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Thought for the Month

And they (sometimes) say:
 "There is nothing except
 Our life on this earth,
 And never shall we be
 Raised up again."
 If thou couldst but see
 When they shall be made to
 stand Before their Lord
 He will say:
 "Is not this the truth?"
 They will say:
 "Yea, by our Lord"
 He will say:
 "Taste ye then the Chastisement
 Because ye rejected Faith."

Al-Quran- 6: 29-30

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FOCUS

We live in a fairly unique time, an age of unprecedented human development. Unlike previous civilisations, marked by clear-cut cultural and religious boundaries, humanity today lives in a vastly diverse world of cultures, ethnicities and faiths. Globalisation has so networked the world and made it inter-dependent and inter-related, that no one person can live in isolation from the next or be indifferent to what goes on elsewhere. It is also said to be an age of secularism. Yet, despite this and despite all the philosophical predictions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with regard to the demise of religion, religion in the third millennium has in fact emerged afresh, to play an essential role in shaping and affecting people's conscience and behaviour across the world.

Given the fact of globalisation and the revival of religions in a milieu where everyone is practically on everyone else's doorstep, it is vitally important for theologians from all faiths to derive from their own religious sources conceptions of religious pluralism corresponding to the reality of the present world. In other words today's inter-faith issues cannot be solved by resorting to out-of-date conceptions. New efforts are needed in the field of theology to develop up-to-date patterns for peaceful religious co-existence and inter faith dialogue.

This study is a response to the urgent need and challenge for an effective and positive way to interact with the religious other. It explores the Qur'anic conception of normative religious pluralism with a view to providing answers to questions such as whether the Qur'an itself regards normative religious pluralism as a value system or simply a method through which the Qur'anic worldview can be actualised. What is the main purpose of the Qur'anic endorsement of normative religious pluralism? Is normative Islam always identical with the actions of its adherents? Does an extant negative attitude towards normative religious pluralism emerge from the teachings of Islam or from the context of surrounding circumstances?

The most important key to answering all these questions is Qur'anic exegesis or *tafsir* which has a decisive religious impact on Muslim consciousness and is a vital prerequisite for Muslim understanding of interfaith relations. The problem is that where once the Qur'anic text was viewed dynamically, allowing for a renewed understanding of religious co-existence and thus preserving the religious identity of Muslims whilst keeping pace with universal human values, this progress over time slowed. Understanding and engagement became historically burdened with methodological and socio-political problems which have carried to this day. These developments include for example, the emergence of certain ethical conceptions from the Qur'anic text in historical contexts different from the present, the usage of the atomistic approach, the excessive implementation of the abrogation claim in relation to some ethical norms towards non-Muslims, the exclusive restriction of the general meaning of certain Qur'anic verses referring positively to non-Muslims on the grounds that the general sense of these verses was specified for Muslims only, etc.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS Lecture on “Islam, Democracy and Islamic World”

A lecture on “Islam, Democracy and Islamic World” was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) on 31.1.2015 at its Conference Hall. Delivering the lecture, former Dean of Arab Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi, insisted that while power in Western democracies rested with the people, in Islam, Allah is the supreme ruler. But this was not a basic difference. This only meant that in a democracy there was no scope for dictatorship or monarchy.

Democracy did not negate the supremacy of Allah, he noted. This was the reason why democratic system of governance received support from Islam and its followers as a whole. He said that Islam accepted the word “Caliphate”, instead of democracy. He observed that the challenge of democracy before the Islamic world was a 21st century phenomenon.

However, during the early phase of Islam, democracy was not a strange system of governance, nor was it unknown to Islam, though the nomenclature differed. Explaining the basic difference between the Western and the Islamic democracy, he said that the people were the fountainhead of power in a democracy. In that system, government was elected by the people and government passed law in deference to their wishes. In an Islamic democracy, the ruler was elected by a group of responsible persons whose integrity was above board and the ruler

was bound to take their advice. He said that in a Western democracy, the concept and ideas were evolved by individuals and were reflected in the government.

