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Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come:
 There can be no doubt
 About it, or about (the fact)
 That Allah will raise up
 All who are in the graves.
 Yet there is among men
 Such a one as disputes
 About Allah, without knowledge,
 Without guidance and without
 A Book of Enlightenment,-
 (Disdainfully) bending his side,
 In order to lead (men) astray
 From the Path of Allah:
 For him there is disgrace
 In this life, and on the Day
 Of Judgment We shall
 Make him taste the chastisement
 Of burning (Fire).

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

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FOCUS

In the world of scholarship it is now widely accepted that European Renaissance was deeply influenced by the Islamic civilization. The military tension and conflict between Islam and Christianity or between the East and the West started during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) and accelerated during the reigns of Pious Caliphs, Umar and Uthman. After a brief halt it continued on a massive scale during the Umayyad period. Before the Crusades the two civilizations continuously clashed in the war theatres of Sicily and Spain for many centuries. In both the centuries Muslims succeeded to establish their rule where their culture flourished by leaps and bounds. However, very few from among the Europeans showed interest in intellectual supremacy of the Muslims and learnt their sciences and religion. There were of course Arabised Christians, especially in Spain, who had adopted the Muslim way of living, their dress, mannerism and language especially. We cannot say that these Arabised Christians had studied and understood Islamic civilization thoroughly; in fact they just saw its appearance, the visible cultural aspects and adopted them in their lives as a fashion.

The first serious effort to understand and acquire the intellectual richness of the Islamic civilization was made by the Normans when they occupied Sicily. Initially they thought that mere change of hands will deliver to them the superior industrial skills of the Muslims in various fields of production. As a result they took away all the industries from Muslims and gave them to the Christians. But immediately the production declined which alarmed them. They realized that various industries required skills for their proper functioning and progress which cannot be learnt overnight. So, they stopped the persecution of Muslims till the time when their own men will learn their industrial skills. They also realized that Arabic was the language of international trade and decided to learn it. As a result they continued to patronize the Muslim universities and learnt the superior Islamic scholarship from great men of letter and scientists like al-Idrisi who wrote for them the universally acclaimed *Nuzhatul Mushtaq*, a great work on world geography and history. The Normans had commissioned this book in order to advance their international trade. But soon after they committed the fatal mistake of persecuting and driving Muslims out of Sicily. Little did they realize that learning was not a positive, it was rather a continuous life long process.

The Christian Kings and Princes were mainly religious zealots; they were interested more in driving Muslims out of Spain and, as a result, rarely made any effort to learn the European like the French, the English, the German, even the Italians came to Spain, learnt from the Muslims and became of a part and consequent beneficiary of the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Spain preferred to burn the books after the fall of Granada and missed the bus of development.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS-Magadh ‘Varsity interfaith seminar

Inaugural Session

A two-day national seminar on “Importance of Inter-Religious Understanding: Its Implications for Mankind” jointly organised by Forum for Inter-religious Understanding, Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) and Deptt. of Buddhist Studies & Directorate of Distance Education, Magadh University in Bodhgaya, concluded on September 25, 2016. The deliberations that started on September 24 saw the convergence of religious leaders from six main religions who unequivocally underscored the need for the creation of a congenial atmosphere for peaceful co-existence, harmony, mutual respect and tolerance.

The inaugural session was opened by President of Bandhua Mukti Morcha and a prominent Arya Samaj leader, Swami Agnivesh. In his inaugural speech, he held that God is one, but He is called by several names. We fight among ourselves because we err in understanding Him. He said that the cause of the problem of misunderstanding among different religions were the rituals and ceremonies that were performed in the name of religion. All of us are creatures of the same God, yet we nurture the idea of being separate entities. Nobody knew where this idea came from, he wondered.

He maintained that while Gautam Buddha spread the message of love and compassion, Islam praised God as “*Rabbul Alameen*” (Nurturer of the worlds).

Though our earth is equal to the minutest part of a rice grain in the universe, we cannot remain united. Laying emphasis on the unity of all religions, he said that it was resolved to form a Dharma Sansad (religious parliament) seven years ago to foster inter-religious unity. Commenting on the evils that were plaguing our society, he observed that consumption of liquor was one of them, leading to the disintegration of social order. He called for a united fight against liquor consumption and freeing society from this scourge. Praising Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar for enforcing prohibition in the state from April 1 last, he termed it as a positive and courageous step. He said that in Islam, drinking is assumed as the fountain-head of all evil. Condemning gender bias he said that we claim to be a

communalism, nepotism, intolerance, yawning gap between poverty and wealth, etc. It was against this backdrop that a two-day national seminar was planned to identify these problems and seek their solution in a religious perspective. He was elated that the seminar was deliberating on such a serious issue in the land of Mahatma Buddha who spread the message of peace, brotherhood, goodwill, forbearance and cooperation.

