



IOS NEWSLETTER

Vol. 19 No. 10

October 2012/Ziqadah-Zilhijjah 1433 H

Thought for the Month

Those who avoid
Great sins and indecent deeds,
Save lesser offences,—
Verily your Lord is ample
In forgiveness. He knows
You well when He brings
You out of the earth,
And when ye are hidden
In your mother's wombs.
Therefore hold not yourselves
purified:
He knows best who it is
That guards against evil.

Al-Quran-53:32

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FOCUS

There is a tradition in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "From Adam to me Allah sent a hundred and twenty-four thousand Prophets of whom three hundred and fifteen were entrusted with a book". The names of all these Prophets to whom scriptures were revealed are not mentioned either in the Qur'an or in the Hadith. It is not possible for us, therefore, to provide details about them. We come across a few references to the books revealed to Adam, the first Prophet. Unfortunately, however, we are not aware of the language in which they were revealed nor do we have any idea, on basis of factual knowledge, of their contents.

Besides these Prophets there are other individuals who have not been accorded the status of a Prophet in clear terms in scriptures, still the possibility that they were Prophets cannot be dismissed altogether. One of them is Zoroaster. The Parsis acclaim him as their Prophet. It is possible that this was so because the Qur'an mentions Magians (22: 17) whose religion is based on Avesta, a book revealed to Zoroaster.

If we were to compare the teachings of Avesta, as known to us, with those of the Qur'an, we shall have some idea of the intrinsic superiority of the latter. Avesta was written in the contemporary language called Zand. After the conquest of Iran, the language of the new rulers gained currency and the old tongue became archaic with the result that except for a few specialists no one remained familiar with Zand. That is why the scholars of Zoroastrianism summarised, and wrote commentaries, on Avesta in the new language called Pazand. Only about one-tenth of this version of Avesta is available to us, the rest has disappeared. It comprises some details about prayers and a few commandments.

In any case, an ancient religious book is known to us as Avesta even though it has not come down to us in its entirety. The Avesta, among other things, contains the following statement of Zoroaster: "I have not perfected the religion. Another Prophet will come after me and he will perfect this religion; his name will be 'Mercy for the entire universe'". This reminds one of the Quranic verses in which Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been so called (see Qur'an 21: 107).

In India, too, some religious scriptures are to be found. Hindus believe them to be revealed by God. Among these holy books are the Vedas, the Puranas, the Upanishads and others. It is difficult to determine whether they were all revealed to a single Prophet. It is possible that they were revealed to various prophets (provided they were Prophets). In these books, too, particularly the Puranas, we come across a few interesting allusions. Purana is the same word as is still used in Urdu in the sense of ancient. In the Qur'an, we come across a significant reference: "And lo, it is in the Scriptures of the men of old" (26: 196). There are ten Puranas. In one of them it is mentioned that in the final epoch a man will be born in a desert. His mother's name will be "Reliable" (Aminah) and his father's name will be the "slave of God" (Abd Allah). He will be obliged to move north from his country and settle there. He will then conquer his own country with the help of ten thousand men several-fold. In the battle his chariot will be drawn by camels and they will be so swift that they will soar to the skies.

From these statements in the Puranas, it is possible to infer that they refer to the coming of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

From *The Emergence of Islam* by Muhammad Hamidullah, pp. 3-6

Activities of the IOS Headquarters**India and Muslim World
in the 21st Century**

(The following is the concept note of a conference on 'Islam and Muslim World' to be held shortly)

A dominant segment of discourse in the last phase of the 20th century was that it had experienced unprecedented speed in the growth of technology. And, the beginning of the 21st century stands marked by the emergence of a concern to bring about a change in thought processes asking for innovation and out of the box solutions to meet the challenges of the new millennium. The human mind is in search of new modes and paradigms to be able to contribute to human development, peace and progress. For such an endeavour, one needs to work and search new ways to prepare a roadmap to foster better ties and linkages among civilisations so that the finer values of philosophy and culture are not neglected. Those, who wish to contribute, are in need of having a clear vision and strategy to achieve the targets. The ties of India and Muslim world can usher in a new era of constructing viable modes to carry forward the development process. Former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam says in his book *India 2020*: "An organisation, society or even a nation without a vision is like a ship cruising on the high seas without any aim or direction. It is clarity of national vision which constantly drives the people towards the goal".

