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Thought for the Month

Nor are the two seas alike,—
The one palatable, sweet,
And pleasant to drink,
And the other, salt
And bitter. Yet from each
(Kind of water) do ye
Eat flesh fresh and tender,
And ye extract ornaments
To wear; and thou seest
The ships therein that plough
The waves, that ye may
Seek (thus) of the Bounty
Of Allah that ye
May be grateful.

Al-Quran- 35: 12

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FOCUS

Prayer helps in establishing man-God relationship. Offering prayer is one of the ways of remembering God. "Islam prescribes five daily prayers, preferably in congregation, at their appointed hours for every adult Muslim. In addition, there are prayers to mark special occasions. Prayers serve as the direct link between man and God, and hence its special place in a Muslim's life." (Kidwai, 2019, p. 2).

Muslims perform prayer for developing *tawheed* in them and the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation. Muslims perform prayer at the individual and collective levels. In all forms of worship, we do invocation with praises and prayers. Husain and Qayoom (2016), have reviewed a number of studies on the relationship between prayer and well-being.

With regard to prayers, Hadrat Abu Bakr said, "He who prays for five times a day is in the protection of God, and he who is protected by God cannot be harmed by anyone."

Prayer is to ask for Grace of God that all of one's intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the service, submission and praise of Allah. In Islam, regular prayer times are important. As your children grow, make the effort to pray with them and tell them this is the path through which one can develop God consciousness. When God answers a prayer, call it to your child's attention and thank God for what He has done. You are also required to keep aware during the course of everyday life and opportunities to have spiritual experiences out of practical circumstances. They can present themselves at any time, and usually they are unstructured.

When such foundation is being passed on to others at home, worship place, classroom, and group activities can function as supplements to boost your child's spiritual growth. It is important for your children to spend time with other believers, and worship services and group outings can reinforce what your child is taught within the family. They will also provide opportunities for developing friendships with peers who share your family's values and beliefs.

"Prayer enhances one's religious and existential well-being. Its practice benefits people physically, socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Through prayer we approach God. The ideal prayer to God is something more than spontaneous praise of His Being. Prayer develops inner strength among us and love for the Eternal Beloved. One of the main purposes of prayer is to remember God. Be constant in praying and mindful. It develops patience, righteousness, obedience, peace, piety, and punctuality. Prayer is a duty incumbent on the faithful." (Husain, Khan, & Khan, 2019, p.1)

From Quranic Guidance, Therapy and Islamic Counselling Interventions
by Professor Akbar Husain, pp. 23-24

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS book "Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China" by Shastri Ramachandaran released

The book titled "Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China (2008-2022)", authored by the senior journalist, Shastri Ramachandaran and published by the Institute of Objective Studies, was released at an impressive function organized by the Institute at the lecture hall-2, India International Centre Annexe, Lodhi Estate, on January 27, 2024.

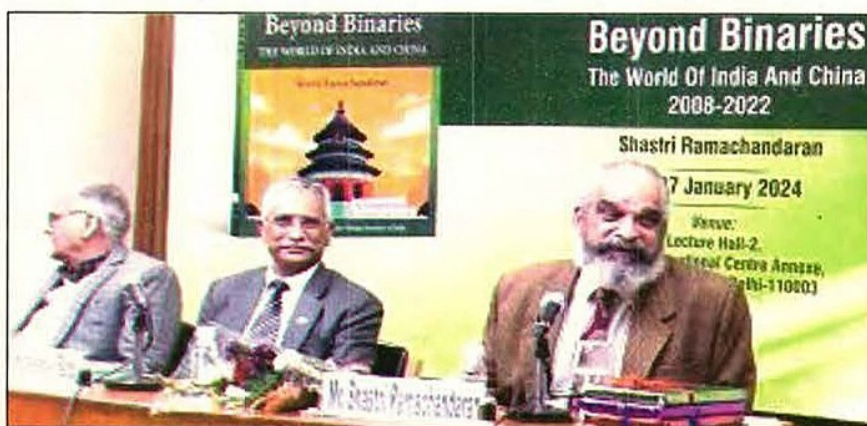
In his welcome speech, senior journalist Raju Mansukhani, introduced the author, Shastri Ramachandaran. He said that Shastri was a journalist and columnist, writing on national and global affairs with special focus on Nepal, Sri Lanka and China. He worked for 50 years in positions from reporter to editor, with publications in India, China and Europe. The present book was a compilation of Shastri Ramchandaran's writing produced for various Indian, Chinese and international magazines. He also highlighted the activities of the IOS.