He said that it was prayer that was essential for the peace of mind. Lauding the role of the Institute of Objective Studies in cherishing human values and finding ways of virtue, he said that this was the first partnership of the university with the IOS. India was a country where many religions were flourishing without hindrance and we were duty bound to take the spirit of mutual understanding among various religions further.

He lamented that though the Indian Constitution had guaranteed the right to equality and freedom to the citizens of the country in order to strengthen national integration, certain vested interests were busy working

against brotherhood and striking at social harmony. Holding that social harmony pre-supposed prosperity, he said that religious heads had given a fillip to peace and goodwill. He expressed the confidence that the confluence of religious leaders would herald a new dawn.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman of IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam informed that the institute was completing 30 years of its existence. Associating himself with the views of Swami Agnivesh on prohibition, he insisted that the All



L-R: Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. M. Ishtiyah Sardar Karnail Singh, Swami Agnivesh, Dr. Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni, Prof. G.N. Samten, Fr. Philip Manthra and Pandit Ramacharya

predominantly religious country, but sons are always preferred over daughters. He deplored that cases of lakhs of female foeticide were reported every year in the country. Underlining the need for inter-caste marriage, he suggested that inter-caste marriage fairs be organised every year to put an effective curb on casteism. He also pleaded for a common minimum programme for religions to follow.

The vice-chancellor of Magadh University, Prof. Md. Ishtiyah, in his welcome address held that today’s world was faced with problems like

India Milli Council had discussed the issue in detail at its Bengaluru session where the Swami was also present. He opined that while intellectuals conceived ideas, it was the universities which were tasked with reaching them to the common people.

“We have one of the finest Constitutions of the world, but it is not being implemented in accordance with its spirit. Similarly, laws exist, but are not being properly enforced to maintain law and order”, he regretted. He hoped that the clouds forming at the national seminar would rain over the world spreading the message of tolerance, goodwill, love and respect for other’s religions. In order to perpetuate the memory of the seminar, he urged the vice-chancellor to plant a sapling on the university campus. He also suggested the setting up of a forum for religious understanding for promoting mutual goodwill.

The seminar was formally opened with the lighting of a lamp by all the religious heads present on the occasion.

Addressing the delegates, Acharya Dr Lokesh Muni of the Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti, New Delhi, pointed out that similar to different types of pollution, the ideological pollution called terrorism, too, had taken in its stride the areas stretching from Syria to Afghanistan. Religion only strengthened bonds and never broke. He felt it strongly that the country would not transform unless the outlook of society underwent a change. In a democracy, diversity of views was essential for development, he said.

Vice-chancellor of the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, Prof. GN Samten, held that Indian culture was the oldest and the

concept of respect for all religions was inherent in it. This offered an example for the rest of the world. The languages of the religions might be different, but the basic idea remained the same. What was needed most was to promote friendship, brotherhood and love in temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras, he remarked.

Former chairman of PUCL, Bihar, Father Philip Manthra said that a man commanded respect since his birth which continued till death. This respect had been outlined by our Constitution. Since all religions stood for human welfare, Bodhgaya should serve as a starting point, he said.

Jain Sadhvi, Veerayatan, Rajgir, Upadhyay Sadhvi Yashaji called for inter-religious efforts to mould people towards tolerance. She said that no

souls), he said that those who converged on Gaya for *pind daan* also contributed to the local economy. Local population benefited from the pilgrims who undertook the journey to Gaya every year.

Former professor, department of religious studies, Punjab University, Chandigarh, Dr. BS Siddhu emphasised that Guru Nanak Dev, Mahatma Buddha, Swami Vivekananda and Dr Mohammad Iqbal stood for unity in diversity.

Lt. Gen. RK Sharma, army headquarters, New Delhi, held that goal of all the religions was one, but the ways differed. We should find a common path. He said that like other religions, army was also a religion where followers of different religions worked together as a single family. Defending the country was their religious duty as for soldiers country came first and other things later. He said that the military was the only organisation where all-religion prayers were conducted and soldiers professing different faiths visited them.

He suggested that all-religion places should be constructed by religious leaders unitedly in order to promote tolerance among themselves. He also said that the news channels should be asked to compulsorily show video clips on religious tolerance. He felt that the media could play a constructive role in nurturing the idea of tolerance and communal harmony.

President, Gurudwara Management Committees, Gaya, Sardar Karnail Singh also stressed the need of unity among all the religions.

The chancellor of the Integral University and Principal, Nadwatul



A view of the audience

religion was ill-disposed to other faiths and hence, we should take forward the divinity of religions by treading the path of compassion, love, fraternity and harmony.

The President, All India Ramacharya Mantralaya Vishnupad, Gaya, Pandit Ramacharya defended the Sanatan Dharma by saying that it did not hold a critical view of other religions.

Referring to the custom of *pind daan* (for the peace of ancestors’

Ulema, Lucknow, Maulana Saeedur Rahman Azmi, observed that Allah created man so that he could benefit from the earth and extend those benefits to others. He divided people into different communities, so that they could recognise and love each other. Referring to the Qur'an, he said that the greatest among the human beings was one who recognised his Creator. Man was the most respectable among all creatures. All of us were one because we had a common mother and father. The solution to the problems facing us today lay in coming closer to each other. We must learn to trust each other, he added.

The Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, while outlining the activities of the Institute, said that it was engaged in formulating plans for the future. This included seminal research on epistemology and uplift of weaker sections, especially Muslims. He maintained that the Institute also commissioned researchers for conducting surveys on various subjects. Besides, the Institute published books on various topics. More than 300 books had been published by the Institute. Seminars and symposia on burning topics were regularly organised by the Institute. Three books – *Introduction to Sociology: An Islamic Perspective*, *Sociology in Islamic Perspective: Selected Readings* written by Prof. AR Momin and *Shiksha Dwara Musلمانon ka Sashaktikaran* by Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui, published by the IOS, were released on the occasion. A vote of thanks was proposed by dean, faculty of science, Magadh University, Prof. NK Shastree.

Business Session-I

The first session was devoted to “Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism and Sikhism.” This session was chaired by Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, former dean, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad and Prof. DA Gangadhar, professor and former head, deptt. of philosophy and religion, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

While Dr Rajeev Ranjan Sinha, former head, deptt. of Sanskrit, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi, spoke on Hinduism, secretary-general Islamic Fiqh Academy, New Delhi, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, explained the tenets of Islam; Dr. AAB Gyaneshwar, chief monk, Kushinagar Myanmar

on “A Study into development of inter-faith dialogue by Guru Nanak”, Founder Director, Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, New Delhi, Dr. MD Thomas, spoke on “Golden Rule – A Shared Culture of Ethics”. Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadwi, presented a paper on “*Musalman Aur Hindu Mazhab ki Mutaleyati Riwayat*”. Secretary, International Buddhist Council of Bodhgaya, Kiran Lama and Secretary, Inter-faith Forum, Bodhgaya, Dr. Azmat Hussain also explained their viewpoints.

Business Session-III

The third session of the first day on “Inter-faith Understanding and Peace”, was preside over by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish, former head of the deptt. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. Dr. SB Singh, Nalanda, and Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, former director, SH Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, spoke on “Muslims’ Understanding of World Religions: A Comparative Study”. Ven. Bhikku Sumanapala, presented his paper on



L-R: Prof. Z.M. Khan, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. M. Ishatiaq, Swami Agnivesh, M. Saeed Ur Rahman Azmi and Prof. Tenzim Lama Thappe

Temple, UP and Dr. U Kundala of Nalanda University enlightened the audience on Buddhism. While Father U Lawrence, president, Jeevan Sangam, Bodhgaya, elaborated on Christianity and Prof. NK Shastree, spoke on Jainism, Col. Dalvinder Singh Grewal, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab, spoke on Sikhism.

Business Session-II

The second session on “Inter-religious Understanding” presided over by Swami Agnivesh, focused on religious understanding. While Col. Dalvinder Singh Grewal, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab, presented a paper

on “Buddhism and Human Rights”. Prof. Obaidullah Fahad, deptt. of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, discussed “Muslim Understanding of Hinduism.”

Business Session-IV

The fourth session on the second day focused on the “Prospects of Inter-religious Understanding and the Indian Constitution”. It was chaired by the vice- chancellor, Central University of Kashmir, Prof. Mehrajuddin Mir. While Dr Mukesh Kumar presented his paper on “Religiosity and Indian Constitution”, Dr. Saswati Mutsuddy of the University of Kolkata and Dr. Bela Bhattacharya of Kolkata spoke on

“The Glorious Buddhist Women of Rajgaha”. Dr. Manish Sinha of the deptt. of History, Magadh University and Dr. Tarika Kumari, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan concentrated on “Mahila Mukti Ke Prerna Srot Buddha: Ek Drishti.” Dr. Arvind Bhattacharya from Kolkata also spoke on the theme.

Business Session-V

The fifth session focused on “Inter-faith Dialogue and Human Rights Violation” was presided over by Lt. General RK Sharma. Speakers in the session included: Prof. DA Gangadhar, who presented a paper on “Inter-religious Understanding and Dialogue for Peace”, Dr. Aquil Ahmad, asstt. professor, department of philosophy, AMU, Aligarh, who presented a paper on “Engaging Youth in Inter-faith Understanding and Communal Harmony”, Dr. Saw. Htutu Sandar (Myanmar), deptt. of Buddhist Studies, Magadh University, who presented a paper on “My Experiences with Universal Brotherhood”, Dr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Nalanda University presented a paper on “Inter-religious Dialogue and Indian Cultural Legacy of Buddhism. Dr. SK Jain, deptt. of religion, BHU, Varanasi and Dr. SB Singh, NavNalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, also spoke on the theme.