However, in the case of Islamic system of governance, this freedom was not allowed as the system was based on the belief that man was Allah’s representative on earth to carry out His command. While in the Western concept of democracy, it was the people who elected government, in Islam, it was only a group of articulate, wise people and practitioners of faith who could rule. This was based on the belief that the opinion of a wise person could not be equated with that of an ignorant person. He maintained that in an Islamic democracy, non-Muslims



Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi delivering his lecture
Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and Prof. Z.M. Khan on the dais

could also enjoy rights of a citizen provided they agreed with citizenship laws and were ready to abide by them.

They could, however, not be drafted for compulsory military service, and would be charged certain amount as “jizya” in lieu of their protection and for safeguarding their rights. But if they were willing to perform military service, they would not be required to pay jizya. He said that Islam granted religious freedom to everybody according to democratic standards and commanded that all places of worship be given respect. Under Islamic system of governance, no place of worship could be destroyed

as religious sentiments of followers of other religions were not permitted to be hurt, he explained.

Prof. Usmani observed that Muslims ruled over the world when Islamic *Fiqh* was codified. But today, in several countries, Muslims shared power where there was no Islamic system of governance. Democracy in these countries had different objectives and the laws enacted there did not conform to Islam. In these countries Muslims needed authoritative interpretation of *Fiqh*. He suggested that Muslims should understand the niceties of modern system of democracy and take their own course of action. There were certain issues like obtaining citizenship of a non-Muslim country, bank insurance,

benefiting from loan with interest from different financial institutions and banks, which needed to be addressed. He also raised the question if Muslims could enter government jobs and serve armed forces in these countries.

Earlier, the subject was introduced by Prof. of Islamic Studies, Kashmir University, Srinagar, Prof. Hameed

Naseem Rafiabadi. He held that the subject had scope for further debate as by and large Islamic scholars avoided discussion on it.

Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam remarked that the verdict of the people was the source of power in a democracy while in the Islamic system of governance rule of Allah prevailed and the directives of policy came from the Quran and Hadith. Thus if the public opinion was harmful for society and mutual relationship, it could not be accepted as Islam preached the teaching of a better and harmonious life, free from

evil. Stressing the need for taking into account changes that were taking place in today's world as a result of which it had become a global village, he said that the rule of Muslims or the believers vis-à-vis others would have to be defined.

Presiding over the function, the Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. ZM Khan observed that Islam differed a great deal from democracy. Democracy was one of the ingredients of Islam and a study of other demerits of democracy should be made. Referring to the Western concept of democracy, he held the three main political thinkers had concluded that democracy was a system of governance created by man.

The proceedings of the function were conducted by Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi. Those who attended the function included Vice-Chairman of the IOS, Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Dr. Eqbal Husain, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Bhatt, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad Wani, Maulana Ameen Usmani, Maulana Safdar Ali, Zafar Sadiq, advocate, Syed Ashraf Husain Rizvi, Suhail Anjum Akhtar and AU Asif.

Release of Report on "Access to Urban Basic Services in the Muslim Localities of Delhi (A Research Study)"

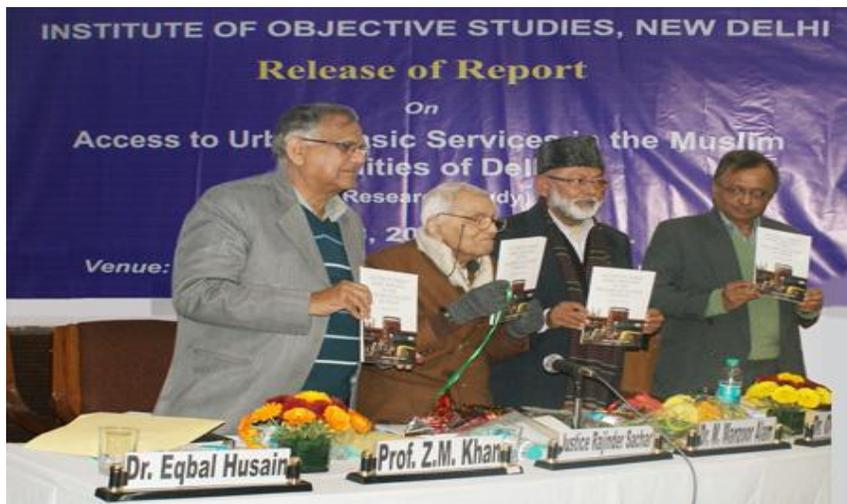
Former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, Justice Rajinder Singh Sachar, released the report on "Access to Urban Basic Services in the Muslim Localities of Delhi (A Research Study)" at a function organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at the Nehru Guest House of Jamia Millia Islamia on 28.1.2015. Delivering his address, he took the Modi government to task for omitting the words

"secular" and "socialist" enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution in an advertisement released by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, in the newspapers on January 26, the Republic Day.

