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Thought for the Month

The unbelievers will be
Led to Hell in groups:
Until, when they arrive there,
Its gates will be opened.
And its keepers will say,
“Did not messengers come
To you from among yourselves,
Rehearsing to you the Signs
Of your Lord, and warning you
Of the Meeting of this Day
Of your?” The answer
Will be: “True: but
The Decree of Chastisement
Has been proved true
Against the unbelievers!”

Al-Quran- 39:71

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FOCUS

Lawrence, in fact, never intended an independent Arab State. Rather, as is evident from *The Politics of Mecca*, (a confidential paper) his purpose behind instigating an Arab insurrection was, on the one hand, to break the Ottoman Empire which even in its decadent state was a power to be reckoned with, and, on the other, to establish numerous Arab states under British tutelage and keep them constantly at loggerheads with each other through a policy of divide and rule and by promoting jealousy and rivalry among them. The following excerpt from *The Politics of Mecca* would further elaborate the point under debate:

“(Husain’s) activity seems beneficial to us, because it marches with our immediate aims, the break up of the Islamic ‘bloc’ and the defeat and disruption of the Ottoman Empire, and because the State he would set up to succeed the Turks would be as harmless to ourselves as Turkey was before she became a tool in German hands. The Arabs are even less stable than the Turks. If properly handled they would remain in a state of political mosaic, a tissue of small jealous principalities, incapable to cohesion, and yet always ready to combine against an outside force. The alternative to this seems to be the control and colonization by a European power other than ourselves which would inevitably come into conflict with the interests we already possess in the Near East”.

In the same paper Lawrence further suggests to create two Caliphates and keep them embroiled in rivalry and hostility towards each other:

“(Husain) had a mind to taking the place of the Turkish Government in the Hejaz himself. If we can only arrange that this political change shall be a violent one, we will have abolished the threat of Islam, by dividing it against itself, in its very heart. There will then be a Khalifa in Turkey and a Khalifa in Arabia, in theological warfare, and Islam will be as little formidable as the papacy when popes lived in Avignon.”

Lawrence not only proposed to divide Islam against itself but also suggested ways and means as to how this purpose can be achieved. In a secret memorandum: *The Conquest of Syria If Complete* he urged the British Government to utilize the opportunity that the war with Turkey had offered to end the religious supremacy of the Ottoman Caliph. According to his analysis it was not possible for Britain to appoint a Caliph on her own as she had installed a Sultan in Egypt. The Sultan of Egypt, in his view, was ‘loose-mouthed’ and because of his special relationship with Britain was unlikely to be accepted as Caliph. However, Sherif Husain, he opined, would be Britain’s best choice. The Sherif had considerable influence in the Hijaz and Syria. But his relations with the Turks were tense. He was even suspected by many as being disloyal to the Ottoman Caliphate.

From “*The English and the Arabs the Making of an Image*”
by Ishtiyaque Danish, pp. 89-90.

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS Workshop on Fuller’s Future of Political Islam

With a view to countering the Western discourse on Islam and the Muslim world, the Institute of Objective Studies engaged with scholars and ulema at its conference hall on September 29, 2018 at a workshop on Graham E. Fuller’s *Future of Political Islam*. Fuller’s book written in 2003 generated a serious debate among experts on Islamic history with opinion sharply divided over the intent of the author. The book assumes importance because Fuller had served as the vice-chairman of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and spent several years in five Muslim countries, including Muslim areas of China and Russia.

This book is the result of his study of these countries and formed the basis of his perception about the Muslim world. The day-long workshop was spread over five sessions, including inaugural and valedictory sessions.

Introducing the subject, Prof. Arshi Khan, department of political science, Aligarh Muslim University, noted that the present century could be identified with anti-Islamic policies and activities affecting the future of 57 Muslim-majority countries in the world. Most of the Muslim countries were rich in natural resources and strategic locations in addition to their heritage and contributions in most of the continents. He said that politically-motivated media launched campaigns to demonise Islam. As a result, the prevailing notion about religious,

social, political and other aspects of Islam and Muslims had been purposive, directional, retributive and pejorative, creating psychological stress among Muslims all over the world.

Prof. Khan observed that as part of the introduction in the book, Fuller expressed his views on political Islam, Islamic terrorism and Islamic political spectrum. His description of Islam was quite pervasive and did not leave any aspect of Muslim lives concerned with any kind of organised behaviour in religious affairs. He traced roots of radicalism in Sayyid Qutb, Ibn Taimia and Abd-al-Salam Muhammad al-Faraj, and finally linked fundamentalism with Osama bin-

Prof. Khan argued that the present Western order and its civilisational product could not be said to be superior in any manner. It also could not be considered the final model of history. Propelled by excessive consumerism, ruthless and senseless exploitation of natural resources and proliferation of deadly nuclear weapons and its continued dominance was fraught with dangerous consequences for future generations of mankind, world peace and the planet. It had already created more problems than it solved, more diseases than it treated.

Such a world order could not sustain itself for a longer period of time. He said that it was noticed in chapter two of Fuller’s book that he agreed with Islam as a religious ideology but not as a part of political ideology. Prof. Khan sought to know if Turkey would be the first country to succeed in reaching a genuine reconciliation and integration of Islamist and Western liberal democratic traditions.

