high. Ideally it should be 1:40 but practically it is 1:90 in most of the schools because vacant posts in schools are not filled. He demanded that in the New Education Policy, it should be ensured that the prescribed teacher student ration is maintained.

Dr Umar Ghazali Associate Professor at Hooghly Mohsin College under Calcutta University said that in 2005, the NCERT had formed a curriculum committee of which he was a member. The committee took five years to make its recommendations but later it was seen that grave distortions were made in important subjects like history. He suggested that the same mistake should not be made in the new policy and school curriculum. If the policy is made on constructive lines, it will yield good results otherwise it will do more harm than good. He also said that there were many vacant posts in colleges and universities that affect the productivity of the education system. He appreciated that the new draft policy puts stress on the filling up of vacancies.

Sohail Arshad from Eastern Post monthly said that in the draft, they

speak of promoting communal harmony, social cohesion and national integrity but at the same time, a school in Haryana was penalized for organizing Eid celebrations and a fine of Rs 4.5 lakh has been charged from the school. Other incidents of creating hatred and animosity have happened and the government has remained silent. This creates the impression that the motive behind the new policy is not formulating a universally acceptable education policy but something else.

was an infringement of the rights of minorities.

Mr Rafat Ali, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Jadavpur University suggested that education should be made more student and child centric and also remedial coaching should be provided by educational institutions to curb the menace of private tuitions.

Dr N. Sabah Ismail Nadvi, Chief Administer of Jibreel International School said that this draft of the new education policy is indicative of the days to come. The New Education Policy was going to cast serious aspersions on the educational scene of the minorities and dalits. He further said that the new education policy was going to curtail the powers of the state and more powers are going to be vested in the HRD Ministry. This is not a good sign. He said that people should raise their voice against the saffronisation of education system.



A view of the Discussion of New Education Policy

Mr. Zainul Abedin of IOS, Kolkata Chapter suggested that the government should include the setting up of central schools like Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya in minority dominated areas to give opportunity to minority students to study in the central school with reservations for minority students.

Md. Shahjahan, Vice Principal of Jibreel International School objected to proposed application of RTE Act Clause 12 ic to government aided minority institutions as he felt that it

President of the discussion, Dr. Khalid Hussain said that the NCERT committee formed in 2005 had been given five years to complete its task but the new education policy was being finalized in a very short time without giving ample time to the national educated masses to make deliberations and suggestions. Therefore, to make the new policy really fruitful, effective and acceptable to all the sections, the HRD Ministry must give more time to nation to study the draft and make suggestions. He felt that the minority community's views and apprehensions have not been taken into consideration while formulating the draft. The MHRD should consult

the intellectuals, academicians and minority organizations before finalizing the draft.

At the end, A. Basit Ismail summed up the points presented in the discussion. He said that the suggestions approved will be forwarded to MHRD.

A large number of teachers and intellectuals were also present during the discussion.

1. Serious thought should be given to the apprehensions, fears and views of the minority community before finalising the draft policy.
2. The teacher student ratio should be dealt with. Ideally it should be 1:40 but practically it is 1:90 in most of the schools because vacant posts in schools are not filled. In the New Education Policy, it should be ensured that the prescribed teacher student ration is maintained.
3. History should not be distorted and the education system should not be communalized.
4. Schools organizing programmes to promote communal harmony should be encouraged and not penalized as a school in Haryana was for organizing Eid celebrations.
5. The government should set up central schools like Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalay and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in minority dominated areas to give opportunity to minority students to study in the central school with reservations for them.
6. Proposed application of RTE Act Clause 12 ic to government aided minority institutions is an infringement of the rights of minorities. The rights of the Minority institutions should not be violated.
7. Education should be made more student and child centric and also remedial coaching should be

provided by educational institutions to curb the menace of private tuitions.

8. The new education policy was going to curtail the powers of the state and more powers are going to be vested in the HRD Ministry. This was not a good sign. The powers of the states should not be curtailed in the formation of syllabus and concerned rules.
9. To make the new policy really fruitful, effective and acceptable to all the sections, the HRD Ministry must give more time to nation to study the draft and make suggestions. The minority community's views and apprehensions have not been taken into consideration while formulating the draft. The MHRD should consult the intellectuals, academicians and minority organizations before finalizing the draft.

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And I have seen some degenerates who fast during the day and drink alcohol and commit adultery at night. Most Muslims, thank God, have not fallen so low. But how many of us still retain any trace of piety and virtue by the second day of 'Id?

The reason most of you behave as you do is that the very meaning and purport of 'Ibadah has become distorted in your minds. You think that mere abstention from eating and drinking throughout the day is the Fasting. You therefore are very particular to observe the minutest details about it. You fear God to the extent that you avoid even the slightest violation of these rules; but you do not appreciate that merely being hungry and thirsty is not the purpose but only the form.

This form has been prescribed to create in you such fear of God and love, such strength of will and character, that, even against your desire, you avoid seemingly profitable things which in fact displease Allah and do those things which possibly entail risks and

losses but definitely please God. This strength can be developed only when you understand the purpose of the Fasting and desire to put to use the training you have undergone of curbing your physical desires for the fear and love of God only.