He described it as mischievous and charged the present government with making an attempt to subvert the Constitution. He said that even the Supreme Court had reprimanded nine state governments for acting against socialism. He informed that he was contemplating to take legal recourse against the deletion of these words from the Preamble to the Constitution. Referring to the report on access to the urban basic services in Muslim localities, he noted that there were

'Charkhamba Raj' propounded by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia in this connection, and said the panchayat bodies should be assigned the task of managing civic affairs.

Calling for vigilance against right-wing lobbies in various ministries which were actively involved in creating controversies like deletion of "secular" and "socialist" clause, he asked the people to stand up now or else we would not be able to speak in future. He wanted to know if Narendra Modi would breach the oath of the Constitution he had taken at the time of swearing ceremony. He advised Narendra Modi to take some lesson from US President Barack Obama, who in his speech at Siri Fort auditorium, called for religious tolerance. He asked Narendra Modi to desist from rejoicing over Obama's invitation and take note of his advice to act according to the provisions of Article 25 of the Constitution. He said that though it was an internal matter of India, Modi should take it seriously in view of the majoritarian nature of his government.



View of releases the report on "Access to Urban Basic Services in the Muslim Localities

three big hospitals in the Jamia Nagar area. But access to them was altogether a different matter.

He said that 70 percent of Delhites could not afford to spend Rs. 60,000 on the education of their wards. He suggested that the MLAs and the Councilors of the area should be approached to find out where funds allotted for the basic civic facilities had gone. He observed that there was struggle between haves and have nots and another struggle was needed to end the strife. He said that the report was an instrument in our hands to ask questions from civic authorities. He made a reference to the concept of

Introducing the Report, president, Civil Society Network, Dr. Onkar Mittal, explained that the research focused on 7 wards of Delhi which had 60 percent Muslim population. He said that the density of population in these areas was 30,000 per square k.m. adding that no money was spent on these localities during the last 5 years. While other areas adjoining the Muslim localities had access to all basic civic facilities the latter were at a disadvantage with no such facilities, prompting one to conclude that the Muslims were discriminated against. Blaming lack of political will to address the issue, he complained that the recognised

colonies too were faced with the problem of blocked sewers. Dr. Tarique Ashraf of Civil Society Network and the main researcher of the project, held that the report was an eye-opener for lack of basic amenities like water, sewerage, etc.

Chairman of the IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, called upon the youth to come forward. Highlighting the activities of the IOS, he said that after its establishment in 1986, a conference on the empowerment of Muslims was organised in 1987. Such activities were continuing even today. The facts that had emerged from another report on Jamia Nagar, which was under preparation, were startling. It was a matter of concern that the Jamia Nagar area, which was considered to be more educated, had children who, instead of going to school, were engaged in doing different jobs, he said. He informed that similar studies had been undertaken on the Muslims in Uttarakhand and the weavers of Varanasi. He observed that so far the reports had indicated the backwardness of Muslims in every field

of activity. He regretted that in several matters, the Supreme Court had take suo motto notice, but he had not come across any such matter pertaining to Muslims in which the court took suo motto notice.

The Secretary General IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, in his welcome speech, emphasised the need for analysing and understanding things around us. Though we were the best among the third world countries, we could not compare ourselves with the US on Europe. Praising the Indian system of governance, he said that though there were certain ills like communal rights plaguing the country, the things were

not beyond redemption. He observed that the IOS was working in the world of ideas and efforts were on to link IOS to ground work.

