



# IOS NEWSLETTER

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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

According to the Legatum Prosperity Index, 2015, among the most educated countries in the world are Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherland, New Zealand, Norway Finland, Ireland, United States, Iceland, and so on. India stands at 92<sup>th</sup> position in the world in the said list, far behind other developing countries of the world. The 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population of the world, geographical location, caste and class, economic and social norms have played vital role in this. Although India has raised its current literacy rate of 74.04% (2021) from 12% at the time of Independence in 1947, it still lags behind the world average literacy rate of 84%. Compared with other nations, Republic of India has the largest illiterate population (Literacy Rate of India, 2021).

India is a country of heterogeneous population, comprising of many religions and numerous castes. Literacy plays a major role in the economic development of a nation. Literacy rate of the country is quite low in comparison to other countries of the world. According to Census of 2011, the literacy rate among Muslims is 68.5%, which is far behind the national average of 73%. The literacy rate of Hindus, who form the majority community in India, is 73.3% (literacy rate slightly better than the national average). Literacy rate among other minorities—Jains (94.9%), Christians (84.5%), Buddhists (81.3%) and Sikhs (75.4%). Thus, the Muslim literacy rate is the lowest among minorities. And, the Muslims have the highest illiteracy rate of any single religious community in India. Although the literacy rate for Muslim women is higher than that for SC and ST women, but it is lower than others (Times of India, 2020). It is also very notable that in India only the Muslim community has a child sex ratio higher than other religious populations (Distribution of Population by Religions, Drop-in-Article: Census of India 2011), but the gender gap in literacy rate of Muslims is very high—for the nation as a whole female literacy rate is 65.46%, for males it is 82.14% while Muslim female literacy rate is 51.9% and male literacy rate is 62.41% (Census, 2011, India). Here, it would be useful to mention that the average national total fertility rate is highest among Muslims i.e., 2.6% above national average of 2.2% (NFHS, 2015-16).

According to the Census, 2011, among the minorities, Muslims have the highest population (172.2 million), followed by Christianity (27.8 million), Sikhism (20.8 million), Buddhism (8.44 million) and Jainism (4.45 million). There are many states/union territories such as Lakshadweep, Jammu and Kashmir, Bengal, Assam, and Kerala in which population of Muslims is above 20%. In terms of absolute numbers, Uttar Pradesh has the highest population of Muslims in the Country (38.4 million), followed by West Bengal (24.6 million), Bihar (17.5 million), Maharashtra (12.9 million) and Assam (10.6 million)—All states that have Muslim population in millions.

Though the government has taken several initiatives to increase the literacy rate of the country and provided support to religious communities, the Muslim community still has a long way to go.

**From Educational Status of Muslims in India**

**Strive for Bright Future (Yearbook 2021) by Rubina Tabassum, pp. 1-2**

**Activities of the IOS Headquarters**

**IOS-G.M. Momin Women’s College two-day International Conference on “Need of Inter-religious Understanding for Promoting Peace and Harmony”**

A two-day offline/online International Conference on “Need of Inter-religious Understanding for Promoting Peace and Harmony” was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies in collaboration with KME Society’s G.M. Momin Women’s College, at Bhiwandi, Maharashtra, on March 19-20, 2022.

**Inaugural session**

The conference got off to a great start with the recitation of a Quranic verse. Dr. Tabassum Sheikh, Coordinator of the conference, presented the welcome address. She said that religions taught virtues that could serve as the basis for an understanding of all religions.

Dr. Nisar Shaikh, Principal, G.M. Momin Women’s College, Bhiwandi, observed that the purpose of holding the conference was to bring students and research scholars together. It was also an opportunity to share new ideas that might help to solve several problems that cropped up off and on, he said.

Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, highlighted the activities of the Institute in detail.

Commenting on the theme, he said it was very relevant in today’s context.

Introducing the topic, the Convenor of the IOS Forum for Inter-religious Understanding, Prof. Hamidullah

Marazi, pointed out that peace on the earth was not possible if there was no peace among religions. He opined that religion could play a big role in the restoration of peace and harmony in the world. In order to ensure peace among religions, inter-religious dialogues meant inter-religion faith dialogues. He called for establishing peace and harmony and inter-religious understanding.

In his inaugural speech, spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living, Bengaluru, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said that love, happiness and peace constituted the essence of all religions.

He held that certain forces were trying to divide countries and families, but efforts should be made to bring peace and happiness to everyone’s life.