Business Session-VI

The sixth session discussed “Inter-Religious Dialogue in the Indian Context”. This was presided over by Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, Md. Sirajul Islam, head deptt. of Philosophy, Viswa Bharti, Shantiniketan, presented his paper on “Dara Shikoh and Inter-Religious Understanding” and Dr. Md. Habib, associate professor, dept. of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala

spoke on “The Social Implications of the Qur’anic Approach to Interfaith Understanding”. Nanak Singh Nishter, president, International Sikh Centre for Inter-faith, Hyderabad, discussed “Sikhism and other Religions.”

Business Session-VII

The seventh session was devoted to “Need for Inter-religious Understanding”. This was chaired by Prof. Madhumita Chattopadhyay, Jadavpur university, Kolkata. Dr. Sibtosha Bandyopadhyay, professor of political science, Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya, Hooghly, presented a paper on “Deepening democracy are the most essential criterion for inter-religious understanding and promoting humanity”, Dr. Nripendra Kumar Srivastava, deptt. of history, Magadh

The ninth session was devoted to “International Fraternity”. Prof. Bela Bhattacharya, University of Kolkata presided over the session. The speakers in the session included: Phrawiwat Hongsen (Thailand), Ms. Truong Thi Ngoc Anh, Vietnamese scholar, presented a paper on “Importance of Inter-religious Understanding: Its implications for mankind”, Dr. Vishwajit Kumar NavNalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, presented a paper on “Dharm aur uska swaroop: Dhampad ke vishesh paripekshya mein”. Dr. RKP Singh, NavNalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda also spoke on this theme.

Valedictory Session

The valedictory session was addressed by the governor of Bihar and the chancellor of the university, Ram Nath Kovind as chief guest. In his address, the governor made special mention of the booklet titled “Messages of Peace”, brought out by the Magadh University. He said that the letter ‘I’ was especially important because it was common to



L-R: Fr. U. Lawrence, Dr. Rajiv Ranjan Sinha, Prof. Mohsin Usmani, Dr. Gangadhar, Dr. A.A.B. Ganeshwar Dr. U. Kundala, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani

University presented a paper on “Inter-religious Understanding in Practice: A study of Akbar’s policy of sulh-i-kul”. Prof. Ishteyaq Danish and Prof. ZM Khan also spoke on the theme.

The eighth session was devoted to “Global Harmony”. Prof. NK Shastree was in the chair with Dr. Pravat Kumar Dhal, Member, Global Harmony Association and head of the department of education, Magadh University, presenting his paper on the topic. Prof. Manoranjan K Singh, HoD, deptt. of mathematics, Magadh University also spoke on the theme.

all the six religions – Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity, mentioned in the booklet. He insisted that ‘I’ symbolised unity among all these religions which was so essential for national integration. One character of each of all religions together thus made “INDIAN”.

He cautioned people against religious radicalism which posed a danger to the unity of the country. Referring to the Right to Religious Freedom enshrined in the Indian Constitution, he said that Dr. BR Ambedkar wanted religion to work as

science did. Knowledge could best be acquired by following religion and propriety. Commenting on Articles 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Constitution, he explained that the state was secular and there would be no discrimination against anybody on the basis of caste and creed. Even parliament had been barred from imposing a particular religion on the people.

Quoting the noted Hindi poet, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, he said that Indian culture was not like grains collected by ants, but it was like honey collected by bees which benefited all. He noted that unity in diversity was the hallmark of India's strength. Whether they were Krishna, Jesus Christ or the Prophet (PBUH), all of them possessed divinity. He pointed out that the views expressed at the seminar were not new, as the saints of Hindu Nirguna stream and sufi saints had already spread the message of religious tolerance, affection and brotherhood. But, what was needed was to create understanding and establish dialogue between different sects, he said. He made a plea for dialogue not only between two religions, but also among all religions.

The vice-chancellor, Prof. Md. Ishtiaq, hoped that the views expressed in the seminar would go a long way in taking the message of peace, goodwill and brotherhood to every nook and corner of the country. He informed that a total of 50 research papers on nine different topics were presented by the scholars at the two-day national seminar.

IOS Chairman Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, while spelling out the purpose of the seminar, said that religious leaders, intellectuals and

scholars had gathered to think over religious intolerance and confrontation in society and find ways to put a stop to them. He asked them to form a strong chain, the links of which must be so strong as not to let the country weaken.

Prof. ZM Khan expressed satisfaction that the purpose of the seminar had been achieved. He read out the three-point resolution unanimously adopted by the delegation. The resolution read:

1. Keeping in view the successful handling of the subject and the display of organisational capabilities of involved organisations, it is felt that more efforts should be made to continue with this practice on mutually-



L-R: Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. M. Ishtiaq, H.E. Ramnath Kovind (Governor of Bihar) Mrs. Savita Kovind, Lt. Gen. R.K. Sharma, Prof. Z.M. Khan

- agreed terms by the parties.
2. The Institute of Objective Studies and the Magadh University may mutually agree to cooperate in granting funds to research/survey projects, scholarships and exchange of scholars on the basis of prescribed terms and conditions.
3. This conference emphatically proposes to keep women and youth studies in the priority areas of research design undertaken by both the parties. These bodies would cooperate in mutually agreed areas.