Releasing the book, former Chief of Army Staff, General M. M. Naravane said that the book was a welcome addition to several other books published earlier on a neighbour which had not been very friendly to India. He observed that sometimes people had a wrong perception about China. "As Indians, we have not read the country properly. This is why we have a wrong perception about China, so is the case with our army". He shared his

experiences during his posting as Colonel on the India-China border. He lived there and worked there, and knew everything about that country. Local people were well receptive to him. He worked in the border areas, including the disputed Indo-China territories. He held that he had a different perception of the boundary issues of India with China. While dealing with China or other countries, one should see both sides of the spectrum. He said that the book gave a balanced perceptive of China. It became worth reading because of the *foreword* to the book which was written by India's former foreign secretary, Shyam Saran. Gen. Naravane opined that the phase of "*Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*" and its aftermath

categorically said that confrontation was harmful for both the countries. He remarked that China was bound to lose more if she took recourse to confrontation. Instead of toing the line of a big power, the line of governance should be followed, he concluded.

The message of the IOS Chairman, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, who could not make it to the book-release function due to indisposition, was read out by Raju Mansukhani. In his brief message, Dr. Alam expressed pleasure that the function was being organized to discuss the contents of the book written by an eminent Indian journalist like Shastri Ramachandaran. He was confident that the finer points of the book would be discussed threadbare.



On the dais (L-R): Prof. Z.M. Khan, General M.M. Naravane (Rtd.) and Shastri Ramachandaran

Speaking about his book, Shastri Ramachandaran explained that he tried to decode China. As he travelled China, he saw the Chinese society from close quarters. There were inside stories of that country which were not narrated in India. As a journalist, he felt that there was a need to do more work on China in order to correctly understand

necessitated confidence-building measures on the border question. He said that India witnessed Galwan incident and was pushed back to the wall. He referred to the Chinese foreign minister's recent statement that the border question of China with India was part of its legacy. Where there was trade and commerce, disputes were bound to arise. Similarly, where there was a dispute, there was conflict. He said that the national interest of a country was paramount to determine her foreign policy. He further articulated that the friendly relationship between the two giants was in the interest of the entire world. At least a Chinese expert had called India a giant. China wanted India to recognize her as a big power. He

that country because there were many aspects of Chinese life and society which still remained unexplored. It should be studied how China managed its economic imbalance. Chinese relations with India had past linkages by way of the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist paintings. He said that as an optimist, he believed that India should show pragmatism and collaborate in several areas. Commenting on today's journalism, he remarked that journalism was disappearing. In the same vein, he said that life was breaking away from familiarism. He gathered from his extensive travels to several European countries, including Germany. If there was message, there

was life. This gave him a perspective on several issues. There should be clarity, particularly in unexplored stories. Gravity was also important in writing, he added.

Presiding over the function, Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan observed that the author started with common things and then he unfolded big things. He talked of two civilizational countries who had great civilization and culture. He said that the development process of China was very fast. He emphasized the need for cooperation between the two countries. Referring to the book, he said that Shastri Ramachandran covered many things during the period under review. As such, the book was very useful for researchers and policy makers. They should consult the book both academically and practically. He said that regional and cultural perspective should be factored in while surfing the book. He took the opportunity to briefly explained the activities of the Institute.