Turkey had advanced farther in establishing modern institutions of democratic governance than any other Muslim state, an evolution shared by its Islamists. Thus Turkey’s task now was to open up fully its democratising system and to integrate those social and ideological elements that were left behind, or excluded during the forced Westernisation project. Referring to the UN assessment in mid-2002, he said that there were three major crisis areas for the Arab world that required urgent attention: lack of freedom of political order which prevented Arab states from utilising the human potential of their citizens and from initiating the needed reform; the



A view of the Workshop on Future of Political Islam

Laden. He also dislodged Shariah, endorsed modernists and talked about the reconsideration of the intent of the Qur’an.

Fuller divided Islamists into categories – some were modernist, creative and wise, some were primitive, ignorant, even destructive. His agenda was concerned with the future and welfare of Muslims, but it was basically a disclaimer because, he added “As an American I naturally care strongly about the future and welfare of my own country”. Political Islam to Graham was concerned with the role of ulema and self-educated Islamic intellectuals.

woefully low level of education of its citizens, making them unfit to adapt to the conditions of the contemporary world; and the low social status of women which damaged the advancement of both the professional and social potential of Arab society.

Fuller talked about universality, commonality and plurality founded by religions, but it was possible when a particular religion was not treated with deep biases. Fuller also said that the force of Protestantism in Western history heralded the emergence of the autonomous individual on social and economic stage, able to think for himself or herself in a new economic environment that spurred individual initiative. According to him, the next two decades would place far greater demands and pressures upon Islamist movements as they would gain some position within the political order across the Muslim world.

Prof. Khan pointed out that Fuller said the fate of political Islam was internally linked to the cause of reform more broadly. He felt that Islamism was not the only vehicle for reform and change by any means, but it would be the dominant one, especially in closed societies. He insisted that political Islam would either adopt the radical reform agendas of the Left, or it would yield them to the Left and lose prominence. When that happened, we would probably see a resurgence of struggle between Islamism and the radical Left, somewhat reminiscent of the 1970s.

Prof. Khan referred to Fuller's advocacy for a more benign, less confrontational international order and the diminution of terrorism in general. He concluded by saying that one could only hope that liberal Islamists would persevere to work towards renewed understanding of Islam in the modern age. He believed that if Islamists could not rise to this challenge, they would be soon supplanted by other political forces that did have something to offer. According to Fuller's assessment, Islamists would come to power in

several Muslim countries after 2023. He also believed that Jordan and Turkey would survive due to the presence of good Islam. Predicting that the United States would take pre-emptive action less often, he said that significant changes would take place in the Muslim world with liberal Islam surviving the crisis, Prof. Khan concluded.

Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, said the workshop was aimed at understanding the political theory of Islam. Though it was a beginning, it would pave the way for developing Muslim political thought. He said that the IOS was committed to taking the idea forward by setting the ball rolling. Nothing could be said for sure of the intention of Fuller, but he certainly offered an opportunity to study his book from different angles. Timing of the publication of the book was important as much as the notes on it by scholars who touched upon almost all aspects. The paradigm in which he wrote the book was equally important.

The book needed to be understood in the context of purpose, Prof. Khan said. This also explained the unilateral decision making and domination of US. Today, when the entire world was groaning under a burden of strife, Islam could provide guidance to salvage the world. But the Muslim countries were maintaining silence over the happenings in their neighbourhood. He said that Islam was based on the principles of unity, rationality and tolerance, and offered room for freedom of speech, criticism, dissent, etc. He pleaded that the book should be appreciated and properly analysed. He informed that all views on the book would be collected and brought out in book form.

Business Session-I

The inaugural session was followed by the first business session chaired by Prof. Mirza Asmer Beg of the political science department of AMU. The topic of the session was "Understanding Islam: A theoretical framework with

discussion on the Ideational framework of political Islam and its multiple roles and the categorisation and relevance of Islamic movements". Prof. Abdul Waheed, deptt. of sociology, AMU, who was the first speaker of the session, held that it was not an academic book. He quoted the views of the Marxist scholar, Cedric J. Robinson who described Islam as the most advanced religion. He also called Islam an ideal. According to Fuller, he said, Islamic civilisation was inert and static, and Muslims should be understood in that context. He noted that the book was intelligently written to serve some purpose.

Fuller's remarks were not empathetic to Islam and he did not consider it as a political ideology. For him it was merely a religion. He appreciated the US as the most religious country, Prof. Abdul Waheed said.

Dr. Waris Mazhari, deptt. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, held that the idea of political Islam could not be rejected outright. Western scholars viewed Islam also as a political thought because of *dawah* which contained freedom of speech as one of the aspects of political thought. He said that Western scholars treated Shia-Sunni divide as political. He called for studying political Islam in its different aspects.

Dr. Saeed Anwar, editor, *Islam aur Asre-Jadid*, noted that the book was more than academic and should be understood in that context. Fuller was a high-ranked officer of the CIA and spent about 16 years in Muslim countries studying their political and social life. Thus, it required thorough study and analysis, he said.

Dr. Md. Sohrab, deptt. of West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, explained that the epistemology of Islam was inclusive of all the good things—universality of brotherhood, humanity, justice, etc. He believed that there might be a political project behind the writing of the book. But he

rejected the thesis that political Islam was a project articulated by Western scholars. He brought home the point by stating that France, where Muslims were properly accommodated, did not have a trace of political Islam.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman from the Indian Council of World Affairs referred to a scholar who held that if one wanted to survive in the US, he would have to write on Islam and its politics. Under the prevailing circumstances, one would be recognised only when he upheld the Western value system. Islam had to play a bigger role against the backdrop of the challenges posed by Western political thought, he emphasised.

Md. Sajid, a researcher in the political science department of AMU, pointed out that the title of the book was objectionable. Islam stood for communal and religious harmony, and co-existence of all human beings. He said that the book was the result of a clash between two civilisations.