In this context, a living and viable relationship between India and the Muslim world needs a proper vision, paradigm, analysis and roadmap. The 21st century belongs to these regions and civilisations. The post-cold war era, particularly the present century demands from India and the Muslim world adoption of a realist approach, which highlights the strategy of self-help, readiness to accept change, use of national resources, liberal free market economy and balanced foreign policy projections. India, in many quarters, is thought of as an emerging economic power that may acquire the status of

super power at some point of time in the 21st century. States most commonly mentioned as potential super powers are Brazil, China, EU (a union of states), India and Russia. The projections are based on a variety of factors. Daniel Lak describes India as the underdog facing more challenges than advantages. Yet, it is approaching super power status. Robin Meredith claims both India and China as future super powers. But, these projections are challenged on various serious grounds. However, India has been able to show marked progress in growth rates, in attracting foreign investment, increase in remittances, development in infrastructure, creation of robust middle class with enormous purchasing power. It can also claim unprecedented progress in areas of human resource, information technology, investment opportunities, education, agriculture etc. These areas are supported by its democratic system, free-market economy, balanced foreign policy and participation in activities of international concern, including human rights. This scenario has created fresh opportunities.

The Muslim world needs to be understood in its broad parameters. It generally means those nations and territories where Muslims form the majority. Their system of governance is diverse and their socio-cultural milieu diverse. However, their consciousness of being the part of the Muslim world is profound and enduring. On the basis of rough estimates, two-third of the Muslim population is related to emerging democracies like those of Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Turkey, Nigeria and India. Arab Middle East represents one-third of the Muslim world and there is considerable evidence of willingness to participate in development processes. Globalisation and technological advancements have opened new areas of cooperation and partnership. The 21st century has witnessed a clear shift in India's policy towards Middle East as it must be governed more by economic and energy considerations and less by political rhetoric of the past. This scenario has to be worked out in terms of preparing a roadmap to achieve the desired goals.

The Muslim world is spread over the Afro-Asian landscape. India is also considered as part of the Muslim world because of the size of Muslim population in India and Islam's historical presence and role in shaping the Indian nation and society. India's importance can be assessed on the basis of (a) its strategic significance as it is a leading country of South Asia and it has proximity to China, Pakistan and Iran, (b) its acquisition of substantial military apparatus, (c) its growing economy, industry, education, agriculture etc., (d) its liberal democratic political set-up, (e) its civilisational continuity and role of Islam in shaping Indian philosophy, culture and society, (f) its balanced diplomatic endeavours in conducting its foreign policy. Besides, Muslim world has faced serious question in the post-9/11 international scenario. Islamophobia dominates current perspectives on the Muslim world. It is urgent to find friends and solutions for the Muslim world. India is a traditional friend that stands with the Muslim world in crisis situations and it may provide opportunities for reciprocal benefits in select areas. The present situation calls for strengthening linkages between the Muslim world and India with a vision and programme.

A 2-day international conference, "India and Muslim World in the 21st Century" is proposed to be held in New Delhi, to be organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi. The conference may have following themes:

- (1) Historical Backdrop of Relations:** India has experienced a close historical relationship with the Muslim world right from the beginning. For a considerable period it remained part of the Muslim world and contributed in shaping the civilisational excellence. The contribution of Islam has also been recognised in shaping Indian thought and culture. This relationship through the ages has brought proximity in all areas of life. An honest assessment of such a historical backdrop is important to make ties strong and viable.

(2) Attitudinal Proximity between Indian Civilisation and Muslim World:

There is a strong attitudinal proximity between India and the Muslim world on philosophical, political, economic, cultural and security issues. Also, India has the second largest Muslim population (140 million). The opinions and perceptions of Indian Muslims have contributed to over-all development in policy planning and in shaping attitudes. Secondly, the role of Indian leadership during national liberation struggle and in post-independence era has to be understood properly. As shown by the Khilafat movement and support for Arabs of Palestine from early 20th century, Indian leaders have recognised the importance of the region. Political leaders and intelligentsia have always couched India's policy towards the troubled regions of the Muslim world in terms of political support (anti-imperialism and third world solidarity), moral principles (right to national self-determination), or in terms of national interest (economic interest and energy security). Muslims are no exception. Lastly, role of Muslim scholars in India and religious freedom enjoyed by Indian citizens have also contributed considerably to the similarity of attitudes.