The IOS report on access to urban basic services in the Muslim localities of Delhi contains the findings of research undertaken by Civil Society Network, an NGO that claims that discrimination is being made against citizens on ground of religion. The report says “as these are basic ingredients of living conditions, it is also an inalienable right of citizens, it expects and demands from government to provide these basic facilities”. The capital city of Delhi is glittering with swanky shopping malls and multiplexes, metro rail and dotted with overbridges and underpasses in the

expenditure by various government agencies like Municipal Corporation, Delhi Government, Public Works Department and Central government in the habitations having predominantly Muslim population. In order to understand the genesis of problem at policy and governance level, it was proposed, to undertake a survey of access to urban basic services in selected Muslim localities in the city. At the same time it was decided to seek information through RTI Act and other sources, the pattern of government expenditure in these areas”.

Earlier, the function began with the recitation of a Quranic verse by Hafiz Athar Husain. Dr. Eqbal Husain, Associate Prof. of Law, JMI conducted the proceedings.

Those present on the occasion included Vice-Chairman of the IOS, Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, teachers and the students of Jamia Millia Islamia, journalists and intellectuals.

**IOS Lecture on
“Hindutva: A
Concept and
Practice in the
Context of Muslim
Society”**



A view of the audience

wake of Common Wealth Games. The report further says the basic urban services of decent public transport, dispensaries, schools, parks, petrol pumps, gas agencies, banks apart, even the basic urban services like supply of potable water, minimum housing, garbage collection by municipal employees, regular cleaning of closed/open drains has not been made available in these localities, leading to filth, stink and disease. The situation is even worse in areas which are “exclusive Muslim pockets.”

The report says, “in this context it would be pertinent to explore the pattern of allocation and actual

The IOS Headquarters organised a lecture on the “Hindutva: A Concept and Practice in the Context of Muslim Society” on 24.1.2015 at the Conference Hall of the Institute. Delivering the lecture, Secretary, Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Maulana Abdul Hamid Nomani, explained that Hinduism and Hindutva connoted different meanings. While Hinduism was a religion based on a positive outlook, Hindutva, as defined by the Supreme Court, was a way of life, he said.

The Court, however, did not elaborate how to lead such a life and what should be the basis for its

preference as both the theist and the atheist were welcome to Hinduism. The question arose which way of life should be adhered to. He held that the theory of Hindutva as propagated by the ideologue, Veer Savarkar, was based on negative thinking. He said that in his campaign, Savarkar targeted Muslims and Christians, and had not the two communities been there, the campaign would have fizzled out.

Dwelling at length on the current upsurge of Hinduism, Maulana Abdul Hamid Nomani said that the move was aimed at protecting the Brahminical order. He explained the reason behind the choice of December 6 for the demolition of the Babri Masjid by saying that the Brahminical order was on the decline in Maharashtra as Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and E V Periyar's movement had upset the Hindu social pyramid with the result that a large number of Hindus had embraced Buddhism. Concerned over the movement launched by Dr. Ambedkar, Brahmins treated it as a threat to the existence of the Hindu social order.

Selection of December 6 for the demolition of the Babri Masjid served the twin purpose of being the death anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar and getting rid of the mosque, which they misperceived as a symbol of slavery, he noted. Referring to Islamic thought, he said that it did not believe in conversion, but invited everybody to be fully merged with the religion. "That is Islam", he added. According to Islam, one was advised to go into ills and shortcomings of his religion and overcome them. Islam asked believers of other religions to adopt the *kalma*. Millennia ago, we had Ram, Krishna, Buddha, etc. but did not have

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). We followed the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H.), he observed. He elaborated that the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the last prophet of God and his writ would run on the entire humankind for all time to come. We could become complete only by recognising all the prophets who were sent by Allah from time to time. No religion is perfect without accepting Muhammad (P.B.U.H). All Muslims respect all prophets and *avtars*, but do not worship any of them, not even Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Commenting on Surah *Fateha* Maulana Nomani said that it is the prayer of a Muslim and Quran is an answer to it. Comparing the Quran with other Hindu religious texts, like

right path, he said. He pointed out that Muslims believe in the existence of one God whom they worship. This worship is both direct and indirect. He clarified that if we turn to Allah through the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) we would be called *Momin*. But if we worship the medium through whom we knew Allah, it would amount to straying from the right path. The same happened to the Hindu society as it started worshipping Ram and Krishna as God, though they were only symbols of the greatness of God.