Business Session-II

This session was devoted to “Islam in global politics and terrorism”. The other themes discussed at the session, included “Islam in global politics—Its resemblance with mainstream political movements” and “Islam and Terrorism.” The session was presided over by Prof. Abdul Waheed. Prof. Khwaja Abdul Muntaqim, former visiting professor, Amity University, who spoke on “Islam’s Big No to Terrorism”, traced the genesis of terrorism and held that the concern of the international community was not new and its beginning could not be attributed to terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001.

After the assassination of king Alexander of Yugoslavia and the foreign minister of France by a foreign hand in Marseilles on French soil in 1934, the League of Nations sponsored a Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism on November 16, 1937. He said that such

acts of violence were not attributed to any religion, and rightly so. But, unfortunately, Islam was being presented as the religion of fanatics, barbarians and recently, of terrorists, though there were no cogent reasons to believe it.

Quoting Fuller he said, “While examining the social, economic and political context, Fuller explains that the struggle between the fundamentalists and liberals will determine the future of political Islam”. There was nothing like liberal Muslims, radical Muslims, non-radical Muslims, modern Muslims or orthodox Muslims. It was merely a figment of imagination. A Muslim was simply a Muslim, he observed. An act of violence should not be attributed to the religion of the person committing it. If such a subjective approach was adopted, all religions would be deemed to be religions professed by terrorists and perpetrators of violence, he concluded.

He was followed by Prof. Mirza Asmer Beg, who held that Muslims had a problem with Western political and social life. He said that the West had been dominating Muslim countries militarily, but after World War II the strategy was changed. Now the Western powers were dominating them by consent.

Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish, former professor of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard and finance secretary, IOS, remarked that America created a situation in which one was forced to resist. This situation prevailed in Afghanistan and Palestine. Commenting on terrorism, he said that it was a global phenomenon. American social, political and economic system was pro-Europe and highly prejudicial to Third World countries, including the Arab world. Though the US faced no threat from Russia, Fuller devoted fairly good number of pages of his book to it. Fuller was one of several CIA officers who wrote books on international relations.

Prof. Danish castigated the US for targeting Muslims, but not uttering a single word against Israel which was demolishing Palestinian houses and grabbing their land. He accused America of blaming Afghanistan for exporting opium to Iran and other countries. Religious Muslims were dubbed as terrorists whereas 200 Americans were sent to Afghanistan to fight as the Taliban were not in a position to fight. He called terrorism a by-product of state policy.

Dr. Najmus Sahar from the deptt. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, observed that the term terrorism was first used in France. She held that there was no place for terrorism in Islam and those who linked terrorism with Islam did not properly understand it.

The chairperson, while rounding up the discussion, noted that terrorism was multi-layered. He said that terrorism was a reaction against excesses committed by the state. Western media played up the issue of terrorism by describing it as the last attempt of Muslims, he added.

Business Session-III

The third session, presided over by Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish, focused on “Islam, modernism and democracy in the 21st century.” The issues discussed in the session were, Islam and democratic order: Modern Islamic Arguments and Islam and West-A Futuristic Projection. The session began with the observations of Prof. Shamim Ansari, former professor of psychology, AMU. He contended that Islam is a religion based on the politics of values. He was critical of Fuller for adopting a negative approach to Islam. While touching upon terrorism, he never talked of terrorism in Georgia and other regions, but singled out Islamic terrorism to denigrate Islam and Muslims. He unreasonably attacked the Shariah and other personal matters of Muslims. He said that terrorism was a natural consequence of attack on Muslims, adding that

Muslims were not terrorists. They were only defending themselves.

The West wanted Muslims to act as their pawns. That the Western world had launched a psychological war against Muslims was clear from the killing of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Ladin. Owing to media manipulation, many Muslims failed to distinguish between real and the unreal. He also asked the Muslim community to develop a bent of mind that could tune in with the Qur'an and Hadith.

Dr. Saroj Giri of department of political science, Delhi University, commented that Islam was being currently debated in France, particularly in La-Hain, a suburb of Paris where majority of Muslims lived. Admitting that very little work had been done by think tanks on Muslim issues, he said that Islam was a universalist project as against the Western project to call itself universalist. The US had deviated from its role as a global policeman to wear the mantle of white ethno-nationalism, he remarked.

Dr. Khalid Khan from the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies noted that Kemal Ataturk introduced modern judicial system which was prevalent in Judaism. The ideas of Jalaluddin Afghani were just the reverse. According to Fuller, Turkey could be the best example of political Islam. He said that 20 percent of NGOs in Jordan were run by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Dr. Fakhru Islam from Deoband held that the political aspect of Islam had to be understood clearly. Thus Fuller's book should be understood and analysed in that context. He said that the influence of Western culture and thought started manifesting itself in Europe in the 17th century. Ulema in India also started to spread the puritanical Islamic thought through their writings. Notable among them was Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautawi, who laid seven conditions for a devout Muslim, he concluded.

Mr. Badre Alam, a research scholar in Delhi University and Mr. Abhay Kumar Mishra, a Ph. D. research scholar in Jawaharlal Nehru University also spoke on the occasion. Abhay Kumar held that certain ideologues were influencing policies in the US. Demonisation of Islam and Muslims was one of them. He drew parallels between the utterances of Western scholars and some Indian leaders. There was no distinction between Bernard Lewis, a British American historian who wrote against Muslims, and the Indian vice-president, except that Lewis is a scholar while the VP is not. He opined that the problems faced by Muslims and Hindus were similar. Muslims were as good or as bad as Hindus, he added.