**International Conference on
The Legacy of Muhammad
Hamidullah and Its Contemporary
Relevance
On February 17-18, 2017 at New
Delhi**

Concept Note

Professor Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002), an outstanding and internationally renowned Islamic scholar, was born in a respected family of scholars, jurists and judges in the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad in India. He graduated from Jamia Nizamia, a reputed institution of Islamic education, in 1924. He then enrolled at Osmania University, Hyderabad and received the bachelor's and master's degrees in Islamic law. He proceeded to Germany for higher studies and was awarded a D. Phil by the University of Bonn in 1933. He received another doctorate from Sorbonne University, Paris in 1935. He returned to Hyderabad and was appointed a lecturer in the Department of Law at Osmania University. He taught at Osmania University from 1935 to 1948. The political uncertainty

and turmoil preceding the disintegration of the state of Hyderabad led him to leave his homeland and settle in Paris. He worked at Centre Nationale de la Recherches Scientifique in Paris from 1954 until his retirement in 1978.

For 26 years, from 1952 to 1978, Professor Hamidullah spent 3 months in a year in Turkey, where he was invited to teach Islamic law and other Islamic subjects at the universities of Istanbul, Erzurum and Ankara. In 1994 he fell seriously ill, following which Sadida, his elder brother's granddaughter, took him to the United States

where she was staying. He passed away in Jacksonville, Florida in 2002.

Professor Hamidullah was proficient in more than a dozen languages, including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Urdu, French, German, English, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Russian and Chinese. In a long scholarly career spanning over six decades, he wrote nearly 100 books in seven languages and more than 1,000 papers and articles. He translated the Quran into French (*Le Saint Coran*), which was first published in 1959 and which carried a foreword by the renowned French Orientalist Louis Massignon. Since its first publication, millions of copies of this translation have been printed and it remains the most popular and widely read French translation of the Quran in the world. Professor Hamidullah also published translations of parts of the Quran in German and English. His other publications include *Al-wathaiq al-siyasiyah lil ahd al-nabawi wal khilfah al-rashidah* (1983), *Sahifah Hamam ibn Munabbih* (1956), *Le Prophete de l'Islam* (in two volumes, 1979), *Muslim Conduct of State* (1979), *Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad* (1979), *Muhammad Rasulullah* (1979) and *Introduction to Islam* (1990). Professor Hamidullah discovered and edited about a dozen rare and invaluable Islamic manuscripts. He translated Imam Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaybani's monumental work *Siyar al-Kabir*, into French. The translation was published in four volumes from Ankara in 1989.

Three aspects of Professor Hamidullah's contributions are particularly note-worthy. First, He explicated and interpreted Islamic law in the context of time and space and in a comparative perspective and in terms of the contemporary legal discourse. He highlighted the rational basis of Islamic legal prescriptions, the universality of Islamic law and its inherent dynamism and its capacity to deal with unforeseen circumstances and situations. He pointed out that a

distinctive feature of Islamic law is that all social and political institutions must be governed by the Shariah and that the judiciary should function independent of the government. This principle allowed sufficient autonomy to Muslim legal scholars and jurists to pursue their scholarly interests and were thus able to advance the frontiers of Islamic jurisprudence without let or hindrance from the powers that be. Secondly, Professor Hamidullah convincingly showed that the foundations of international law were laid by Muslim scholars and jurists centuries before Hugo Grotius (1583-1965) wrote on the subject, and that Islamic international law exerted a deep and pervasive influence on the development of international law in the West. Thirdly, while he appreciated the contributions of European Orientalists to Islamic learning, he identified the flaws and shortcomings of their works and cogently and effectively countered their criticism of Islam and Islamic civilization. Professor Khurshid Ahmad has remarked that Professor Hamidullah was the first and last Orientalist among Muslims because his erudition and depth of learning, linguistic proficiency and analytical rigour not only matched those of European Orientalists but also surpassed them in many respects.

In Western legal history, the celebrated Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius is considered the founder of international law. Professor Hamidullah has pointed out that the foundations of international law were laid, eight centuries before Grotius, by Muslim legal scholars and jurists, notably by Imam Zayd ibn Ali (d. 120 AH), Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150 AH) and Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH). The earliest treatise on Islamic international law was Zayd ibn Ali's *Kitab al-Majmu'*, which unfortunately did not survive the vicissitudes of time. Abu Hanifah wrote *Kitab al-Siyar*, one of the earliest works on the subject, which too did not survive the ravages of time.

However, large parts of this treatise as well as Abu Hanifah's lecture notes on the subject were incorporated by his disciples. Fortunately, some of these works are extant. The most comprehensive work on Islamic international law is Al-Shaybani's *Al-Siyar al-Kabir*. The complete text of this monumental work is preserved in Al-Sarakhsi's voluminous commentary, *al-Mabsut*. Al-Shaybani also wrote a shorter treatise on Islamic international law, called *Al-Siyar al-Saghir*.