Book release function was followed by the panel discussion. Rityusha Tiwari, faculty, Delhi University conducted the proceedings as moderator. V. Srinivas, secretary to Government of India and director general, National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) initiated the discussion by saying that he developed interest on China. He collected information on China from *Xinhua website* and the Chinese newspaper, *Global Times*. He explained how Chinese development story went up and how the country managed economic imbalance. There was a lot of trade balance between China and the US. China was the third largest economy of the world. She stuck

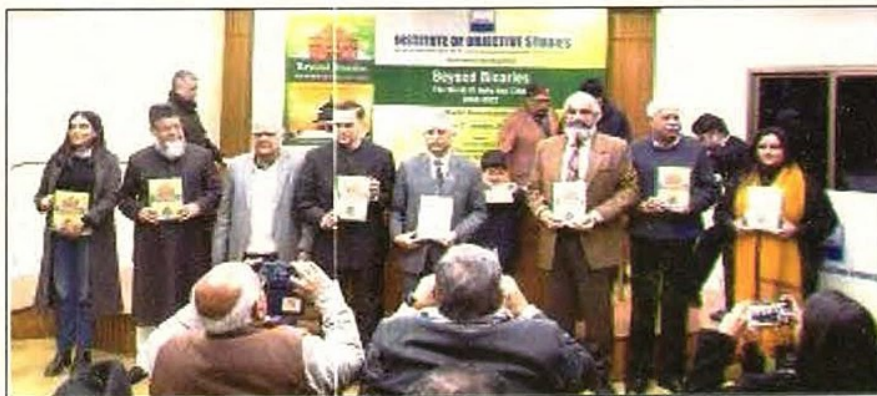
to the policy of three children norm. He commented on the slowing down of Chinese economy and promotion to start-ups. There were linkages of the past between China through Buddhism and Buddhist paintings. This century belonged to Asia and rejuvenation of the countries in the continent should be speedy. India and China should show pragmatism and collaborate, he stressed.

Prof. Arshi Khan from Dept. of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, held that the book was academic and a very valuable publication. The book had been written in an analytical manner. The value of the book could be gauged from the fact

ago. Chinese incursions happened whenever a Chinese dignitary visited India. This could not be described as a friendly act, he noted.

Rityush Tiwari said that hawkish attitude of China defied solution to the border issue. China had a disputed nationalism. Nobody knew what kind of image Chinese had built up, she added. Satarupa Bhattacharjya, journalist, who worked in China, India and Sri Lanka, observed that the US was the biggest beneficiary from China. India was a regional military power, she noted.

The function concluded with the Assistant Secretary General, Prof. Haseena Hashia, extending a vote of thanks to the attendees.



Dignitaries releasing the book titled "Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China"

that six IFS officers appreciated it. Referring to the study of political science, he said that Machiavelli was the father of the subject. Commending the formidable research done by the author, he observed that the publication would be good for the future generation. Jayadeva Ranade, Member, National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and President, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy (CCAS), emphasized that relations between India and China should improve and they should be bilateral. He said that China's ambition was to become number one and the world should follow her and be subordinated to it. She also wanted to reclaim the territories which were lost 100 years

ago. Chinese incursions happened whenever a Chinese dignitary visited India. This could not be described as a friendly act, he noted.

IAMSS-IOS one-day national seminar on "Issues and Challenges before Minorities in India"

A one-day national seminar on "Issues and Challenges before Minorities in India" was jointly organised by the Indian Association for Muslim Social

Inaugural Session

Scientists (IAMSS), Western Zone, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, and Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI) Pune, on December 30, 2023 at the YMCA Conference Hall, Pune.

The Convener of the seminar, Prof. Moinuddin Khan, in his opening remarks, briefly threw light on the purpose of holding the seminar and the challenges before the minorities, especially the Muslims. In his welcome address, Organising Secretary of the seminar and the President of the IAMSS (Western Zone), Prof. Shakeel Ahmad said that the Muslim community was still lacking in

education and its economic plight had not improved yet. He also expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman of the IOS, for giving his approval to start IAMSS, Western Zone at Pune. Therefore, it became possible to organize the above seminar at Pune. The Assistant Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. Haseena Hashia remarked that the IOS was seized of the problems faced by the community. Keeping this in view, the Institute was consistently studying the contours of the problem by undertaking research and holding seminars and symposia. She said that the IOS had churned out important data on the economic backwardness of Muslims.