On the dais (L-R): Maulana Hassan Nadvi, Prof. Haseena Hashia, Dr. Nisar Shaikh, Mr. Talha Fakhir, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Mr. Sohail Fakhir, Prof. Hamidullah Marazi and Dr. Tabassum Sheikh

The most important thing in life is happiness, and it can be achieved by way of love. He said that there was no deficit of love among people, and this could begin with giving respect to others. Only religion could create love, and the message of love, brotherhood, and *ahimsa* should reach every nook and corner of the country, he added.

Delivering his keynote address, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, General Secretary, All India Muslim Personal Law Board, New Delhi, observed that the Prophet (PBUH) gave the message of love and equality to

people. Referring to the Prophet’s (PBUH) last sermon at the Friday congregational prayer, he said, “All of you are the offspring of Allah and born to the same mother and father. O, faithful! Be fearful of your Master, who created you from a living being. “God is one, and since He is creator of every human being, everyone is equal”, he said. This created a sense of equality among human beings. Hence, there was no distinction between them. There would have been distinction had one treated himself as superior to the other. Islam conceptualised the idea of equality among human beings for the first time in history. The Prophet (PBUH) declared that no Arabian would have precedence over non-Arabian, and no white-skinned individual had preference over the black-skinned. Similarly, no one was

preferable on the basis of his race, colour, religion, geographical area, or boundary. Commenting on religious differences, he said that the Prophet (PBUH) went from house to house to teach the Message of Allah by way of *Dawah*. If Allah had wanted only one religion to exist on earth, he would have done it. But the divergence of opinion among religions or

within religion was a logical corollary due to the way of thinking. Islam taught Muslims to engage with the followers of other religions by helping and giving due respect to them. He observed that the Prophet (PBUH) would not defend on the Day of Judgment who usurped property and looted non-Muslims.

It was an Islamic duty under *Shariah* to treat others as brothers and extend warmth and love to them. He called for dousing the fire of hatred and sharing others’ concerns. Every neighbour should be treated as a brother.

Speaking as the guest of honour, Prof. Imtiyaz Yusuf, Associate Professor, ISTAC, Malaysia, who shared his presentation through power-points, said that inter-religious understanding takes place when a crisis happens. Crisis in the modern age deepened, necessitating inter-faith dialogues to lessen it. He observed that currently, in Asia, there is an urgent need to build inter-religious understanding. The inter-faith dialogue was a far cry today. Referring to Muslims and the Indic religions, he said that the period between the eleventh and twelfth centuries marked the presence of Muslim pioneers in history and phenomenology of religion.

He made special mention of emperor Akbar in the 16th century and Dara Shikoh in the 17th century, who promoted religious understanding. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), by the message of *Tawhid*, told the world to treat every individual irrespective of his religion, race, and colour, as equal. Commenting on the

crisis and inter-religious dialogue in the modern age, he referred to several Muslim pioneers of inter-religious dialogue, including Asghar Ali Engineer. He clarified that dialogue was not a debate to enter into. He concluded by saying that interfaith dialogue should be a permanent feature, and the political will of every group was needed.

Former President of Maulana Azad University, Jodhpur, Prof. Akhtarul Wasey, held that every enlightened person was aware of the issue. Holding that inter-faith dialogue was the need of the hour, he said that tolerance should be seen from an acceptance perspective, not from the pressure perspective. The

message of religious harmony should reach the people in a manner that is conducive to the inherent ethos of different religions. It should be convincing without being offensive and critical of others' religions. The Prophet (PBUH) himself politely and convincingly reached the message of Allah to the people who were idolators and cherished no values that a civilised world demanded. This message was possible only when one understood the sensibility of other religions in the same manner as he did in the case of his religion. He remarked how Muslims could expect Hindus to be secular without themselves being secular. They should follow their religion and honour

been trying for it for decades. One should take note of the world that changed in the last 110 years after the world religious congress was held in Chicago. He pleaded for discussing the issues relating to the minorities outside parliament because bodies, like Supreme Court, the human rights commission, minorities commission, miserably failed to solve their problems. He urged the IOS to create books on inter-religious faith dialogues and distribute them among students of all faiths.