Valedictory Session

The valedictory session was presided over by Prof. Arshi Khan. Summing up the discussions, he said that Fuller wanted everyone to accept the Western idea of democracy. This simply meant acquiescence in the US policy of domination over the world.

In his valedictory remarks, the IOS chairman, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, called upon the scholars who participated in the workshop to accept the challenge posed by the questions raised in Fuller's book and respond to them in an argumentative manner with supportive material on the subject. Describing the book as beautiful, he said that being an ex-CIA agent, Graham E Fuller had access to the classified information available with the US Administration. "We must study the book in all of its aspects and come out with answers supported by works of Islamic scholars, Maulana Abul Aala Mawdudi, Syed Qutub and others", he said.

Explaining individual dignity as defined in the Qur'an, he said that removal of hunger, *Iqra* (read) and communication were three bases on which it rested. He warned against the imminent social conflict due to the accumulation of 80 percent wealth in

the hands of 20 percent people. He suggested that a project to study the genesis of terrorism in the world should be taken up. He saw a ray of hope for Muslims in Recep Tayyip Erdogan, president of Turkey, Mahathir bin Mohamad, the prime minister of Malaysia and Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar Ibrahim wanted to join hands with Mahathir to ensure justice to everybody as equality and fraternity were the basic tenets of Islam.

At a time when attempts were being made to effect cultural change, the Qur'an was there to guide us. Allah has guaranteed against any change or alteration of His Word in the Qur'an. That was the reason why despite several attempts, the Qur'an remained intact till now, he emphatically said. He announced the constitution of a five-member committee headed by Prof. ZM Khan to go into the issues related to political Islam raised in Fuller's book.

Other members of the committee are Prof. Mirza Asmer Beg, who has been made the convener, Prof. Arshi Khan, Dr. Aftab Alam and Prof. Abdul Waheed. Acknowledging that not much literature on Islam was available, Muslims must, however, use the books of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, Maulana Qasim Nanautawi and Maulana Abul Aala Mawdudi. He also suggested that a comparative study of religions should be made to prepare a book. He asked the scholars to keep in mind the intermingling of capitalism, socialism and communism, and the Western dominance over technology and ideology.

The workshop was followed by a question-answer session. The workshop was preceded by the recitation of a verse from the Qur'an by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadir. While Dr. Aftab Alam, asstt. professor of political science, Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University, conducted the proceedings, a vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish. Prof. Afzal Wani, vice-chairman and

Prof. Hasina Hashia, asstt. secretary general, IOS, were also present on the occasion.

IOS Discusses Consultation Paper on Reform of Family Law

A meeting to discuss the Law Commission’s Consultation Paper on Reform of Family Law, was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at its conference hall on September 15, 2018. The discussion was initiated by the former member of Law Commission and Vice-Chairman, IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani. In his introductory remarks, he said that the response to the consultation paper had been subdued, adding that a law must have honesty, naturalness and accommodation for plurality and diversity.

A number of issues regarding personal law had been raised in the consultation paper prompting the need for further research. In this case, several judgements of the Supreme Court must be utilised, besides the Quranic guidelines and injunctions. Regarding marriage, he said the 1400-year old history of Islam showed how to approach this institution. Islam provided structural solutions to problems arising in marriage. This solution was worth emulating by other communities as well, because the Islamic law was derived from divine guidance.

He admitted that divergence was bound to crop up while discussing personal law. On dispute redressal, he said extra-judicial resolution could also be allowed. As far as adultery was concerned, it was not acceptable and could be a ground for separation of spouses. Referring to the criminal law, he said that it was a public law and different from the personal law.

Criminal law could not be imposed on family issues unless there was an element of public welfare in it.

Prof. Wani said that the paper circulated by the Commission was meant for reformation and community leaders must go into the suggestions in the light of the constitutional provisions. With regard to polygamy, he said that it was a matter of satisfaction that compared to Muslims, other communities had a greater number of polygamous marriages. Commenting on adoption, he noted that there was no point in bringing in a law when the Shariah was clear on it. Maintenance was an issue that defied solution, though several tribunals had been set up to resolve it. Law alone could not solve all problems because

code. Thus there must be no cause for imposition of a law. Regarding adoption, he said that paternity would continue to weigh heavily in the case of Muslims.

Prof. Eqbal Husain of the faculty of law, Jamia Millia Islamia, suggested that family law should be discussed with Justice A.M. Ahmadi since the issue had been raised several times, but to no avail. Practice of family law among Muslims was based on religious tenets. This being an integral part of the Shariah law, the ulema must come forward to specifically spell out the provisions according to the Qur’an and the Hadith. Referring to Part IV of the Constitution, he said that the Directive Principles of state Policy were not judicable and thus the Law



A view of the Discussion on Reform of Family Law

Commission’s recommendations were not mandatory, but recommendatory in nature. He expressed the apprehension that the Law Commission’s recommendations might be used by the ruling party to take political mileage out of it.

Prof. Hasina Hashia, professor of Geography, Jamia

Millia Islamia and Asstt. Secretary General, IOS, deprecated the practice of *halala* which was still prevalent among miniscule group of illiterate Muslims. Describing the practice as a form of exploitation of Muslim women, she said that this was still practised. Owing to this ill-practice women were in pain. She urged the ulema to give a serious thought to the issue and take a pro-women decision.