Giving an example, he said that if one praised the sun, it would be the praise for Allah, but if he started worshipping the sun itself, it would amount to deviating from the path of Allah. Ram and Krishna were believed to be God by Hindus, but they ceased to be ideals the time they became God as only man is ideal for man. He said that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was an ideal for everybody on earth and brought the message of Allah. He said that on one hand all those living in the country were called Hindus, on the other, Hindu religious leaders and scholars failed to

distinguish between Hindus and non-Hindus. Under the circumstances, the claim that everybody living in the world was a Hindu, was inexplicable, he added.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman of the IOS, Dr. Muhammad Manzoor Alam, informed that the subject would be further debated after it was discussed at the meeting with the office-bearers of the Institute. A half-day workshop would be organised in the near future to discuss the subject thoroughly. He pointed out that though the Institute was not a political body, politics was one the issues that were



L-R: Maulana Abdul Hamid Nomani, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam and Prof. Z.M. Khan

the Gita and Upanishad, he observed that while the entire Quran is full of guidelines, these books fall short of the remaining part of the message. Unlike these books that do not differentiate between truth and untruth and created ground for suspicion, the Quran at the very outset removes doubt as the person entertaining doubts could not move ahead on facts. The Quran diagnoses the path of righteousness by saying that those who are blessed by Allah take the right path.

However, there is no mention of the right path in the Gita and the Upanishads. Nor do these texts have any mention of those who take the

discussed here. Referring to the Jansangh leader, Balraj Madhok's emphasis on "mainstream", he said that "humanstream" was more important today. All of us were descendants of Prophet Adam (AS) and it was immaterial to know who was born where, he concluded.

Earlier, the function began with the recitation of a verse from the Quran by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadvi. While Prof. ZM Khan, Secretary General, IOS introduced the subject, Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi conducted the proceedings. Those who attended the function included Vice-Chairman of the IOS, Prof. Refaat Ali Khan, Prof. Mohd. Hashim Qureshi, Consultant, UGC, Mr. Haseeb Ahmad, Dr. Eqbal Husain, Dr. Mohd. Mushtaq Tijarwi, Dr. Rashid Nomani, Mr. Mohd. Mazharul Haque Ansari, Mr. Ishtiqyauque Ayyubi, Mr. Ashraf Kausar, Maulana Mohd. Abdullah Tariq, Mirza Zaki Ahmad Baig, Mr. Safi Akhtar and Dr. Bismil Arifi, besides several students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia, and Research Scholars.

Condolence meeting on the demise of Saiyyid Hamid, B.S. Abdur Rahman and Dr. Ausaf Ahmad

Glowing tributes were paid Saiyyid Hamid, B.S. Abdur Rahman and Dr. Ausaf Ahmad at a condolence meeting organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on 5.2.2015. Recalling the services of Saiyyid Hamid, his son, Samar Hamid said that his father left an indelible mark on public life. He saw Saiyyid Hamid from close quarters and found that he was special, unique and a man of determination and indomitable courage. He said that Saiyyid Hamid left a trail of qualities

for others to follow. He had a keen understanding of things and transcended barriers of thought.

He was for all ages. He was a scholar, poet, author, thinker, social activist, reformer, institution builder, editor, and above all an extraordinary human being. A man of unimpeachable integrity, Saiyyid Hamid encapsulated compassion, love and foresight. He believed in the dictum "simple living and high thinking". He used to bring home nothing for himself, except books. Samar Hamid said that his father would help others without fanfare. He was so preoccupied with his work that he would not waste time even for a second. Always gentle and smiling, he never spoke ill of anyone. He stood for

to Saiyyid Hamid, he said, "we are celebrating his life and it should continue in future as well." He was an admirer of Saiyyid Hamid even before he had met him. He said that he was part of a delegation that went to Dubai for raising funds for the magazine *Nation and the World*, whose editor-in-chief was Saiyyid Hamid and the speaker was the editor. B.S. Abdur Rahman, who was on board of the *Nation and the World*, received Saiyyid Hamid in Dubai. Saiyyid Hamid was so concerned over the riots of the Ayodhya movement that he wrote several articles during 1992-93 on the issue. These articles were published in a book form later. Describing Saiyyid Hamid as a man who had a systematic style of working,

he noted that simplicity and a sense of humour formed part of his personality. He concluded by reciting a line from an Urdu couplet, "*Tum kya gaye, ke rooth gaye din bahaar ke*" (With you have gone the days of spring).