(3) Economic and Financial Linkages:

India and the Muslim world are two complex entities, where their economic and financial linkages constitute the core areas of mutual cooperation. There is a whole range of complementarities between the two regions in terms of economic resources, patterns of trade, investment and finance. There is a considerable amount of inter-region economic activity in traditional sense. However, of late there is a growing realisation in strengthening economic ties among the nations. India has started expecting good results from Gulf region in particular. Wayback in 2005, The Prime Minister's Trade & Economic Relations Committee (TERC)

resolved to launch negotiations for an India-GCC Free Trade Agreement and a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with GCC countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh calls it a part of natural economic hinterland of India, where India must pursue closer economic relations with its wider Asian neighbours. Reflecting a desire for good and healthy relationship between India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.H. King Abdullah categorically announced during his visit to India that India, for him, is his second home. These statements reflect heart-felt sentiments and realisation of need for healthy and more meaningful relations among these regions. India is also seeking an increased maritime engagement with Gulf states. Energy security and Indian migrants in these countries are also important considerations.

(4) Opportunities to Benefit Reciprocally:

The 21st century is distinct in bringing people closer to each other. In this age of globalisation, it is a borderless world with multi-polarity of power centres in various sectors. India's development scenario is attracting the whole world. It has achieved impressive records in areas of trained human resource, education, information technology, urbanisation, agriculture, etc. India has opened its doors with a commitment to contribute to those who are willing to participate. There is a conducive environment for creating partnership in development. The Muslim world should come forward in creating synergy to have cooperation in all areas of mutual concern. On the same plane, the Muslim world has a tremendous potential to contribute to Indian development. It may include fight against hunger, disease and terror. It is high time to realise and use the available opportunities.

(5) Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relations:

This section needs to be analysed with precision and objectivity. Richard N. Hass, the President of the Council on Foreign Relations of US, presents his assessment that a new world order has come up, where in contrast to multi-polarity – which involves several distinct poles or concentration of power – a non-polar international system is characterised by numerous centres with meaningful power. Power is now found in many hands and many places. It means India and the Muslim world will have to work for closer relations. In formulation of foreign policy, there are strong domestic determinants. Secondly, the international climate is changing where the cold war has gone. Thirdly, economic interests are gaining grounds. And, energy security is also assuming importance and calls for meticulous planning at appropriate levels. Afro-Asian policies and various regional groupings are occupying centre-stage in diplomatic world. These opportunities call for unity in approach and action on the part of India and Muslim world.

The end of cold war has brought about a fundamental change in India's attitude of looking at the Middle East through an economic prism. Political rhetoric of the past gave way to strong economic interests as the driving force behind India's interaction, especially with the oil-rich Gulf region. Economic growth since early 1990s and resultant surge in energy demand meant that India is now looking to Muslim world as its principal partners. The Middle East represents a new and interesting leaning curve for India as it aspires to be a major actor on the world stage.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

ALIGARH CHAPTER

Symposium

On the occasion of World Environmental Day Institute Of

Objective Studies , Aligarh Chapter organized a symposium on “ **Environmental Degradation and its Devastating Effect in Future** “ in it’s lecture hall on June 05, 2012 at 5:45 PM which was attended by a large number of students, research scholars and teachers belonging to the departments of Geography , Geology, Plant Protection and Agricultural economics and Business Management in particular and other departments of AMU in general, in addition to social activists and lawyers.

Indifferent attitude, neglect and misuse of environment by the people at large has led to the problems of global dimension such as desertification, global warming, ozone hole and acid rains, in addition to local problems of water air, noise and land pollution and all these have raised questions on the survival and sustainable development of human beings, animals and plants, said Mr. M. Serajuddin Khan Assistant coordinator, while introducing the theme and the speakers of the evening.