Asrar Ahmad, advocate, stated that Muslim community was being asked to shun rigidity which simply meant abandoning our cultural ethos. This clearly indicated the government’s

cases would continue piling up. Thus a firm stand should be taken on the Shariah and it should be defended, he said.

Former Professor of Law, Amity University, Khwaja Abdul Muntaqim, in his presentation held that when the law panel had itself accepted the diversity of personal laws, how could a uniform civil code be enforced in a country where the Hindu society itself was divided among different schools of thought. He said that the Supreme Court too had ruled that consensus must be reached before deciding to enforce a uniform civil

intent to interfere with Muslim religious and cultural practices that were protected under Article 18 of the Indian Constitution.

Supreme Court lawyer Mushtaq Ahmad held that a Uniform Civil Code could not be enforced as several communities among Hindus would oppose it because of their belief in the existence of 33 crore gods. He called for seriously studying the Law Commission report in order to understand its nitty gritty.

President of the Welfare Party of India, Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, informed that the All India Muslim Personal Board's delegation, of which he was also a member, met the law panel seven times. Adoption was one of the issues that came up for discussion, he said. He opined that while pursuing the case of triple talaq, the views of Hanafi and other schools of Islamic thought must also have been put before the apex court. He also regretted that Islamic scholars avoided participation in discussions on issues relating to Islam on television channels.

Mohammad Kazim Sher, advocate, pleaded for confining the discourse to the issues that affected the community most.

Secretary, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani, complained that Muslim leaders failed to properly present the case before the court. According to him, Muslim women had three powers to annul as against one held by a husband, talaq being one of them. He denounced *halala* and said that it had no existence in Islam, neither in the Quran nor in the Shariah. Currently, the practice of *halala* was a crime and attracted penal provision. While asking the AIMPLB to categorically state that the offender of triple talaq must be given punishment, he said that it existed only in the Hanafi school of thought. He urged the ulema of all schools of thought not to set themselves on the

course of confrontation and put up a brave front. It was also needed to dispel the popular misconception that the ulema were united against Muslim women. He also asked for the compilation of rules on marriage, adoption, succession, etc.

Dr Mufti Obaidullah Qasmi, from Delhi University, observed that personal law formed a part of Muslim religion and since it was divine, it was inviolable. He said that Islam was backed by rationality and logic.

Dr Mohammad Qasim, HoD Arabic, Zakir Husain College, Delhi University, remarked that *halala* was an Indian practice and found nowhere else in the world. He asked the ulema to unequivocally declare triple talaq a crime.

Shams Tabrez Qasmi, chief editor, online news portal Millat Times, insisted that talaq was a religious and social issue.

IOS Secretary General, Prof. ZM Khan, who chaired the meeting, expressed apprehension that the consultation paper was a trap laid to politicise the issue in order to garner votes. The exercise was timed to coincide with the approaching parliamentary polls in 2019. The intent was to provoke the reaction and use it to polarise voters. Thus, it was up to Muslims to read into the plot and not to bite the bait.

It was high time to sit together and deliberate on such issues and try to reach a consensus. If something was deficient, it must be complemented by others. He said that the IOS had been sharing its concerns with scholars, social activists, NGOs and other stakeholders by regularly interacting with them. He informed that the suggestions received from them would be compiled and a decision to work on them taken.

Earlier, a verse from the Holy Quran was recited and translated into Urdu by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadwi, Asstt. Professor of political science,

Dr. Zakir Husain College, Dr Aftab Alam, conducted the proceedings and proposed a vote of thanks.

IOS workshop on preparation of Islamic Civilisation Syllabi

A workshop on the "Preparation of Course of Islamic Civilisation in the light of the writings of Dr. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi" was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at its conference hall on September 3, 2018. Presided by the IOS chairman Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, the workshop was inaugurated by the Secretary, Islamic Fiqh Academy and the spokesperson of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani. The key-note address was delivered by the vice-chancellor, Maulana Azad University, Jodhpur, Prof. Akhtarul Wasey.

It was decided at the workshop to prepare a course on Islamic civilisation in the light of the works of the eminent Islamic scholar, Dr. Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. A six-member committee consisting of Dr. Mohammad Fahim Akhtar Nadwi, Maulana Mohammad Umar Abideen Qasim Madni, Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, Prof. Hamid Nasim Rafiabadi, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi and Dr. Ashraful Kausar Misbahi was formed for this purpose. While Dr. Mohammad Fahim Akhtar Nadwi was tasked with co-ordinating the activities of the committee, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi will serve as member-secretary.

In his presidential address, the IOS chairman Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam said that the current phase in the world was marked by ideological war and little-known civilisations were being presented after systematic planning. Citing the case of Judaism, Dr. Alam said that the Jews preserved the Hebrew language and their civilisation. They anxiously waited for the opportune time to arrive and propagated their culture throughout the world. He insisted that media and other

sources of information were being used to castigate Islam.

Eighty percent of the content in the media was against Islam. Big powers of the world were united against Islam, and it was high time to ponder over it and counter them with irrefutable arguments. He said that when something was presented in tune with the true spirit of Islam, people would become eager to know more about it. Giving the illustration of Turkey, he noted that the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan fast-tracked his country on development within the parameters of good governance and Islamic values. He expressed the confidence that on completion, the course would help the new generation understand Islam and rekindle an urge in them to know more about Islamic civilisation. Besides offering resource material, the course would become a part of the syllabus for higher classes. He used the occasion to urge the ulema to learn English language as it would consolidate its position in the world in the years to come. He said that even in the Arab world, more attention was being paid to English than Arabic.