Prof. Paramvir Singh, Department of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala, laid stress on the need for creating a universal brotherhood. He said that the teachings of Guru Nanak were still relevant to the entire mankind. He observed that the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev, taught that there was one Lord whose light shined in every human being. Explaining the universality of the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, he said that the great Sufi saint Baba Farid also contributed to the

couplets of the Granth. All the Sikh gurus wanted freedom of faith and worship. They also wanted the followers of all religions to follow their faith. Again referring to the Guru Granth Sahib, he insisted that it emphasised harmony among all faiths.

Maulana Hassan Nadvi, University of Cairo, Egypt, described the conference as very important. He held that inter-religious dialogues helped improve mutual relations among the followers of different religions. They also helped create an atmosphere in which the apprehension of confrontation between two religions stood little chance, and the respect for other religions increased. He counseled



From top to bottom (L-R): MI. Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Mr. John Dayal, A view of book release, Prof. Akhtarul Wasey, Prof. Konrad J. Noronha, Prof. Imtiyaz Yusuf, Adv. Gajanan Chavan, Dr. A.K. Merchant, Prof. Paramvir Singh and Dr. Manvinder Singh

every religion. Instead of disconnecting, religion always established a connection among people and strengthens bonds of love and harmony. He also urged Hindus to give equal respect to other religions by treating them on par.

Mr. John Dayal, Member, National Integration Council and a veteran journalist, noted that all the communities shared their festivities together. No religion wanted the blood to be splattered hither and thither. Religious intolerance has strained warm relations among the followers of different religions. Politics and economy too played a contributory role in it. Emphasising the need for inter-religious dialogues, he said that he had



that everyone was obliged to protect whatever he possessed. This would change the entire perspective, he added.

The occasion was marked by the release of three books published by the IOS. The first book, *“Principal Foundations for Global Peace (A Way Forward for Better Future)”*, edited by Prof. M. Afzal Wani, was released by the President of KME Society, Mr. Talha Faquih. The second book, *“Inter-religious Understanding for Advancement of Human Rights (for All)”*, also edited by Prof. Wani, was released by Dr. Nisar Ahmad Sheikh. The third book, *“Islam Meri Nazar Mein”*, written by Rishi Acharya, was released by the Secretary General of KME Society, Mr. Sohail Fakieh.

In his presidential remarks, Vice-Chairman, IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, observed that people wanted mutual understanding, dialogue, and peace. Despite the efforts of Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, and the Prophet (PBUH), people were still at war. He said that educational institutions would have to come forward to let the students learn love and harmony. The institution of justice was fraught with contradictions, and there was a need to examine what humanity required. He asked for bringing humanity to the human pedestal. He also focused on the similarity of several things in both Islam and Hinduism. Every religion had the message that each individual was human, and the academics were required to do research and transfer their knowledge to the younger generation. He observed that every religion had several positive as well as negative aspects.

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks extended by Prof. Haseena Hashia, Assistant Secretary General, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

#### **Business Session I**

The first business session focused on Indic religions and peace. While Dr. Amita Valmiki from Mumbai chaired the session, Prof. Srinivasan Iyer from

Madurai was the Co-chairperson. Prof. Abdur Rashid Bhat from Kashmir was the moderator.

Ms. Simmin Bawa, Head, Department of Philosophy, Jai Hind College, Mumbai, spoke on ‘The Pathway to Peace and Harmony: A Buddhist Perspective’. She said that according to Buddhism, violence begets violence. Thus Buddhism stood for the principle of non-violence and the culture of peace and harmony. She observed that there were internal causes of conflict and violence.

Prof. Fahim Akhtar Nadwi, Head, Department of Islamic Studies, MANUU, Hyderabad, centred his talk on the ‘Concept of Peace in Islam’. He held that misquoting Islam created many problems. Islam was the religion of peace in relation to the rest of the religions. It was also the religion of preaching and never allowed forced conversions. Islam recognised all religions, which meant the co-existence of every religion. Unlike other religions, Islam never asked for performing rituals. He said that the Quran and Hadith laid stress on doing good deeds.

Dr. Uzma Naheed, Member, United Nations’ GDF (Global Dialogue Foundation), Mumbai, observed that politicians exploited religion. Islam believed in one human being. She urged all heads of religions to come together for harmony and peace.

Iymen Nazir, Research Scholar, Department of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir, spoke on ‘Interfaith Dialogue among Indian Religions’. Explaining inter-faith dialogue, he said that it was a way of communication among people belonging to different religions. They must treat each other as part of a cosmic society, he added. Dr. Amena Hamid from Kashmir focused on Islam and peace. She explained religious harmony from the Islamic point of view.