The Secretary of Dnyanoday Prashikshan Sevabhavi Sanstha (DPSS), Mr. Shailesh G. Mehta, emphasised that India was home to many religious groups. Noticeable gaps between many religious groups and minorities in education, employment and economic opportunities existed. He further said that

security and safety were the rights of everyone. Diversity must be promoted to showcase India's plural society. Inclusivity was the necessity and the right of every citizen. He called for celebrating this diversity.

Well-known political scientist, writer, researcher, thinker from the School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Prof. Ashwani Kumar, delivered the key-note address. He gave many thought-provoking ideas about syncretic India. He said that India was made of migrants from time to time from Egypt, Greece, Arabia, Mediterranean and many other places from all over the world. Every fifth

person in India was a minority. Muslims were the biggest minority. Thus India was a land of minorities. National movement for freedom by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru realized this diversity. India was like a salad bowl in which every group remained intact and unique. India had a syncretic culture. He maintained that the idea of India being a nation of minorities, saved India.

Prof. Ashwani Kumar observed that India was a nation of nations. Only 4 percent of India faced violence. Ninety-six percent was peaceful. Ethnic identities, regional identities and religious identities were used by politicians to bring strife. A study of our

public employment was poor. In view of this, more inclusive policies for them were necessary. Muslim youth was desperate for employment. He said that a nation could not be built with a large number of unemployed youth. Muslim community was churning and within the community, more democratization was taking place. "All of us are minorities in our own way and in our own religion", he said

Prof. Ashwani Kumar held that Indian culture was the culture of melting pot. Nehru had dreamed of unity in diversity. Amrita Pritam often invoked Waris Shah. Today too, India needed Waris Shah. Ambedkar never standardized belief systems. Gandhi

was fascinated by Urdu. This language had words from Persian, Hindi and written in Arabic script. Urdu was a fine example of India and was Indian. India was both geographical and spiritual. It continued to flow like a river uninterrupted. India was largely self-regulated and integrated. India remained an oasis of peace and largely

autonomous, he added.

President of the Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Nisar Sagar introduced the MCCI and stressed the need for coming out of groupism, getting united and disseminating the message of love and peace.

In his presidential remarks, Secretary of the Indian Association of Muslim Social Scientists (IAMSS), Prof. Shamim A. Ansari highlighted the aims and objectives of the AIMSS and suggested that such programs should be held at Pune on regular basis. He appreciated the efforts of office-bearers of IAMSS Western Zone, for organizing this program. He said that



Dignitaries on the dais in the inaugural session of the Seminar

history and civilization revealed that we never had polarization. According to Asutosh Varshney, India had ethnic violence, but there was dialogue. He said that the Constitution gave rights to minorities. Baba Saheb Ambedkar laid emphasis on civil identity. In the eye of the Constitution everybody was equal. Article 29 and 30 gave protection to all linguistic and cultural minorities. Dr. Ambedkar purposely kept the meaning of the minority ambiguous. This enabled India to remain together.

Prof. Kumar noted that the minorities in the present time were facing many challenges. Sachar Committee spoke about the exclusion of minorities. Muslim participation in

association had been focusing on social issues, particularly relating to Muslims. A vote of thanks was proposed in the inaugural session.

Technical Session-I

The first technical session was chaired by Prof. Shamim A. Ansari, Secretary, IAMSS. Prof. Khaja Moin Shakir of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad spoke on political representation of minorities in state assemblies and Parliament. He commented that when Muslims were 14 percent, the BJP vote percentage declined. On the contrary, in the Muslim majority areas, vote percentage of the BJP increased. This was ironical. Social scientists should do analysis of the election data and put suggestions in order to make Muslim voting effective, he said. Prof. M. G. Mulla, Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Abeda Inamdar Senior College, Pune, identified the indicators of inequality between Muslims and other religious groups. He held that education could reduce these inequalities. India was made in class rooms. However, the New Education Policy (NEP) did not promote education. He opined that more Muslim students were dropping out when the NEP was being implemented.