In his doctoral thesis *Die Neutralitat im Islamischen Volkerrecht*, which was submitted to the University of Bonn in 1933 and which was published from Bonn and Leipzig in 1935, Professor Hamidullah offered a cogent refutation of the claim that international law originated in Europe in the 16th century. He demonstrated, in this book and subsequently in *The Muslim Conduct of State* (1979), that international law was first conceived and enunciated by Muslim legal scholars and jurists in the 7th century CE.

Islamic international law recognised, for the first time in legal history, that all nations, regardless of the distinctions of class or creed, developed a body of rights and obligations. Islamic international law, which forms an integral part of Islamic jurisprudence, deals with wide-ranging issues, including rules and regulations related to war and peace, ethics of war, rights of prisoners of war and asylum seekers, political, diplomatic and commercial relations between Muslim and non-Muslim states, neutrality, conflict of laws, immunity, rebellion and civil war, treaties, territorial jurisdiction and the rights of non-Muslim subjects of Islamic state. The provisions of Islamic international law which deal with the ethics of war are particularly important. The Prophet instructed Muslim soldiers sent to fight the Byzantine army not to harm unarmed civilians and unresisting inhabitants and not to destroy the

means of their subsistence, including their palm trees and orchards.

Professor Hamidullah points out that the earliest writers on international law, such as Francisco de Vitoria (1480-1546), Baltasar de Ayala (1548-1584), Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), Alberico Gentili (1552-1608) and Pierre Bello, were Spanish and Italian and were the product of an intellectual and cultural milieu which was deeply influenced by Islamic civilization. Hugo Grotius' book *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* was written in Paris, where libraries were filled with books on Islamic sciences. Grotius acknowledged that he was deeply influenced by his Spanish predecessor De Vitoria, who was indebted to prominent Spanish writers on international law, notably King Alfonso X of Castile. King Alfonso's treatise *Las Siete Partidas*, written in 1263, clearly testifies to the influence of Islamic law. The fact that Grotius was quite familiar with Islamic law is attested by his amazement and appreciative reference to the issue of postliminium in Islamic law.

The Austrian Orientalist Joseph Hammer von Purgstall (1774-1856) was greatly impressed by Al-Shaybani's *Al-Siyar al-Kabir* and described its author as the Hugo Grotius of the Islamic world. A German legal scholar Hans Kruse said that when we compare the views of al-Shaybani and Hugo Grotius, it becomes evident that even after eight centuries European law did not attain the lofty heights of humanism, which is a distinctive feature of Islamic law. Kruse, who held al-Shaybani in great esteem, founded the Shaybani Society of International Law in 1955. Christopher Weeramantry, a former judge and vice-president of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, describes al-Shaybani as the author of the most detailed early treatise on international law. He adds that al-Shaybani was the precursor for the development of modern international law and that Hugo

Grotius' work on international law was in all probability influenced by earlier Islamic legal scholars, particularly al-Shaybani.

A significant component of international law deals with the status and treatment of refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), in collaboration with Naif Arab University and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, sponsored a comparative study of Islamic influences on international refugee law in 2009. The study noted that the Islamic tradition of providing protection and generosity towards people fleeing persecution has had a far greater influence on international refugee law than any other historical source. The study, *The Right to Asylum Between Islamic Shari'ah and International Refugee Law: A Comparative Study*, shows that Islamic law and tradition respect refugees and asylum seekers, including non-Muslims, forbid forcing them to change their beliefs, seek to reunite them with their families and guarantees the protection of their lives and property.

In *The Muslim Conduct of State*, a work of monumental scholarship, Professor Hamidullah set out, in a systematic, well-documented and cogent style, the structure and contours of the Islamic state, as gleaned from the principles laid down in the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah, the city-state founded by the Prophet in Madinah and the precepts of the Four Caliphs and the Prophet's companions, and in the light of the legal principles enunciated in the classical works of Islamic jurisprudence. The discussion on the protection of the legal, political, social and cultural rights of the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state, as mandated by Islamic law, is of particular importance and has a great contemporary relevance. The Islamic state, as portrayed by Professor Hamidullah, appears as a humane political institution founded on the

fundamental Islamic principles of freedom of belief and conscience, equality and social justice, security of life, honour and property, the rule of law, kindness and compassion, and protection of human rights, including minority rights. This provides a much-needed corrective to the distortion and misrepresentation that has surrounded the idea of an Islamic state in present times, which are fuelled and reinforced by the barbaric actions of some extremist and misguided Muslim groups, which are reminiscent of the ideology of the heterodox group of *khawarij* in the early history of Islam.

Professor Hamidullah led an exceptionally simple and frugal life. His life and scholarly work exemplify the selflessness and dedication of scholars, jurists and savants in the early centuries of the Islamic era. He was extremely humble and self-effacing, courteous, kind and generous. Though he led a life of celibacy, he was easily approachable and accessible to scholars, researchers and young students. Deeply impressed and inspired by his exemplary life and character and his scholarship, thousands of French men and women embraced Islam, many of them at his hands.