Sumbul Begum, daughter of late Dr. Ausaf Ahmad hailed her father as a scholar, researcher, economist and a poet. He taught at several institutions



L-R: Ms Sumbul Begum, Mr V.A.S. Ibrahim, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Dr. S. Farooq, Prof. Z.M. Khan and Mr Samar Hamid

"good food for good health", Samar Hamid concluded.

Advocate-on-record, Supreme Court of India, Mushtaq Ahmad described Samar Hamid as worthy son of a worthy father. He praised Saiyyid Hamid for enthusing students of Aligarh Muslim University with the aspiration for Civil Services. Editor, IOS Current Affairs and senior journalist Mohammad Zeyaul Haque, who had worked with Saiyyid Hamid for several years, recalled that he went with him in a caravan up to some length. Making an obituary reference

of higher learning like Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University and had several books to his credit. Besides, she said, he delivered lectures on various aspects of Islamic banking. Though he did not begin life as a privileged person as he was not born in a rich family, he carved out a niche for himself as an eminent economist by dint of hard work. She said that Dr. Ausaf Ahmad always laid stress on the education of Muslims, so that they could compete with others in different fields. Religion was part of his life and he always acted according to the preachings of Islam,

particularly on charity, love and care for others.

Prof. Naushad Ali Azad from the Department of Economics, JMI, said that Dr. Ausaf's life was worth emulating. Referring to the financial constraints he faced during his student days, Prof. Azad said that he used to work as a newspaper hawker while doing his B.A. from Lucknow University to support his mother. He was a very good teacher as well as researcher. He was all praise for the Chairman of IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, for acknowledging his erudition and involving him in the activities of the Institute.

Condoling the death of the three eminent figures, Chairman of the IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam said that all of them were awarded by the Institute in recognition of their services in their fields. Everyone excelled in his field. Recounting his association with Saiyyid Hamid, he said that during his mission to raise funds for his newspaper, he had suggested to Saiyyid Hamid to fix the price of the paper in keeping with the purchasing power of the reader. Remembering B.S. Abdur Rahman, he noted that he had met the latter for the first time in 1986. Besides being a successful businessman, he was a great philanthropist who used to help the needy through the charitable trusts he had created. A strict practitioner of Islam, he built colleges and a university for imparting education to the Muslim community. Recalling his association with Dr. Ausaf Ahmad, he noted that he had met him first at the AMU and then in Saudi Arabia during his tenure at the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). Dr. Ausaf had promised him to associate himself with the IOS after completion of his tenure at IDB. He kept his promise and joined the IOS without taking any remuneration. Calling for the preservation of their legacy, he said that the mission of all the three should be taken forward. He also suggested that a book on the life and times of Saiyyid Hamid be brought out.

The Chairman of Tasmia Education and Welfare Society and Himalaya Drugs, Dr. S. Farooq, who presided over the meeting, said that every living being born in the world had to taste death. But those who left an indelible mark on society and rich legacy behind were always remembered. All the three gave their children good education by sparing some time for their family. He explained that Gandhiji was a great leader but a bad father as he had no time for his family. He expressed his dismay over those who, after attaining position, skipped *namaz*.

Paying rich tributes to Saiyyid Hamid, B.S. Abdur Rahman and Dr. Ausaf Ahmad, he said that they worked for educational development of Muslims. Despite reaching the top, their humility was worthy of emulation.

In his introductory speech, Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. ZM Khan observed that he came to know Saiyyid Hamid in 1956 when he was the District Magistrate of Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh. He was impressed with the rescue and relief operations he undertook during the floods. He also had an opportunity to join him as a member of a delegation to Cairo. He came into contact with Dr. Ausaf Ahmad when the latter was appointed as a teacher in the Economics Department of JMI. Prof. Khan said that B.S. Abdur Rahman did a lot of work in the South in the field of education.

Earlier, the condolence meeting began with the recitation a verse from the Quran by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadvi. Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi conducted the proceedings. Those present on the occasion included Resident Director, Coastal Energy Pvt. Ltd. and associate of late B.S. Abdur Rahman, V.A.S. Ibrahim, President of Welfare Party of India, Dr. SQR Ilyas, Professor in University of Kashmir, Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, Professor of AM Khwaja Chair, Jamia, Prof. Mohd. Hashim Qureshi, Associate Prof. of Law, Jamia, Dr.