Prof. Wazahat Hussain, former Chairman, Department of Botany, AMU, spoke at length on water contamination, water borne diseases, causes and remedial measures of water contamination . He expressed concern about unavailability of safe drinking water to most of the Indians even after 65 years of India’s independence. Prof. Hussain also discussed the problem of air pollution and held the human being responsible for environmental degradation.

Prof. Salahuddin Quraishi, former chairman, Department of Geography, AMU, emphasized the need for water conservation and said that this objective would not be achieved unless water became a taxable commodity. Change of mindset towards environment and care for pollution free environment was according to him the mantra for the protection of environment and sustainable development of all living beings.

Dr. Shadab Khursheed, associate professor, Department of Geology, AMU discussed ozone hole, acid rain, water

table depletion, water contamination and land pollution and said that use of chemicals and negative technology are the root cause. He suggested the need for water harvesting to check the depletion of water table.

Dr. Bachchan Ali Khan, a Post graduate teacher at the +2 program of the university, advocated the integrated environmental management by individuals, local, regional and national agencies for the control of environmental pollution of all kinds. He also laid emphasis on educating school children by giving them especial program of pollution free environment.

Dr. Nagma Azhar, a guest faculty at the department of commerce, AMU shed light on legal provisions to protect environment from degradation and said that all these statutes and laws were of little help unless implemented strictly and forcefully. She advocated the need for the establishment of separate courts for dealing with environmental problems.

Mr. Sabir Rahi, a real estate dealer by profession and recipient of many awards for his works regarding protection of birds and environment was of the view that there was urgent need for practical steps for protecting environment, and the cooperation of all a was must, in this noble cause.

Prof. Mohammad Muqim, former chairman, Dept of Philosophy, AMU, Aligarh was of the opinion that all environmental problems that are being faced by us are because of the negligent behavior of the common people and exhorted the entire human being to contribute his/her bit for creating a healthy and sustainable environment for animals, plants, and men.

Dr. Mohammad Moazzam, deputy secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India ,New Delhi while giving his presidential remarks highlighted plans of his ministry to curb the problems of environmental degradation and suggested the required measures like plantation , water harvesting, avoiding the use of polythene

bags and last but not the least change of mindset towards environment.

Maslaki Ikhtelafaat Ko Kam Karne Ki Tadabeer

Islam came for integration and cooperation among the people at large in general and the Muslim Ummah in particular and the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) made tireless efforts for bridging the gaps of any kind among his followers and for uniting them throughout his life but the rigidity and intolerance among the followers of different masalik is causing a lot of problems for the followers of Islam, said Prof. Mohammad Muqim ,co-ordinator, IOS Aligarh chapter during his welcome address on the occasion of a muzakrah (Symposium) on *Maslaki Ikhtelafaat Ko Kam Karne Ki Tadabeer* organized by Aligarh Chapter of the Institute of Objective Studies ,New Delhi ,on June 26, 2012 which was attended by a large number of scholars belonging to different schools of thought and about all masalik. He exhorted the scholars to share their views for doing away with the masalaki difference so that a path of integrity peace and tranquility could be paved.

Prof. Syed Farman Hussain, former chairman, department of Shia Theology, AMU Aligarh as chairman of the session invited Mr. Rafeeq Ahmad Salafi to share his views. Mr. Rafeeq was of the view that as Muslims we must do our best to minimize the differences and he advocated to follow that form of Islam which was there in the days of Sahabah based on Quran & Sunnah. This would be the basis of unity among Muslims.

Mr. Kabiruddin Fauzan a noted scholar from Purnia, Bihar and the Chief editor *Fikre Islami Ki Nai Tashkeel* opined that minimizing the gap among the followers of masalik and different schools of thought shall remain a dream and unless and until we are guided only by the Quran and the teachings of Rasool (PBUH) and in the light of reasoning . Rationality may bring all people of different masalik on common points.