In Turkey, Professor Hamidullah's lectures were highly popular and were attended not only by a large number of students but also teachers and members of the intelligentsia. His lectures, his books (which were available in Turkish translation), his exceptional erudition and proficiency in over a dozen languages and his exemplary life and personality played a significant role in the revival of Islamic consciousness and identity, which was suppressed by the secularist Kemalist ruling class. The resurgence of Islamic consciousness ultimately led to the collapse of the Kemalist regime and the emergence of the Justice and Development Party as a dominant political force in the country.

Professor Hamidullah's monumental contributions and his life

have been a beacon of light and inspiration and a role model for three generations of Muslim scholars, researchers and students and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations. With a view to acknowledge the debt that the Muslim ummah owes to this great son of Islam and to highlight the relevance of his contributions in the context of present times, the Institute of Objective Studies proposes to hold an international conference on “**The Legacy of Muhammad Hamidullah and Its Contemporary Relevance**” on February 17-18, 2017 at New Delhi.

The deliberations at the seminar will focus on the following themes:

- (i) Professor Hamidullah’s French translation of the Quran and its significance in the context of the spread of Islam in France in particular and in Europe and among French-speaking people in different countries in general
- (ii) His contribution to the Prophet’s biography in French, English and Urdu
- (iii) His contribution to Islamic law in general and to Islamic international law and its influence on Western legal history in particular in the context of the contemporary legal discourse
- (iv) His explication of the structure of the Islamic state and the protection of human rights, including minority rights, in *Pax Islamica*
- (v) His considered and balanced views on Orientalism and his critique of Orientalist writings, and their relevance in the contemporary context
- (vi) His contribution to Islamic Economics in the context of contemporary researches and current trends in the subject
- (vii) His unique approach to da’wah and inter-faith dialogue and its contemporary relevance

Tentative Outline of Programme

Inaugural Session
 Session I: Impressions/Tributes
 Session II: Prof Hamidullah at Jamia Nizamia and Jamia Osmania
 Session III: Prof Hamidullah and Islamic Manuscripts
 Session IV: Prof Hamidullah and the Prophet’s Sirah
 Session V: Prof Hamidullah and Islamic Law
 Session VI: Prof Hamidullah and Translations of the Quran
 Session VII: Prof Hamidullah and Orientalism
 Session VIII: Human Rights in Islam and Prof Hamidullah’s Contribution
 Session IX: Prof Hamidullah on *D’awah* and Inter-faith Dialogue
 Session X: Prof Hamidullah and Islamic Resurgence in Turkey
 Session XI: Prof Hamidullah’s Contribution to Islamic Economics
 Valedictory Session

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Now let us know the story of Muslims’ interaction with European modernity. First we take the example of the Ottomans, the largest Muslim Empire at the time of Industrial Revolution in Europe. Well up to the 17th century the Ottomans had dominated Europe militarily. They suffered their first defeat during the second siege of Vienna in late 17th century.

This marks the beginning of the long decline of the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately we do not see any serious effort, neither on the part of rulers nor on the part of *Ulama* or intellectuals, to find out the real reason behind the rising European supremacy. Throughout the 18th century, the Europeans particularly the French and the British made organized efforts to monopolize the international trade which hitherto was dominated by the Muslims through traditional old-fashioned shipping. The European monopolization of international trade through the sea routes was a clear sign of threat which the Ottomans failed to

realize and therefore could not counter it. Even the Mughals of India failed to see this threat and as a result never thought of developing a navy.

The domination of international trade between Asia-Africa and Europe gave the British and the French enormous wealth which they used to modernize their army, especially the navy. The Ottomans awoke to the danger in late 18th century when Napoleon occupied Egypt. But sadly they could think of modernizing their army only which failed to arrest their decline. Because Europe’s military supremacy was not because of the dress their army wore nor only because of the weapons they used. It was rather in their intellectual superiority, especially in the field of science and technology which was a result of centuries old efforts. The Ottomans unwisely thought that if they imported European modernity, the Ottoman Empire will become modernized and developed. They introduced *Tanzimat*, a set of rules and regulations, blindly borrowed from Europe, to modernize their state and its various institutions including educational institutions, judiciary and the legal system. At a later stage Mustafa Kamal pursued Westernization more vigorously. But like the exponents of *Tanzimat*, his understanding of both, the West and Islam was superficial.

Muhammad Ali (1805-1849) who ruled Egypt in the first half of the 19th century, like the Ottomans, sought to modernize Egypt by importing Westernization in the country. However, he not only sought to modernize the Egyptian state particularly the army but also its various institutions. He was especially interested in modernization the educational system. But for him, too, modernization meant importing the West’s educational systems. Ideas like the Islamic world view, Islamic epistemology or the Islamic concept of knowledge never crossed his mind. His efforts, therefore, resulted not in Islamic revival but only in partial

Westernization of Egypt, especially of its elite.