From *Let Us Be Muslim* by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, pp. 189-191.

Contd. from page-12

But what disturbed the Turks the most was the rebellion by the Arab coreligionists. They appeared disillusioned thinking who they were fighting for. And when Allenby launched a counter offensive, the ill-paid, poorly prepared, disillusioned and demoralized Turkish army was no match to the superior British army. The Turks were defeated thoroughly. More than the military defeat of Turkey the cause of Islam was harmed as the then Muslim world became bitterly divided along sectarian and ethnic lines. And this is what Lawrence wanted.

After World War One, the victorious countries met in Paris to decide the fate of the Ottoman Empire. Lawrence did not like any French presence in West Asia but he was overruled and France got mandate to rule over Syria. Britain had the mandate to rule over Iraq and Palestine. They forgot the promise they had given to Hussein, the Sherif of Makkah regarding the creation of an Arab kingdom consisting of Hijaz, Syria, Iraq and Palestine which included Jordan and Israel also.

Seeing that they have been cheated by the British the Arabs rose in rebellion especially in Syria and Iraq in 1920. The rebellion was especially very strong in Iraq and it could be quelled by bombing the unarmed protesters by the Royal Air Force on the advice of Lawrence.

The French overcame Arab resistance in Syria and so did the British in Iraq. But the British knew that West Asia was still mired in



several problems. They held a conference in Cairo where they created a new West Asia. Against the promise of creating an Arab kingdom in Hijaz, Syria, Palestine and Iraq, they created several nation-states like Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Hijaz which was later on occupied by Ibn Saud and became a part of what is Saudi Arabia today. Worse they created a Jewish state in the heart of the Arab world. And everyone knows the plight of the Palestinians.

One can clearly see how the conspiracy of dividing Islam against itself has succeeded. Yesterday it succeeded because we were weak and today it is successful because we are engaged in incessant fratricidal wars.

OPINION

Divide Islam against Itself
by Ishtiyaque Danish

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

During World War One, Lawrence of Arabia, a spy traveler and British secret agent wrote two small pieces in a secretly and selectively circulated magazine, The Round Table in 1916. The crux of his writings was to divide Islam against itself. He saw an opportunity in Hussein, the then Sherif of Makkah who was in secret correspondence with the British Agent in Egypt regarding a possible rebellion against the Turks whose empire was still spread over present day Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel, occupied Palestine and Saudi Arabia. In a sense the above countries along with Egypt have always formed the mainland of Islam. The thinking of the Round Table group was that whenever, the above-mentioned areas/countries have been united under a powerful Islamic leadership, the West has felt threatened. Prompted by this thinking Lawrence suggested to divide Islam against itself.

The expression 'divide Islam against itself' is very important. Islam is a religion that rises above regional, national, ethnic and other such narrow ideologies and identities and unites people under its umbrella on the principles of equality and brotherhood which, in fact, are a reflection of the Islamic concept of Tawheed, Oneness of God. The Muslim brought up this way is a great source of strength.

Whenever this Islamic bond has been strong, Islam in its mainland has been a power to be reckoned with.

Lawrence and other members of the Round Table were of the opinion that although the mainland of Islam barring Egypt was under one Muslim ruler, the various ethnic groups inhabiting in it were at daggers drawn which offered an opportunity to the West to create a permanent cleavage between the Arabs and the Turks.

The Round Table was a small secret group consisting of influential educated people. If not all, at least some members of the group wanted to create and include a 'brown dominion' in the vast British Empire. This 'brown dominion', according to the group, was either the whole or part of the Arab world. As some members, Lawrence and his mentor, Hogarth specially, later on got involved in Ottoman-Arabian affairs, it is quite possible that they must have influenced Britain's 'Arab policy' during and after the First World War. As we shall see later, Lawrence indeed got an opportunity to shape the map of West Asia according to the idea or scheme of the Round Table.

A few months after World War-I began Turkey joined Germany against Britain and launched an attack on Egypt, then under British occupation.

From military point of view the Turkish offensive was a great danger for the British Empire. Had Turkey succeeded in defeating the British in Egypt, they would have taken control of the Suez Canal and thus deprived London of the huge human and financial resources of India.

The Turko-German military strategy was excellent. The British navy was strong but not enough to defend the ground offensive in Egypt. But it appears as Turko-German war preparation was not upto mark. As a result they failed to achieve military goals in Egypt. But the possibility of reinforcement and better-planned offensive was still there. Such an idea was no less than a nightmare for Britain.

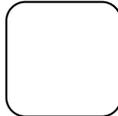
To counter any possible second Turkish attack on Egypt, Britain succeeded in instigating an Arab rebellion in Hijaz. The Arab irregulars led by Lawrence specially targeted the Railway tracks and destroyed them at various places. Naturally the Turks were deprived of much needed military supplies and it thus weakened the Turkish forces beyond recovery.

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