Dr. Abdul Matin, formerly professor of English in the department of Kulliyat,

AKT College AMU Aligarh advised to make distinction between diversity and differences /deviation. According to him our authors and thinkers must do their best to concentrate on depicting a true and transparent image of Islam. He further said that Muslims at large should be advised to have faith in the unity of ALLAH, Mohammad (PBUH) being messenger of Allah and to perform their religious duties in accordance with the provisions of the Quran.

Prof Shah Mohammad Waseem, former chairman, Department of Commerce and Dean, F/O Commerce, AMU Aligarh advised primarily to understand tenets /faith of Islam in the lights of the teachings of Quran and sunnah and leave that Hadiths which are in conflict with Quran . Secondly, he suggested to behave with one another like brothers and not to criticize Imams of other Masalik. And thirdly he advised the learned scholars to confine their dialogues and arguments regarding their Masalik among themselves and not to involve and share with common people.

Er. Saleem Peerzada, National President, Parcham Party of India opined as under for the purpose of minimizing maslaki differences.

- Identifying and discrediting drive should be initiated against those who divide people on maslaki and other grounds. Muslim organizations and institutions should give proportional representation to the people of all schools of thought and should refrain from working as Maslaki Mutths.
- Scholars, preachers and public speakers may be requested to confine maslaki difference only to the academic discussion and not to make it a subject for public discussion.
- Ulema may be requested to be moderate in their speeches. They should also be requested to refrain from vehement criticism of practices of one another's masalik
- Inter masalik marriages should be promoted and encouraged for a better environment.

- A newsletter for the promotion of this mission should be brought out in the name of Al-Wahida to promote and inculcate maslaki harmony and unity.

Engineer Shakeel Baig was of the opinion that maslaki differences would not be removed totally however there is a possibility of minimization of intensity of these differences. He advised for frequent organization of such kinds of programs on regular basis including seminar and workshop. Mr. Baig advocated the use of political platform for unity of the Ummah where the followers of all Masalik and schools of thought could sit and act together. The political platform may become a ground or justification for maslaki tolerance

Mr. Mohammad Sufiyan, a businessman by profession and social activist shared his views by saying that difference is natural but conflict and fighting start only when we consider our Maslak as superior to others and start criticizing other masalik in public places.

Mr. Mohammad Sabir Rahi , a real estate businessman, and recipient of awards like pride of India ,Rajiv Gandhi Shiromani Award and Asia Pacific Excellence award for his contribution to environment and birds protection, suggested to be tolerant and advised to promote those issues of all masalik and schools of thought which are common like giving charity, donations, zakah; prohibiting use of liquor and other intoxicants; discouraging illegal and forbidden ways of earning, usurpation of other's rights, killings of innocent people etc. For these positive work of social significance we should invite people of all masalik and seek their cooperation in such activities.

Dr. H.R. Chighani, expressed his views by saying that the ulema and scholars of all masalik can play a vital role in minimizing differences of masalik. First of all ulema should be approached to realize the importance of eradicating of present situation of intolerance, then involve them in minimizing differences.

Prof. Naseem A. Zaidi, former chairman, Dept. of Economics AMU, Aligarh was of the view that there was a need for change of mindset among the rigid followers of different masalik , and advocated for moderate approach , tolerance of the ideology of other groups for peaceful coexistence.

Mohammad Anees-Ur -Rahman, Director of Al-Hamd Research Center Aligarh, advised to follow the teachings of the Quran as an urgent need for doing away with the maslaki differences.

Mr. Farhat Ali Usmani, a senior advocate, opined that maslaki differences could be minimized only to a certain extent for which we should abstain from criticizing different practices by the members of other masalik, by respecting the scholars and Imams of other masalik , by tolerating those practices of other masalik which are not similar to our's. Ulema have to be careful and positive while speaking or writing anything about other's maslak

Qazi Zia-Ul-Islam, advocated for personal worships instead of minimizing maslaki differences. He further advocated for regular efforts in this regard.

Prof. Farman Hussain, giving his presidential remarks said that for the last 14 hundred years masalik have become like faiths. People belonging to different masalik behave in such a way as if they are doing some religious duty. According to him no one can ignore *ahadiths* but in case of a conflict between the teachings of a hadith and that of the Quran, the later shall prevail. Prof. Farman Proposed to form a committee for promoting such programmes and activities.