Dr. Daljit Kaur, Associate Professor, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi, spoke on

‘Sikh Gurdwaras: Epitome of Peace and Harmony’. She said that Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara was the workplace of Sikhism. It was the legacy of Sikhism in the 21st century, she noted. Asra Aslam and K. Sajad Ahmad, Research Scholars, Department of Islamic Studies, BGSB University, Rajouri, J&K, presented a joint paper on ‘Islam and Peaceful Co-Existence: An Appraisal of *Mithaq-i-Madina*’. In their presentation, they contended that Islam was the religion of peace and harmony. *Mithaq-i-Madina* or the Constitution of Madina was the first constitution of the world. It was an agreement between Muslims and Jews of Madina where the population of both the communities stood at 40 and 15 per cent, respectively. They shed light on the Islamic perspective of peace. At the end of the session, Prof. Srinivasan Iyer called for working towards peace and harmony.

#### **Business Session II**

The theme of the session was Semitic Religion and Peaceful Living. The session was chaired by Dr. Nazir Ahmad Zargar from Kashmir. Dr. Radha Kumar from Mumbai was the moderator.

Dr. Nazar Ul Islam, Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, GDC, J&K, touched upon ‘Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: A perspective building’. Dr. Javed Nadeem Nadvi, Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, MANUU, Hyderabad, observed that Islam spread the message of peace and harmony to promote righteousness. Dr. Kamal Ashraf Qasmi, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Islamic Studies, Aliah University, Kolkata, focused on *‘Baahmi Mazhabi Afham-o-Tafheem ki Zaroorat: Daur-e-Hazir ki Ashad Zaroorat’*. Sumna Sadaqat, post-graduate final year student, Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, spoke on ‘Concept of Peace in Islam’. Mahvish Fatima, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, JMI, New Delhi

focused on 'Prophetic Model of maintaining Peace and Harmony'. She stressed ensuring the security of life and avoiding conflict. Afreen Showqat, Department of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir, J&K, spoke on 'Islam and Peaceful Behaviour'. She insisted that Islam was a monotheistic religion, Horiya Hussain, Research Scholar, Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, J&K, focused on 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islamophobia: Challenges and Prospects' and held that one must strictly follow their faith. Dr. Kousar Jabeen, Research Scholar, University of Kashmir, J&K, talked about the 'Role of Islam towards Peace and Progressive Behaviour'. Niyaz Ahmad Lone, Ph.D. Scholar, Islamic University of Science and Technology, J&K, discussed 'Islam and Peaceful Behaviour'. Juneefa Bilal, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, focused on the 'Qur'anic Paradigm of Religious Harmony'.

### **Business Session III**

The third business session was devoted to the theme 'Personalities and Movements for Peace Promotion'. While Dr. Manvinder Singh from Amritsar chaired the session, Dr. Shahnaz Iqbal Qureshi moderated it.

Dr. Radha Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, spoke on 'The tales of Jatakas - An inspiration for harmonious living'. She referred to Ajanta caves and their paintings, which were commissioned by the Nizam of Hyderabad to be re-produced. Reproduction of paintings caused dissatisfaction among a section of the people. The Suttas were the sources of Buddhist teachings. The Jataka stories were inclusive and indicative of the life to be led with discipline. Dr. Peshimam Nazeer Ahmed, Educational Consultant, Head Master (Retd.), Osmani Higher Secondary School,

Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, devoted his paper to 'Al-Biruni and his understanding of Indian Religion'. He said that Al-Biruni was a universal genius and most original in his writings. He was the religious historian of his time. Dr. Mohammad Ajmal, Assistant Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, focused on 'Contribution of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to India's Unity in Diversity'. He said that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad believed in unity, diversity, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Dr. Arshi Shoaib, Assistant Professor, Women's College, AMU, Aligarh, spoke on 'Dissemination of Peace and Harmony: A Study of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Endeavours'. He said that Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was called the ambassador of peace due to his endeavours in this direction. He was the founder of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality, Dr. Shoaib added. S.M. Rizwanah, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Manipur University, touched upon the theme 'Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Universal Religion', Dr. Ambreen, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, made her presentation on 'The Emphasis on Peace and Harmony in the Quran as reflected in the Tafsir of Maulana Azad'.