In his inaugural speech, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani observed that civilisation was rooted in religion, customs and geographical conditions. He buttressed his point by saying that the utterance of words like “Insha-Allah” and “Masha-Allah” during talk and wearing pants, or any other dress, was part of culture or civilization, and not religion. That was the reason why non-Muslim writers used such expressions in their writings. While in India, wearing of coat and pant by the ulema was not liked, top ulema in the Arab world wore this dress and no fuss was created against this.

In Islam, he said the concept of the supremacy of Allah is of utmost importance. Four other supremacies - the supremacy of humanity, law, religion and world were added later.

Prof. Akhtarul Wasey, in his keynote address, remarked that the British not only established their suzerainty over us, but also destroyed our educational system, method of medical treatment and our social cohesion. He hailed the decision of our forefathers to concentrate on religion in order to preserve it as wise as the attainment of freedom from foreign yoke. With this purpose in view, a chain of religious seminaries (madrasas) were opened by them. But pursuing the same course after 70



L-R: MI. Ajmal Farooqui Nadvi, Prof. Akhtarul Wasey, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and MI. Khalid Saifullah Rahmani

years of Independence was out of tune with the present day realities, he said. We must move ahead and set a syllabus that could focus on both old and new issues, so that it was acceptable to madrasa students and non-Muslims.

Dr. Mohammad Fahim Akhtar Nadwi briefly explained Dr. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi’s concept of Islamic civilisation and his syncretism approach to religion. Dr. Al-Faruqi favoured the pursuit of knowledge that could also recognise Allah as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He used to say that

acquiring knowledge about God was as important as that about human beings. He was of the view that the Islamic civilisation reigned supreme between 7th and 11th centuries, but it became static during the last 200 years. Dr Akhtar said that the existing system of education was based on Western thought which had no concept of Allah and His Oneness (monotheism).

Besides the opening session, the workshop was spread over three other sessions. Those who spoke in different sessions included dean, School of Social Sciences & head, deptt. of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Prof. Hamid Nasim Rafiabadi, general secretary, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani, secretary (academic) Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Dr. Md. Razeel Islam Nadwi, former dean, School of foreign languages, the EFLU University, Hyderabad, Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, asstt. prof. of theology, Alia University, Kolkata, Dr. Md.

Shamim Akhtar Qasmi, Ustadul Maahidul Ali Al-Islam, Hyderabad, Maulana Umar Abideen Qasim Madni, HOD, deptt. of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, Prof. Abdur Rasheed Bhatt, asstt. prof. Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, Dr. Najmus Sahar, ex-head, deptt. of Urdu, L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga, Prof. Zafar Habib, and research scholar in Islamic Studies, JMI, Dr. Ashraful Kausar Misbahi.

The workshop was preceded by the recitation of a Quranic verse by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadwi, Maulana Shah Ajmal Farooq Nadwi conducted the

proceedings and extended a vote of thanks to the participants.

IOS Study Document “Vision-2025” released in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, August 4: The IOS study document “Vision-2025: Socio-economic inequalities - Why does India’s economic growth need an inclusive agenda”, edited by Amir Ullah Khan and Abdul Azim Akhtar, and published by the Institute of Objective Studies, was released here today at a gathering of intellectuals and public figures at Hotel Park Continental.

Mohammad Yameen Khan extended a warm welcome to participants in the function organised under the aegis of Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi. The city’s elite gathered on a warm Saturday morning to discuss India’s political and economic situation.

He said the meeting would not have been possible without generous support from patrons. He acknowledged continuous support from illustrious personalities like Mr AG Noorani, Mr. AK Khan (IPS), Prof. Faizan Mustafa, Prof. Sheela Prasad, Prof. Abdul Shaban and other eminent people. He extended special thanks to Mr. G. Sudhir (IAS), who released the volume.

The agenda for the conference was set with a presentation by Mr. Karthik M. on “Hate crimes and mob lynchings” in India. He provided figures to prove that the crime was mostly happening in BJP-ruled states of Jharkhand, MP, Rajasthan and Haryana. He cited figures to make the point that there was a rise in such crimes after the BJP government came to power in 2014. He called upon people to visit the India spend website for details.

Mr. A G Noorani spoke in detail on challenges for India, past present and future. He said that M A Jinnah was an able leader in pre-1936 India. Mr. Jinnah advised Muslims to concentrate

on business and education. He advised against taking up small fights with non-Muslims. He singled out Muslims like Chaudhry Khaliqzaman, Zahir D. Lari and Husain Imam, who damaged the cause of Muslims in northern India. Khaliqzaman supported India’s stand on Kashmir, but fled to Pakistan in burqa. Mr. Jinnah chided him for betraying the cause of Muslims, he said.

Maulana Azad was not made for politics. He hated Mr. Jinnah and this led to catastrophe for Indian Muslims. “Have you heard his speech at Jama Masjid? Why is this speech extolled? What kind of speech...it was self-mourning...at best..’You cut my tounge, when I wanted to speak, you severed my hands when I wanted to raise it...’ It was a horrible speech, which was a satire on Muslims. Was it a time for that? No, they needed comfort and a daring leader, but he was a weak leader and a lame duck.I.me...myself”, Mr. Noorani observed.

Patel asked Azad, why did not you open your mouth in Lucknow? Patel was doing all sort of things and doing irreparable damage to Muslim cause...and Azad was not standing up to safeguard the interests of Muslims. Some Muslims were there like A R Kidwai, but they did not provide leadership to Muslims. Patel asked all English companies in a circular to expel Muslims and send them to Pakistan, Mr. Noorani said.