Prof. Mohammad Muqim, coordinator of the chapter, while giving vote of thanks summarised the suggestions extended by different speakers for reducing maslakai differences as under.

- That the maslaki disagreements and differences should not be discussed and commented in public places.
- All scholars should avoid to criticise the leaders and scholars of other

maslaks, instead speakers may elaborate and appreciate the positive opinion of other scholars.

- All maslaki groups should hold some meetings within their respective people about understanding the position of other masalik and should also study the literature of other masalik.
- The people of other masalik particularly scholars should spend quality time with the people of other masalik.
- The attention of leaders of different masalik should be drawn towards common issues and problems, the Muslim ummah is facing today nationally and internationally.
- To organize workshops/seminars regarding the core issues related with education, poverty, security etc.
- To isolate & ignore those scholars/speakers who are frequently involved in spreading hatred and violence among the masalaki groups.
- To publish a newsletter and also launch a website for promoting harmony and understanding among the masalaki groups.
- To visit the people of other masalik.

He welcomed the suggestions to constitute a committee for taking ahead the task of minimizing maslaki differences and an adhoc committee comprising of the following scholars was constituted.

1. Prof. Farman Hussain
2. Maulana Sulatan Ahmad Islahi
3. Dr. Safdar Sulatan Islahi
4. Mr. Saleem Peerzada
5. Dr. Abdul Matin
6. Dr. Siraj Ajmali
7. Mr. Sabir Rahi
8. Maulan Aneesur-Rahman
9. Maulana Rafeeqe Ahmad Salafi
10. Qazi Zia-Ul-Islam
11. Dr. Liyaqat Hussain Moini
12. Mr. Kabir Uddin Fauzan
13. Mr. Mohammad Muqim

PATNA CHAPTER

Proceedings of the inter-active sessions held on 7th & 8th September 2012, organised by the Patna Chapter

Taking opportunity of the recent visit of Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS, New Delhi, two important consecutive interactive sessions were organised by the IOS (Patna Chapter) on 7th and 8th September 2012, respectively. The following attended the meeting:

1. Prof. M.A. Quddus
2. Dr. Abdul Matin
3. Dr. Hussain Ahmed
4. Janab Mohd. Mazahir
5. Janab Wasi Ahmed Shamsi
6. Janab Ata-ur-Rehman
7. Dr. S. Shaukat Ali
8. Dr. Imteyaz Hassan
9. Janab Aftab Ahmed Engineer
10. Dr. Fazal Ahmed
11. Janab S. Shamsuzzoha
12. Dr. S.F. Rab

At the outset Dr. S.Fazle Rab welcomed the chairman and the guests present on the occasion. He extended heartiest congratulations to Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and his associates and colleagues for organizing Silver jubilee celebrations and holding almost 14-international conferences. The major themes chosen for these international conferences clearly indicate the concern of the institute towards India in particular and the world in general. Over the years the Institute has emerged as a viable and vibrant think tank connecting leading thinkers, scholars, intellectuals, reformers, religious and legal luminaries, bureaucrats, and social activists etc drawn from different parts of the country.

While initiating the interactive session Dr. Fazle Rab observed that Muslims by and large are pushing themselves on the path of development but they still lag behind. The affirmative steps taken by the various governments are still on paper. Consequently the fruit of development is not shared equally by the Muslims. On the other hand the image of Muslims in general is continued to be tarnished by the various extremist groups with an aim to

marginalise them on all fronts. Amid's these emerging trends one striking phenomena that could be fairly observed, is the gradual ghettoisation of these two communities on communal line. Despite working together and sharing each other in almost all walk of life, the members of these two major communities feel quite safe and protected in colonies and mahallas where they constitute majority. This process of ghettoisation is further reducing the opportunities of neighbourhood interaction, creating an environment of misunderstanding promotes prejudices and intolerance among them. Unfortunately the way certain extremist groups are widening the gap between the two communities has never been so widely experienced before. This means that both the communities are now more at the risk of becoming indifferent to each others. If so happens, this process will lead them into the "Dangerous Zone" where 'toleration' will fail and the members of these communities will appear to be dangerous to each other. The sensible and enlightened members of both the communities should come forward and strengthen their emotional bondage through meaningful dialogue and social interactions by taking up common issues and problems of both the communities on their agenda, he said.