Sohail Ansari, Director, MCCI, focused on the role of the MCCI in the development of Muslims in India. He said that the economic condition was dismal. For example, Muslim literacy rate was below the national literacy rate. Twenty-five percent of the beggars on the streets were Muslims. He did SWOT analysis for Muslims and emphasized that education and economic uplift were extremely necessary for Muslims. He said that the

MCCI could play a vital role in this connection.

Technical Session-II

The second technical session was chaired by Nizamuddin Shaikh of Sholapur. In this session, presentations were made on media and under-representation of minorities, especially Muslims in India. Mr. Shikalgar, Founder President of Maharashtra minorities pointed out that Muslim issues were ignored. Dr. Subhash D'Souza, Vice-Principal of Virar College, eloquently explained how media presented a very bad and incorrect image of Muslims and Christians in India. Suhail Faqih, General Secretary of G.M. Momin



A view of the audience

Women's College, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, analysed the present situation on the representation of Muslims in Indian media and provided some suggestions to rectify this. Dr. Khalil Ahmed, principal, AEK College of Commerce and Management, Mumbai, also made some suggestions to correct the present status of Muslim representation in Indian media. He also suggested that some reforms should be made to correct distortions in the media coverage of Muslims.

Technical Session-III

Prof. Khaja Moin Shakir of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, chaired the third and last technical session. In this

session, Prof. Anjum Ara of Rizvi College, Mumbai, presented an exhaustive statistical data on jobless growth in India and its impact on minorities. Dr. Nasir Sheikh, Principal of Foresight College, Pune, focused on the role of social sciences and the importance of values in human development. Dr. Malika B. Mistry spoke on educational status of minority women in India. She made several recommendations to improve the dismal state of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular.

Valedictory Session

In the valedictory session, Dr. Daniel Penkar, Director, SIOM, Pune,

observed that drastic steps were required for the uplift of Muslims in India. But one did not speak on these issues. He called for giving best education to girls. Every country required quality population. When one had quality, even his worst enemies would attract to the community. For instance, when Shami, a national cricket player,

excelled in the World Cup, Yogi Aditya Nath named one gym after him. He suggested that some experts should do research on government's welfare schemes and disseminate in the community so that the community forged ahead on the path of development. He said that small things mattered a lot. He asked for using the talent of the youth for the good of society and the nation. Community's strength and education would keep it intact. Every problem had a solution and no Hindutva conspiracy would ever affect the community, he added.

In his valedictory address, Vice-Chancellor of PA Inamdar University, Pune, M. D. Lawrence stressed that the

minorities should sustain with honour. They must leave hypocrisy and get united. He said that within minority itself there was majority. They should use CSGD strategy for their sustainability. He maintained that while 'C' stood for continuity, 'S' stood for solidarity 'G' for growth and 'D' for development. Minorities should have regular, healthy and continuous flow of relationship with all. Solidarity should be for all and with all bereft of ego, jealousy, lust and greed. They should continuously develop. Further, right information about minorities should be disseminated. Focus on this strategy would guarantee success, he concluded.

In his presidential address, Mubeen Khan, Vice-President of the MCCI, said that economic condition of Muslims was worse than that of the scheduled castes. He remarked that unless the minorities wanted to change their own condition and worked to achieve that goal, even Allah would not help them. Work ethic was basic to Islam. Muslims should leave their laziness. Economic uplift was most important. If Muslims wanted to reform the community, they must give time to the people of the community and work with them. There was no use blaming others. He advised Muslims to improve themselves. "We must make ourselves so strong that Allah will ask us what we want. Skills must be imparted to our youth". There was need to see that the youth became proficient in latest technology, like chat GPT, AI, etc. Muslims needed to be job givers rather than job seekers. Referring to politics, he said that Muslims should not indulge in hate speech because this would unite the majority community. Muslim unity was extremely necessary. Muslims must interact with non-Muslims closely to earn their goodwill and to clear their prejudices, he counselled.