“Jawaharlal was helpless and in a minority within Congress. Rajendra Prasad was unsecular to the core like several others. What could he do? Gandhi was closer to Patel, but due to North-South divide and differences, Nehru was propped up. Gandhi did not advise Muslims to join Congress.

“Morarji Desai was communal. He said that majority of Hindus were clean hearted but the same could not be said about Muslims. He became PM.

“What were the options? If we joined Congress, we would be controlled. Some Muslims were there, but they were Muslims for namesake. Sheikh Abdullah was an able and secular leader. He controlled a communal riot in Srinagar with a hockey stick. M K Tikku was made minister. He was a judicial officer who was secular.

“During communal riots in Bihar, Muslims of Bihar met and they passed a resolution in favour of Kashmir. A convention of Muslim leaders was called, and I was also invited in Bihar in 1961. Majlis Mushawarat and a CWC meeting condemned the meeting. If you talk of Muslims, it is branded communal. But, no one brands Akalis and their brand of politics as communal.

“No leadership of Muslims. Syed Shahabuddin damaged the Muslim cause and their leadership with his approach to petty issues such as offering prayers in Safderjang Madarsa in Delhi. All predictions of Azad came true. Muslims became muhajir in Pakistan, and in India no Muslim leadership.

“Md Ismael was called Qaed-e-Millat, but Indian Muslim League did not rise beyond Kerala.

“In 1956, Jan Sangh came and Jabalpur riots happened in 1961. The riots were a result of Jan Sangh propaganda. Congress was divided. One group aligned with Jan Sangh. Indira Gandhi co-opted Muslims as a compulsion to win election and get votes. But the honeymoon did not last long. Atal Behari Vajpayee in an interview to Washington Post said she was playing a dangerous Hindu game.

There was a pact between Congress and VHP to remove the locks of Babri Masjid before 1986. Rajiv Gandhi was more communal, and under the influence of Arun Nehru positioned himself as a champion of Hindus. He also fulfilled the promise to VHP. Most researches on Babri Masjid have

been done by non-Muslims like R. S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, S. Gopal.

P V Narsimha Rao was the first BJP Prime Minister, he declared.

“The NRC issue had not been raised by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal and his party. Firoz Bakht Ahmed writes in Organiser to have a dialogue with the RSS. I have given the article to Mr. Asaduddin Owaisi. He is the only man who speaks up. While I was coming from Mumbai, a businessman told me he was the only one. Others were quiet. Mr. Shahabuddin has damaged the cause. I told him talk of Muslim issues.

Talk of rights, and get along with secular Hindus and like-minded people. British foreign secretary said that he did not have papers of his grandfather. We can use his statement for the cause of NRC issue in Assam. We should contact him and make a request, he suggested.

“We should use media. Amir Ullah Khan Sahib and his team has done great work. I congratulate him and wish him all the best. His work should be appreciated and applauded.

“Muslims can initiate reforms among themselves. They can do it. Triple talaq is invalid and polygamy is also not in the spirit of the divine rules”, he concluded.

Prof. Amir Ullah Khan gave an overview of Vision 2025 and presented facts and figures to suggest that Muslims were backward on all parameters of development. He particularly stressed that education and health were the two areas in which they were lagging behind most noticeably. He cited figures about the decline in migration to cities and urbanisation among Muslims. The non-creation of jobs had affected Muslims most who were generally in unorganised sector. He provided statistics to prove that the claims of rise in Muslim population was empty rhetoric resorted to for some political designs. He underlined the need for better political representation for

Muslims, which was at an all-time low.

The report was released by Mr. G. Sudhir. The panel discussion that followed involved Mr. A K Khan, Prof. Abdul Shaban, Mr. Irfan Engineer and Mrs. Sheela Prasad, and was moderated by Prof. Amir Ullah Khan.

Mr. A K Khan said that the budget allocation for education of Muslims in Telengana was Rs. 2,000 crore, which was half of the total amount spent by the Central government. He said that boarding schools in Telengana for Muslims were a model where students were doing well, and teachers were paid well, around Rs. 42,000 per month. He said that girls schools were also opened and there was much demand for this. The scheme was a hit. He also cited the example of Hyderabad as a model city, where he maintained law and order with the help of citizens and political parties.

Prof. Sheela lauded the effort of Vision 2025 in giving a direction after the Sachar Committee and Kundu Committee reports. She appreciated the work of Amir Ullah Khan and called for greater gender parity in policy making. She cited the trolls directed against women as an example of anti-woman bias.

Prof. Shaban said that Dalits in Maharashtra were disillusioned with the existing parties and they were attracted towards MIM. He said that the recent demand of Shiv Sena for 5 per cent reservation of Muslims, even if not genuine, should be welcomed. He cautioned that the demand maybe to put an end to demands by Marathas and others.

Mr. Irfan said that new laws should be made to deal with hate crimes, like lynchings, which had increased since BJP came to power at the Centre. The participants agreed that with political will even existing laws were enough to deal with such heinous crimes.

Prof. Faizan Mustafa talked about law and Constitution and how Muslim

in India could claim rights. He said that the word Muslim, unlike Hindu, Sikh, Anglo-Indian, SC-ST, did not appear in the Constitution. The Constituent Assembly did not accept the wish list of Muslims, so their issues find no mention in the Constitution. There was no provision for a Minority Commission. He said that even then Muslims could claim rights as citizens and human beings. He said that everyone was given right to life, and a dignified life. Freedom and equality could be claimed and contested with the help of good lawyers even in the case of NRC.