While endorsing these views, Mohammad Mazahir, a social activist, stressed the need of expanding the areas of co-operation between the two communities in such a way that both should become indispensable to each other. Dr. Abdul Matin, Director, Maulana Minatullah Rahmani Technical Institute, Imarat-e-Shariah, highlighted the issues of Maslaki Conflicts which is dividing Muslim communities. Unless this age-long barrier to unity is removed by evolving common minimum programme by Ulema of different Maslaks the community cannot strive to stand unitedly to face the threat of external challenges. Aftab Ahmed Engineer was more concerned about the political empowerment of the Muslim Community. Since all the issues relating to development, according to Aftab, is taken up in the legislative houses but the percentage of Muslim representation in

these houses is sharply declining. The regional parties are mainly caste-based and they do not allow to accommodate the interest of the minorities. He was critical of political parties which are not fair in taking up the issues of reservation to Dalit Muslims under article 341 of the constitution. Ata-ur-Rehman, a retired Bank manager, suggested that instead of lip-services offered by the community leaders a practical agenda relating to the socio-economic development of the Muslim community should be prepared which could alone resolve their basic problems and issues.

Wasi Ahmed Shamsi, a social activist, blamed the ulema for the backwardness of the community who, instead of acting as a role model, indulge in corrupt practices themselves and hence they are devoid of religious moral values and virtues. Muslim youth feel quite bewildered in the absence of such role model ulema. Dr. Fazal Ahmed, Head of the department of sociology, Patna College observed that due to the lack of political leadership Muslim youth are quite bewildered and are finding themselves in a state of indecisiveness in facing the new challenges. As all successive Congress and BJP led-governments have failed to protect the interests of the minorities, Muslims should come forward to support the third front which is likely to come up as an alternative to Congress and BJP. Dr. Fazal also pointed out the negative role of Media in tarnishing the image of Muslim community.

Dr. Hussain Ahmed, a noted physician and Professor of Medicine, Nalanda Medical College, observed that instead of raising and highlighting issues, necessary steps be taken to resolve them in phased manner so that confidence building measure could be promoted among the members of the community.

Prof M.A. Quddus appreciated the role of IOS in bringing positive change in the mind-set of the community which is now looking forward to achieve the desired goal. Dr. Imteyaz Hassan and Dr. S. Shaukat Ali also highlighted the achievements of scholarship programme, which continued more than a decade,

helped the needy students across the country.

While reviewing the opinions expressed by the participants, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, in his presidential address, pointed out that there is need to discuss these issues at various levels involving the enlightened members of the society for evolving broad consensus so that a relevant agenda could be prepared and necessary planning be made to resolve such issues on priorities. We are now facing challenges in every walk of life but the most unfortunate thing is that the rule of constitution is being ignored by the vested groups to marginalize minorities by isolating them from the main stream. On the other hand Muslims themselves could not take any bold initiative in promoting Think Tank which could conceptualize and process emerging issues and planning the modus of operand in resolving issues and problems by the "collective wisdom."

Referring to Bihar Dr. Manzoor Alam, suggested to the participants to look into the contribution of Muslim thinkers, reformers, educationists, intellectuals, administrators, social activists and Ulema who not only played a dominant role in image-building of this state but also remained a source of inspiration to the people across the world in their respective field of knowledge.

Dr. Alam also emphasized the need to strengthening the inter-community relation which could alone create a meaningful environment for peace and development. For this efforts may be made to review the contents of leading articles published in different newspapers including Hindi and English if anything found wrong in the content analysis of such articles the community leaders should immediately contact the editors of the concerned papers for rectification.

Regarding the issue of establishing Muslim political parties Dr. Alam said that Muslims have already been translating this idea into practice but instead of establishing specific political parties for Muslims, efforts may be made to create a strong POLITICAL FORUM representing members from the cross-section of the community including

political parties and whose president and secretary should declare that they would not fight any election on behalf of any political party so that they can use the FORUM to pressurize political parties in the interest of the Muslim community.