The success of this national seminar would not have been possible without the active participation of various faculty members of Poona College. Prof. Shakeel Ahmed thanked all of them in his vote of thanks in the

vaedictory session. He thanked chief guest, guest of honour, all the speakers and participants. Finally he thanked Mr. Mohammad Alam, Finance Secretary of the IOS, Prof. Aftab Anwar, Principal of Poona College and Mr. Arman Shaikh, Vice-Principal of Foresight College, Pune for the success of this national seminar.

The seminar was well-attended by scholars and social scientists.

After a day-long deliberation, the following resolutions were adopted:

1. Indian Constitution is pluralistic in nature and it is essential to work for building an India of unity in diversity.
2. To adopt collective and peaceful efforts against discrimination, malpractices, violence etc. against minorities.
3. To work towards discouraging bigotry and fanaticism and encouraging sympathy, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and compassion.
4. To work for strengthening the universal brotherhood, as envisaged in the Preamble of the Constitution.
5. To set and define the roadmap for economic empowerment of socially marginalized individuals and groups.
6. To take lead in the formation of peace committees and participate in its working actively for the welfare of all social groups.
7. To find out all democratic and governmental mechanisms and policies for the welfare of minorities and avoid activities which are detrimental to the socio-cultural fabric of India.

Book Review

"Gandhi: Siyasat Aur Sampradayikta", by Piyush Babele, published by Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

The book under review contains 33 chapters on thirty three varied amusing perspectives. These are: (1) Casteless

Hindu; (2) Gandhi's Religion; (3) Miyaan and Mahadev; (4) Africa's Struggle and Communal Unity; (5) Hindu Pani Muslim Pani; (6) Strike of 1919: Hindu Muslim Blood Shed Together; (7) Towards Resistance and Non-Cooperation; (8) Non-Cooperation Movement: Jai Hindu Muslim; (9) Moplah Rebellion: Acceptance of Hindu Muslim Unity; (10) Flood of Riots; Gandhi Arrested; (11) Unique Fast; (12) Gandhi Ji-Shaukat Ali Conversation; (13) Ups and Downs of Hindu Muslim Unity; (14) Rise of Muslim Secularism, Mohammad Ali Jinnah; (15) Rise of Hindu Secularism, B.D Savarkar; (16) Proposal of Pakistan; (17) Dr B.R. Ambedkar: *Musalman Chahenge to Pakistan Banega*; (18) Again in The Field; (19) Do or Die; (20) ...And the British Empire Crumbled; (21) Gandhi-Jinnah Conversation; (22) Changing Landscape; (23) Direct Action; (24) Noakhali's Miracle; (25) Peace Work In Bihar; (26) Towards the Partition; (27) Last Effort to Stop Partition; (28) Towards the Freedom; (29) Kolkata Fast; (30) Delhi Riots and Fast; (31) Speech in RSS Rally; (32) Moksh; and (33) Journey Continues. These chapters indicate Gandhi's multiple perspectives with which he influenced the socio-political environment of India as a real front runner. There is a lot of literature on Gandhi, but the present is frank addition to that literature looking for further analytical approach to understanding the victory man of India.

Father of Political Science, Plato, in his book "The Republic" states that an ideal state is a living body and as a living individual, states have different organs to perform various tasks, these organs are "Bodily appetite, Spirited Elements and Reason" i.e., the ruling class, the military class and the professional class. In "The Republic" Plato describes the ruling class to be developed as saints, philosophers, and thoughtful people. Plato says, "Until philosophers are kings or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and the power of philosophy and political greatness and wisdom meet in one,

cities will never rest from their evil". Was Gandhi such a philosopher, as mentioned in "The Republic"? Piyush Babele, has tried to present a philosopher's understanding of Gandhi, in his book "Gandhi – *Siyasat aur Sampradayikta*".