He said that the minorities were provided with rights and special status, but the decision of a court to decide minority at state level was strange. This way, even Hindus will claim minority status in many states. “Amir Sahib’s report says that education is important and it should be claimed”, he observed.

“We should respect the Constitution. It was wrong on part of Shahabuddin to give a call to boycott Republic Day. Or, to organise a protest against Salman Rushdie. Such issues and calls only damage the cause of Muslims”, he commented.

“I have the right to say that Shariah courts are not an alternative to judiciary, but mean to fill a gap in judiciary. We should claim our rights, and struggle for that. Article 15 prohibits discrimination. Reservation can be demanded on the basis of backwardness, and it is genuine”, he opined.

Shariat and fiqh were two different things. One should not mix it. There should be room for dialogue and ijtehad. Why have Muslims stopped it? The problem is with taqleed and often one-school following. It damages the cause. One opinion, one school should not be declared law. Rather, all schools should be referred to, Prof. Mustafa argued.

Hidayah, which was translated by the British, should not be treated as

divine law. Law is human and it should be treated likewise. Law can be made compatible with the Constitution with dialogue. Nothing wrong in it. Muslims should start a dialogue and not treat sources as law, Prof. Mustafa concluded.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Syed Mushtaq, who placed on record a deep appreciation to all in the audience for their support and enthusiasm. He said the organisers could successfully complete the agenda because of everyone's presence and help. He thanked all speakers, esteemed guests and everyone in the organising team who helped at various stages of preparation for the conference. He especially thanked the team at Hotel Park Continental, members of the Access Foundation and various stakeholders who attended the meeting.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

KOLKATA CHAPTER

Higher Education and Muslims: Challenges and Opportunities

IOS Kolkata chapter organises a thought-provoking lecture by Dr. Aslam Parvaiz

The morning of August 19, 2018 saw the gates of a renovated IOS Kolkata chapter opened to a select group of intellectuals for a discussion on "Higher Education and Muslims: Challenges and Opportunities" by Dr. Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz, Vice-chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. Despite a heavy shower in the morning, the lecture room almost ran short of chairs to accommodate the visitors.

The guest list included the likes of Dr Afsar Ali, principal, Shaheed Nurul Islam College, Prof. Dr. Shabina N Omar, head, deptt. of English, Milli al Ameen College for Girls, Dr Shamim Ahmed Qasmi, head, deptt. of theology, Aliah University, Dr Alefiya

Tundawala, asstt. professor, deptt. of political science, Savitri Girls College, Dr. Md. Umar Ghazali, assoc. professor, Hoogly Mohsin College, Jawed Abbas Siddiqui, research scholar, Institute of Objective Studies Kolkata chapter, Dr Khaled Hussain, headmaster, Monu Memorial Institution, Anwar Ali, headmaster ML Jubilee Institution, Md. Shahjahan, vice-principal, Jibreel International School, Shamim Rahmani, co-ordinator Rahmani 30, Kolkata, Afnan Akhzar, news editor, *The Eastern Post*, and many others.

The session started with a short recitation from the holy Quran by Md. Shahjahan, vice-principal, Jibreel International School, and an introduction of the guests before asking Dr. Aslam Parvaiz to take over the session by Abdul Basit Ismail. At the beginning Dr. Parvaiz was given a hearty welcome.

A memento was presented to Dr Parvaiz by Afnan Akhzar. In an hour-long discourse on the topic, Dr. Parvaiz focussed on and emphasised the role of teachers in infusing students with a killer instinct to face competition. Speaking on the sub-standard delivery of lessons in Urdu-medium schools and government-aided schools, Dr. Parvaiz said that there was not much that one could do to bring about a massive change as the teachers were recruited by government.

He insisted that managing committees taking care of schools must create provisions for additional coaching to provide much-required impetus to students that would make them fit for higher studies. He also emphasised the need for counselling both for teachers to help them update themselves and equip them with better strategies for 21st century classrooms and students to help them know their orientation and assist them in choosing a career trajectory for themselves.

His discussion was filled with references to the teachings of the

Quran regarding education. The discourse was informative and provoked a series of questions from the guests in the question-answer session.

The guests appreciated a fresh beginning to IOS Kolkata chapter and expressed joy at being in the office after a long time, especially Dr Alefiya Tundawala and Prof. Shabina N Omar. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Abdul Basit Ismail and an assurance by IOS functionaries that in the light of the opinion of the guests, a series of such discussions would be organised in the future.

Calendar 2019

Agents, Shop-keepers and others may place their order of the IOS calendar 2019 which has following features:

Page-1 Country-wise Ranking Press Freedom Index - 2017 and 2018.

Page-2 Crime against Children - 2006-2016.

Page-3 Country-wise Crime Index - 2017.

Page-4 Mosque through the Age (Started 2011) Five Oldest Mosques in India.

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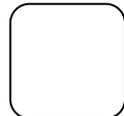
L-R: Dr Md Aftab Alam, Asstt. Professor of Political Science, Zakir Husain College, University of Delhi; Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani, Secretary, Jamat-i-Ulemae Hind; Harsh Mander, Social activist; Justice Rajinder Singh Sachar, former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court; John Dayal, Senior journalist and activist; Dr Hilal Ahmed, CSDS; Prof. Achin Vanaik, Delhi University



L-R: Mr John Dayal, Eminent journalist and human rights activist; Dr ND Pancholi, Secretary General, Citizens for Democracy; Dr M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS; Prof. M. Aslam, Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University; MD Thomas, Founder Director, Institute of Peace and Harmony

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