Eqbal Husain, Prof. Hasina Hashia, Dr. Mohd. Mushtaq Tijarwi from Jamia, Research Scholar, Jamia Hamdard, Mir Shahid Sattar and Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Dean, School of Law and Legal Studies, GGS Indraprastha University, New Delhi and Assistant Secretary General of IOS, besides a number of friends and admirers of the three personalities.

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All these methodological and socio-political circumstances have resulted in exegesis producing meanings which are in reality exclusive with respect to interfaith relations. And these exclusive interpretations have in turn led to the neglect of the humanistic approach with regard to Qur'anic exegesis and hence to the deterioration of religious co-existence.

From *The Qur'an and Normative Religious Pluralism: A Thematic Study of the Qur'an* by Arif Kemil Abdullah, pp. xv-xvi.

Calendar 2015

The IOS calendar 2015 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 (Started From 2011)
- Page-2 Country-wise Global Peace Index-2014
- Page-3 India: Percentage of SRCs in different Educational Levels
- Page-4 India: Work Participation Rates of SRCs

The calendar may also be obtained from

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Price per calendar Rs. 25/-
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Fight against Corruption is not Easy

by Ishtiyaque Danish

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

Muslims have witnessed worst times in post independence India. They somehow overcame all the difficult moments because the bulk of their leadership, however weak they might had been, was not dishonest. Another reason was that there were fewer black sheep and the Muslim masses knew them well. But our today is one of the most difficult time in that the enemy within is clever and shameless. He is not sabotaging from within; he is rather openly inviting the Muslims to surrender before their murderer. And sadly he is being supported by people who, otherwise and apparently, are doing some good works. There are businessmen who are known for having done some good works and there are educationists whose black deeds are not well-known, and sadly for the Indian Muslims they have joined hands, not to brighten, but to blacken their future. Everyone knows the man who has recently been rewarded by being appointed as Chancellor of a central university. In the wake of Gujarat riots he emerged on the scene, made some right noises here and went to England where he reportedly narrated to audiences gruesome stories of the assassination of former Congress M P, Ehsan Jafari. He would say that the murderous mob cut Mr. Jafari's hands and demanded to embrace Hinduism. And when the

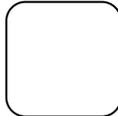
devout and resolute Mr. Jafari refused, he was cut into pieces and set on fire. He collected huge funds for relief works in Gujarat but when he returned to India he underwent a sudden change of heart and became near to the man whom most Muslims consider as murderer even today. While Muslims in Gujarat suffered, his own business prospered. With increase in wealth, his shamelessness also increased. He began supporting the government which had refused to distribute the central government's assistance among the riot victims, and reduced them to being second grade citizens in Gujarat. But then he was confined to Gujarat and his voice or nuisance was not heard or was ignored outside the state. The situation has, however, changed today. Either the party in power at the centre is using him or he himself is willingly being used to secure Muslim surrender. There are fearless Muslim voices which are not being heard or nor being sought after to know the Muslim reality. But there are men, officers, journalists, businessmen and vice-chancellors who need the government support either to survive or to prosper. So, thinking the man from Gujarat is near to the party in power at the centre, many businessmen and vice-chancellors are according him reception in order to curry favour with the government or to cover up their

wrong doings including financial corruption. The shameless men are clever and intelligent. They are advancing their interests in the form of concern for Muslims. Their spacious argument is that ignoring the government of the day would be dangerous in modern economy. They also argue that party and government are two different things. That a party may have any ideology but the government has to work in accordance with the constitution of the country. True every government has to work within the constitutional framework. But then the government has to heed to all voices of a community instead of picking up men of its choice to advance its hidden agenda. The party and its government do not believe in minority and majority identities and apparently want merit to be the sole factor. But the entire world knows what this good sounding political statement means. That Muslims must live in perpetual poverty and deprivation. So, the time ahead is difficult and the Muslim community will be well-advised to be ever alert and refuse to heed to their will-wishers who are nothing but the enemies within.

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