At last the meeting came to an end after the vote of thanks by Dr. S.F. Rab, Director, IOS Patna Chapter.

Calendar 2013

The IOS calendar 2013 has been published. Agents, Shop-keepers and others may place their order with the IOS Headquarters.

The Four-Page calendar has the following feature:

Page-1 Mosques through the Ages (Al-Aqsa Mosque)

Page-2 World – Prevalance of HIV/AIDS-2011

Page-3 INDIA Achievements of PM's 15 Point Programme, 2009-10

Page-4 World Human Development Index-2011

The calendar may also be obtained from

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OPINION

The Birth of a Party Against Corruption
by Ishtiyaque Danish

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Arvind Kejriwal and Co. have finally launched their political outfit, Aam Admi Party (AAP) which aims at systemic change in the country. The aims they want to achieve politically are quite ambitious.

The AAP, as the name suggests, is all about empowering the common man. Their political agenda includes decentralization of power, devolution of decision-making powers to Gram Sabhas and easy/cheap access to judiciary. Most people will welcome these but the AAP raised an alarm when it announced to make laws through referendum. Minorities will especially become apprehensive that referendum might lead to making laws affront to their religious interests.

Soon the AAP has launched a membership drive and the assembly elections due next year in Delhi will provide it the occasion to enter the electoral battle.

The activist and the honest can somehow coexist. But the moment the activist enters electoral politics, corruption moves to embrace him in visible and invisible ways. It is not clear how the AAP will discern if the person joining their rank is as honest as they are or claim to be. In other words their membership drive will be their first test when people will keenly see if they are indeed different from other political outfits. Similarly the selection of candidates for fighting elections will be equally difficult. Most honest people usually do not have the resources to bear the huge expenses of an election campaign.

Also the honesty becomes a handicap in the wake of vicious propaganda unleashed by the opponents. In sum, being honest in public life, especially in India, is almost well nigh impossible.

The AAP has declared that systemic reform would be its real agenda. It is welcome that they want to decentralize governance by empowering Gram Sabhas. But it is easier said than done. The grand vision behind the Panchayati Raj was the same. There are several hindrances and roadblocks which will frustrate even the greatest enthusiast and the optimist. Both the bureaucracy and the political class at district level – DMs, MPs and MLA – vehemently oppose the empowerment of Gram Sabhas fearing that they would curtail their power and clout. The AAP has, therefore, to explain its programme, methodology and roadmap in a clear way to win the support of the common people by clearing their doubts.

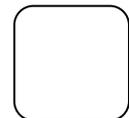
We often hear people saying that they have full faith in judiciary. People who say so are usually persons with sufficient or enormous resources at their disposal. They are in a position to fight long court battles and hire the services of the best legal minds available in the market. A layman, like the writer of these lines, has not a happy experience of court proceedings. Lawyers play tricks to which judges concede in the name of natural justice and principle of fairness. As a result cases are delayed so much that justice is denied. The slow process of justice, the collusion of some judges with the corrupt, state or

individual and the high fees of lawyers join hands to deter people from approaching the court and suffer injustice, even oppression in silence. We often see serving as well as retired judges speaking about or highlighting the need for judicial reform. But nothing has happened so far. The APP will indeed render a great service to the nation if they take some well-meaning steps to bring about long-needed reform in our judicial system. They will soon realize, or perhaps they have already realized, that a better justice-delivery system will help them a great deal in creating a corruption-free India.

Activism and political maturity are two different things. The AAP exhibited political immaturity when it was guided by its activism in saying that it would make laws through referendum. The party has to come clean on this pretty soon as it has the potential to cut its wings before it begins its flight. Because there is every possibility that passions may be whipped to bring about changes to hurt sections of the society particularly the Muslims. The Muslim community is by and large backward as progress of the country has almost bypassed them. As a disadvantaged, deprived or marginalized group they would heartily welcome any change that might arrest their decline. But the AAP's programme to make laws through referendum is not the kind of change that will instill confidence in Muslim mind. The party's leadership must realize that about 14% Muslims of the country will not feel comfortable with its proposed way of law-making.

RNI NO. 59369/94

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