Dr. Firdous Ahmad Sofal, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir, J&K, focused on 'Non-violence and Education: Reflections from Basic Scheme of Education advocated by M.K. Gandhi'.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Manvinder Singh said that all the religions preached peace and harmony. Every religion contributed something or the other for the benefit of society. While Mughals gave Urdu, Ghalib, and Taj Mahal, Christians did tremendous service in the field of education, and Sikhs established community kitchens. He emphasised the need for diversity and dialogue.

### **Business Session IV**

The fourth business session focused on 'Religious Understanding for Preserving Peaceful and Harmonious Society.' While G.N. Taqi chaired the session, Dr. Shivani Sharma from Chandigarh was the Co-chairperson, and Ms. Simmin Bawa moderated the session.

Dr. Amar Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai, spoke on 'What is the role and impact of religion in Social harmony?' Dr. Zabeen Anjum, Former Principal, Jamia Urdu College of Education, Aligarh, touched on 'Prophet's Peace Mission: An Analysis'. Ms. Ujala Amin, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, BGSB, University, Rajouri, focused on 'The message of peace and communal harmony in the teaching of Sufis'. Poojita Goswami, Scholar, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, Assam, spoke on 'Peace, Youth and Interfaith Leadership: Value-based peace-building by advancing religious peace ideals'. Mumim Ahmad Khan, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, devoted his presentation to 'Ottoman Inter-Religious Understanding for Promoting Peace and Harmony with Special Reference to Millet System'. Muneeb Ahmad, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, IUST, J&K, focused on 'An Islamic-cum-Hindu Approach to Inter-religious Dialogue'. He said that the dialogue was as old as the history of humankind itself. Oroos Nasim, Research Scholar, AMU, made presentation on 'Sufism and Peaceful Dialogue'. Saba Irshad Ansari, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, spoke on 'Ahimsa and Jihād-i-Ma'nawī: Drawing Parallels Between the Two Imperatives'. Shakeel Ahmad Lone, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, touched upon the topic 'An Islamic Perspective of Peace and Communal Harmony'. He observed that peace could not exist without communal harmony. Sohail Ashraf Mir, Research

Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, focused on 'Fatehullah Gulen: His perspectives on Interreligious Dialogue'. He said that religion was the most important aspect of humans, and all the faiths had the same narrative. Dr. Mukesh Pimplaskar, Dept. of Bio-Technology, G. M. Momin Women's College, briefly discussed *Panchsheel* (five principles), which were vital for global peace.

### Business Session V

The fifth session was devoted to the theme, 'Role of Education for Promoting Peace and Dialogue'. While Prof. Seshadri chaired the session, Dr. Afroz Ahmad assisted him as Co-chairperson. Dr. Jeremiah Graham was the moderator.

Dr. Sheikh Idris Ahmad, Head, Department of Islamic Studies, Government Degree College, J&K, focused on 'An Islamic Approach of the Interreligious Dialogue with reference to Inclusivism and Exclusivism'. Dr. Ziauddin, Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, spoke about the need to respect other religions. In his presentation, he commented on Sir Syed's response to other religions.

### Business Session VI

The sixth business session was devoted to miscellaneous themes. It was chaired by Prof. D. A. Gangadhar from Varanasi. Prof. Manzoor Ahmad co-chaired the session. Prof. Hamidullah Marazi was the moderator.

Dr. Omkar Bhatkar, Head, St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts (SAPP), St. Andrew's College, Mumbai, focused on 'Saints, Statues, Scriptures and Syncretism of Everyday Life: A Leaf from Goa's Organic Civility'. He said that the past five centuries shaped Goa's culture, life, and customs. He also referred to Goa's pluralism.

Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, Director, IOS Centre for Historical and Civilisational Studies, New Delhi,

spoke on 'Lost in Bewilderment whither Should Man Go: Here Comes the Role of *Masajid* and *Imams* in Character Building and Maintaining Peace and Harmony'. He stressed that an *Imam* should possess knowledge of the Qur'an. He must be a man of character and integrity. He said that *Imam* and *masjid* occupied a central place in Islam. One should remember that the *masjid* was also a social platform. It was also a central place to raise funds. An *Imam* should be a role model for Muslims. Management of *masjids* should confine itself to fundraising. An *Imam* should be an Islamic scholar. *Imams* could play other roles than only conducting prayers. He contended that *shoora* should be constituted to conduct the affairs of a *masjid*. Speeches before the Friday *khutbah* should focus on current affairs. *Masjids* could also play an important role in the character building and personality development of Muslim youth. *Imams* are also urged to speak of secular values, he added.