No doubt, Gandhi is a biggest icon in the Indian political spectrum, and while Gandhi was active as a leader in Indian freedom movement, his philosophy has been a guiding lantern for the whole world. From Nelson Mandela to Fidel Castro and Barak Obama to Macron, every world leader have paid their respect and tribute to Gandhi.

In the book, Piyush, from the very start makes it clear that Gandhi can only be understood in totality, and if you want to understand the philosophy, you will have to understand the politics, and if you want to know the theology behind the philosophy you need to understand the political and social circumstances of that time. India under the colonial rule needed Gandhi. There were many political currents working in the theatre of freedom movement in India, when Gandhi entered into this arena, nothing was clear, nothing was united and nothing was seen as pan-Indian, or national movement. The book brings forth this aspect of Gandhi in the freedom movement in a very subtle manner. From the very first moment, he became the part of a political or politico-social movements. Gandhi had shown a very clear and decisive thinking pattern. Never afraid of preaching what he believed, and never hesitating in executing his beliefs, are the most daring, most honest aspect of his personality and that is one thing which made him stand out in all the other leaders of that era. In course of learning about Gandhi, it becomes clear that, there was no planned path, which was taken by him. He always discovered new ways to express his philosophy, he always learned new things, welcomed new meanings, and always accepted, corrected and altered his path wherever

he seems to understand the flaws in the process and thinking.

In the very beginning, in South Africa, where Gandhi started to work as a movement, he believed himself to be the part of the British rule, his demands at that time were not about freedom of India, or equal rights as Indian citizen, but only a little respect as British citizen, to be recognized as an elite Indian person or society, and he demanded that Indians be treated better than African "Kaffers" with the same understanding, his demand was very clear, that since, he and other Indians are the subject of English crown, he and Indians should be treated with more dignity and respect in comparison with Black natives.

In 1893, he wrote to the Natal Parliament that, "a general belief seems to prevail in the colony that the Indians are a little better, if at all, than savages or the natives of Africa." In 1904, he wrote that the council, "must withdraw Kaffirs" from an unsanitary slum called the "coolie location" where a large number of Africans lived alongside Indians. "About the mixing of the Kaffirs with Indians, I must confess I feel most strongly". While Indians were called Coolies (and Gandhi had no objection to that) Africans were called Kaffirs.

If we would try to understand and criticize Gandhi, in a simple and linear manner, it would be very unfair to the political journey of the greatest political philosopher of our times. Gandhi cannot be understood without going deep into the complexities of the socio-politico-theological super structure of that time and society. Gandhi, a person and political philosopher grew, in India, he learned from Indian culture, he learned from Indian traditions, he learned from Indian people. In his political journey, he did not plan, as it seemed in the book, about what he was going to do in next 20 steps, as a political move, but he took one problem, and tried to solve it, as aptly quoted from Gandhi's "Charkha and Takli" example. In my personal view

nobody could mix and match the politics and theology in the manner Gandhi had done, he never gave up his religions, but he created a beautiful space for other religion also. He was a "Kattar Hindu" when he went on to get education or for the job in south Africa, but he returned a well versed religious tolerant person. It was not the same Gandhi, who left India to work as a barrister in South Africa, he was a clear minded political philosopher of a very sharp political sense and new found confidence. He had gained a unique perspective about the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, he had started understanding the rule of engagements with state and people, and he was looking for his own standing on the stage of Indian political struggle.

In its 32 chapters, the book tries to understand Gandhi's politics and the idea of communalism behind it. It is a tough task, Piyush had done it with direct quotes, articles and speeches, directly taken from various sources. In today's time, it is a courageous task in itself, it's ironical that the same powers, which did not want Gandhi to succeed, are on the working hard to diminish Gandhi again, they are trying to destroy Gandhi. And it's a miracle that despite so much power and hatred being used to kill Gandhi again and again, Gandhi and the Gandhian philosophy is becoming much stronger day by day. Piyush has cited the example of Farmers protest, but I would suggest to see the protest against CAA and NRC, to be more precise, the most powerful and mostly working on the same philosophy as Gandhi had taught.

Nowhere in the history of India after independence, any movement had worked so successfully as the protest dubbed as "Shaheen Bagh" and "Kisaan Andolan" where communal walls were shattered by people protesting peacefully and the state trampling the rights of people, where religion was given utmost respect, but it was never bragged upon, where people came together for the rights of citizen, armed with power of truth and non-violence.

The state in its utmost brutal form, created the sense of fear, hatred and violence, it created a kind of environment, similar to the British "divide and rule" for a minority community of the country, but at the end, Gandhi's philosophy won, and whole country was engaged in a manner of struggle which stopped the state in its tracks. Chapter by chapter the book tries to decipher the meaning and understanding of Gandhi's religious philosophy, in context with India's freedom movement, its partition, its communal history, its cast complexities and its political future. The book brings forth various models of struggle, philosophies, understandings, and tries to draw a sort of comparison to understand the meaning behind the philosophy. The book, meticulously refers to all the national leaders and puts forward their relationship, differences, and their political ideas and truly understand the meaning of being 'Gandhi'.

This is the most useful book of our times, the time when true human values are lost and defenders of humanity are being persecuted, when it is becoming a fashion to criticize Gandhi, without even understanding Gandhi and his philosophy. We need to welcome this book, we need to urge people to read this book, and we need to spread word about this book, about Gandhi and about his philosophy.

*Reviewed by Dr. Dipti Pandey,
Asstt. Professor, Dept. of Psychology,
IILM University, Greater Noida.*

Quranic Guidance: Therapy and Islamic Counselling Interventions by Prof. Akbar Hussain, published by Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

The need for trained Muslim counsellors to serve as chaplains has grown exponentially in our times owing to peoples' modern lifestyles. And as Islam is an all-embracing way of life that caters for the needs of those in distress, in hospital, prison or at home, the author has accomplished a valuable task in encapsulating both the theory and practice of counselling along the Islamic lines. Being an experienced, professionally trained psychologist, with scores of publications in his field of specialization, Hussain's deliberations on this timely issue, based on primary Islamic sources, are both instructive and highly welcome.

Apart from pressing home the truth that the Qur'an and Sunnah are invaluable sources of divine guidance (pp. 9-22), the author focuses his attention on spelling out the interventions prescribed and permitted by Islam for ameliorating the plight of patients. In this context, he highlights the therapeutic and spiritual benefits of [ibadah (devotional worship) and dhikr (remembrance of Allah). He asserts that the '[p]rayer enhances one physically, socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually... Performing the prayer was found to be positively correlated with overall well-being... [it] reduced muscle tension, improved

cardiovascular and neuro-immunological parameters, enhanced coping skills, [thus] reducing stress, anxiety and depression, and improvement in cognitive functioning' (p. 24). It is so reassuring to note that the above inferences are contingent on clinical, empirical research and evidence. In a similar vein, he underscores a host of positive effects of Qur'anic recitation and meditating on the Qur'an. Equally alleviating for mental disorder patients is the assimilation of such basic Islamic values and traits as piety and unshakable faith in Allah which enables the counselees to formulate 'new ways of behaving, feeling and thinking' (p. 34).

Hussain is unflinchingly persuaded of the effectiveness of Qur'anic recitation as therapy. He illustrates the Qur'anic directives for dealing, on the psychological and spiritual planes, with difficult problems, pain, sickness, stress, fear and other behavioural issues (pp. 39-45).

Another remarkable component of this book is the helpful advice to counsellors. Once again, this section is premised on Islamic *adab* (social norms). Hussain deserves every credit for presenting the relevant Islamic material of this much-needed domain.

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