Dr. Amita Valmiki, Head, Department of Philosophy, R. J. College of Arts, Science and Commerce, expressed her views on 'Re-envisioning the Notion of Religious Pluralism and its Exigency in Contemporary Times'. She said that social and corporeal distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic had a bearing on human relations, adding that the diversity inherent in India's ethos should be celebrated.

Dr. Nadeem Ashraf, Assistant Professor, Department of Sunni Theology, AMU, Aligarh, touched upon 'The Rights of Non-Muslims in a Plural Society'. He said that the non-Muslims living in Muslim countries should receive equal treatment, and there should be no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Z.A. Naik, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, BGSB University Rajouri, J&K, focused on 'Revisiting the Concept of Mu'alafatul Qulub in Zakat Distribution: A Move towards Religious Harmony'. Firdosa

Akhter, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, presented the paper on 'Philosophy of Human Dignity: An Islamic Perspective'. Gawhar Ahmad Khan, Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, J&K, dwelt on 'Peace as the basis of Prosperity with special reference to *Sirah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'.

### Valedictory Session

Speaking as the guest of honour, Advocate Gajanan Chavan, Ex-Chairperson, Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa, advised everybody to read the Indian Constitution and know about the fundamental rights of a citizen guaranteed by it. There were definitely certain issues pertaining to diversity, which could be addressed by mutual understanding. Tolerance was another aspect of a host of problems that defied solutions. Tolerance had been a part of the country's cultural legacy. Lauding the role of Mahatma Phule and his wife in the spread of education in Maharashtra, he said that they were pioneers of education. The role of Fatima Sheikh and Savitri Bai Phule in that direction was unparalleled. He remarked that there was a big disparity between India and *Bharat*. He concluded by saying that everyone should get education and at least one member of each family should be employed as a teacher.

Prof. Konrad J. Noronha, Director, Center for Safeguarding and Human Formation, De Nobili College, Pune, in his address as the guest of honour, stressed the need to strengthen inter-religious understanding among various faiths and communities.

Delivering the valedictory address, Prof. Abdul Aziz Barghout, Dean, ISTAC, Malaysia, laid emphasis on inter-religious dialogue, peace, and harmonious relations with the followers of other religions. Cooperation, respect, and collaboration needed to be strengthened for a better understanding of religions. He observed that



spirituality, ethics, and values could not be bought from the market. These could be derived from the understanding of religions that taught harmony and peace for a better future. Human survival depended on ethics, spirituality, mercy, caring, artificial intelligence, sustainability, etc. Both Muslims and non-Muslims needed to work together, he added.

General Secretary, Temple of Understanding India Foundation, New Delhi, Dr. A.K. Merchant, said that religion had come a long way, particularly in promoting inter-religious harmony and understanding. He observed that science had displaced the value of religion. Thus, there was a need to harness the energy of religion on one hand and science on the other. Learning to know, to do, and to live together were the pillars on which life rested, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks, Prof. M. Afzal Wani commented that religions brought eligibility for a better relationship. He said that ethical and moral power was supreme to nuclear and economic power. He asked the scholars to cherish humanity and social relationship.

The Secretary General, Konkan Muslim Education Society, Bhiwandi, Sohail Fakhri, also expressed his views on the contribution of society in the promotion of education among Muslim women.

The occasion was marked by the presentation of Maharashtra folk songs by the students of the college.

A six-point resolution was adopted, which read as:

1. The international bodies/institutions and national governments are urged to take a serious view of the ground situation, create mutual trust, and take necessary measures to promote peace and harmony in the world.
2. Efforts should be made to dispel doubts among the religious communities about one another, which are prominently spoiling the

environment of peace and harmony in different parts of the world.

3. The academic bodies and voluntary organisations at international, national, and local levels should carry out educational initiatives to develop a fair understanding of religions for attaining their real objectives of establishing a peaceful world.
4. There should be regular programmes on inter-religious understanding at various places in India and Maharashtra organized jointly by the Institute of Objective Studies, M. Momin women's College, Bhiwandi, and other interested organisations.
5. The relevant authorities should strive to include a special course in their educational curricula to teach common core values of harmony, peace, and dialogue among Indian religions.
6. At the local level, G. M. Momin College, Bhiwandi, R. J. College of Arts & Commerce, Mumbai, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, and Jai Hind College, Mumbai, should form a core group to carry on regular programmes on inter-religious dialogue in collaboration with the Institute of Objective Studies. Religious scholars and community leaders of all the communities should be invited to these programmes.

### Activities of the IOS Chapters

#### ALIGARH CHAPTER

#### **Discussion on "Minor Research Projects and Write-Ups Focusing on Distortions in History"**

IOS Centre for Historical and Civilisational Studies (IOSCHCS) organised a discussion on "Minor Research Projects and Write-Ups Focusing on Distortions in History" on June 6, 2022 in the premise of IOS Aligarh Chapter.

The Proceedings started with the recitation of *Surah Ikhlās*.

Professor Syed Jamaluddin, Director, IOSCHCS, introduced the purpose of the discussion. He emphasised the need to conduct research in civilisational studies, highlighting the contribution of Indian Muslims towards establishing a culture that aimed at creating a peaceful and harmonious society, bridging all gaps by promoting composite culture. He urged upon the need of conducting researches in the light of the blueprint that had been sent in advance to intellectuals. Professor Jamal also spoke on the kind of distortions that are being spread to malign the Muslim rulers and their rule.

Professor Waseem Raja (Dept. of History, AMU, Aligarh) spoke in length on the attempts by misguided people to erase everything connected with Muslims. In this regard, he mentioned the controversy that is being brought into the limelight through social media, especially the debates conducted by sold-out TV channels which are spreading hatred.

Dr. Qamar Alam from the (Dept. of Persian, AMU, Aligarh) talked mainly about the contributions of Hindus and Muslims to making India a land of composite culture through their writings in Persian, be it history or poetry or sufi literature.

Dr. Salman Habibi and Mohammad Imran Ali, Research Scholars from AMU, Aligarh, now seeking admission in PhD, also gave their inputs into the discussion and expressed their desire to undertake minor research projects of the Centre.

#### **Results of the Discussion:**

Professor Waseem Raja agreed to write on Prithvi Raj-Mohammad Ghori tussle for establishing supremacy in north India and history of Gyanvapi.

Dr. Qamar Alam consented to write write-ups on culture promoted by Muslims as reflected in Persian literature. In particular, he will write on Persian translations of Hindu scriptures by Muslim scholars.

Dr. Salman Habibi will write a booklet on lesser-known Muslim freedom fighters of Uttar Pradesh, while Dr. M. Imran Ali will write on the Meerut martyrs of 1857.

All the four above-mentioned scholars have been asked to submit their proposals as soon as possible.

Discussion came to an end with a vote of thanks.

Professor Waseem Raja promised to deliver a lecture on the distortion in history sometime in July, 2022.

**CALICUT CHAPTER**

**Seminar on Prof. Ismail Raji Al-Faruqui**

The scholars, who spoke in the seminar organised by IOS Calicut Chapter here on May 7, 2022, said that late Ismail Raji Al-Faruqui, a Palestine-born American writer and philosopher belonged to the rare breed of thinkers

who could present Islam as an ideology for the emancipation of the human race.

Khaled Musa Nadvi, in his keynote address, said that Dr. Al-Faruqui could diagnose, around forty years ago, the malaise affecting the Muslim ummah.

In the seminal work *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, he observed that the Muslim community

could then be transferred to the family, society and the nation.

Dr. C. Habeeba, scholar and motivator, said that the fact *Al-Tawhid* was translated into Malayalam language long ago shows how intellectually vibrant Kerala Muslims are. Only a patient and academically curious person could understand the full meaning of the work.

However Al-Faruqui says that the failure of the community results from its wanderings away from the principle of unity of God. The gravity of his arguments might be one reason why *Al-Tawhid* still remains one of the highly influential works, she said.



Release of the second edition of the Malayalam translation of 'Al-Tawhid: Its Implications of Thought and Life' and 'Source and Purpose of Knowledge'

The second edition of the Malayalam

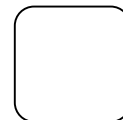
translation of 'Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life' and 'Source and Purpose of Knowledge' was also released on this occasion. P.T. Kunhali, the Convener of the programme welcomed the audience. Prof P. Koya, E.M. Sadiq, and Ahmed Sahal were present.

was the unhappiest community in the world. "I find no reason to question that assumption", Khaled Musa Nadvi continued. But Al-Faruqui also said the concept of Unity of God alone was the formula to be used by the ummah to come out of this unhappiness and angst. Through creative reading and thinking, Muslims can restore happiness in knowledge, philosophy and ideology. Individual happiness

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