Modernity reached India in different way. The British occupied Bengal in 1757 and immediately set out to impose their legal system on the occupied province. By the end of 18th century they controlled bulk of India and the Mughal Emperor was compelled to live on a meagre amount of money that the company paid to him. Even in Delhi the power rested more with the British Resident than with the Mughal Court. The defunct Mughal Empire ended in 1857 and the British became master of the entire country.

Of all the changes that the British introduced in India, two i.e legal and educational reform brought India very close to Western modernity. The Muslims had fought bitterly against the British occupation of the country and lost the war and, therefore, they hated the British. The *Ulama*, too, had participated in the 1857 Rebellion on a massive scale and as a result many were hanged, while others were tried and jailed. They also could not reconcile with the loss of power and hated everything British. They refused even to learn and teach English language in the *Madaris* they set up after 1857. As can be imagined no worthwhile effort was made by the *Ulama* to fully understand the West, especially the modernity that the British schools, colleges and universities were spreading in the country. The *Ulama's* rejection of modernity was more an expression of anger than being based on a scholarly study of the subject.

Interestingly the Christian missionaries and some missionary-minded British officers attacked Islam as being incompatible with modernity. Christianity was on the back foot in Europe including England because a good number of scholars were questioning its relevance in the modern time. The Christians theologians had no answer to such criticism of their

religion in Europe and yet here in India they were attacking Islam as being backward and out of time with modernity.

The *Ulama* were largely unaware of Christianity's plight in Europe. Similarly they mistook all Britishers as being true Christians while probably a vast majority was Christian just in name. The *Ulama*, therefore, remained aloof from them and perhaps never sought to understand modernity from them.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan alone responded to modern education in a positive way. Sir Syed deserves to be called an *Alim* because he was not a graduate from some Western university or British institution. He had received only traditional education as did the *Ulama* of his time. He championed modern education, not because he had studied and understood modernity very well; he rather did it realizing the fact without modern education the Muslim decline will continue unhindered. It was mainly his concern for Muslims' progress, which he believed could be secured by obtaining Government employments that prompted him to establish the Anglo-Oriental Mohammadan College at Aligarh which became a university in 1920.

Being a Government servant Sir Syed came in contact with many British officers. He had saved the lives of many Britishers during the Rebellion of 1857 which the British appreciated immensely. This further brought him in close contact with the British officers. He also interacted with the British missionaries and thus fully knew the fact that they considered Islam as backward. He took it upon himself to prove that Islam was quite compatible with modern science and in so doing he interpreted some vital aspects of the faith in a way that the *Ulama* and the people did not like or approve of.

It appears as neither modernity nor his own theological ideas were very dear

to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. His sole commitment was to work for Muslim welfare and progress. He, therefore, reading agreed to the Muslim demand that his own books will not be taught in the college he had set up for them. He also introduced a course on Islamic theology in the MAO College in order to assure the suspecting Muslims that his championship of modern education was not against Islam. However, it must be accepted that Sir Syed stood for modern education because he felt it was necessary for Muslim survival and progress in India.

Allama Shibli Nomani, a colleague-disciple of Syed Ahmad Khan, was probably the first '*Alim*' who had seen both modernism and traditionalism very closely. He sought to reconcile between the two but failed because both the *Ulama* and the modern educated were not ready for a compromise.

The debate over the question of compatibility of Islam with modernity continued to agitate the Muslim mind even after Sir Syed and Shibli. There was slightly bitter written dialogue between Maududi and Fazalurrahman. Fazalurrahman a supporter of modernity through and through whereas Maududi advocated an alternative Islamic concept and system of education.

Today we cannot be sure if the question or problem that confronted Sir Syed and Shibli or Fazalurrahman and Maududi has been answered/solved. There are both *Madaris* as well as Muslim-managed colleges and universities. Sometime there appears tension between the two but examples of cooperation are not rare to find. It must be considered as a healthy development and should encourage us to address a fresh the question of compatibility between Islam and modernity.

In the context of education modernity stands for ever expanding science and technology, ever-growing human ideas in all fields, humanities and social

sciences. The ultra modernists still believe that knowledge is secular and cannot be coloured with any religion or culture. But there are also the ones who have shunned rigidity and believe that modernity and secularism are not synonyms. This gives us hope and scope to discuss and develop an Islamic concept of knowledge, which is Islamic and Islamic alone, well above the narrow and polarized debate over modernity and traditionalism.

From *The Muslim Reality in India* edited by Ishtiyaque Danish, pp. 377-383.

IOS remembers Dr. A.R. Kidwai



The Institute of Objective Studies held a condolence meeting at its conference hall on September 3, 2016 to mourn the death of the former governor of Bihar, West Bengal and Haryana and the ex-chairman of the Union Public Service Commission, and a recipient of the prestigious civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, Dr. Akhlaqur Rehman Kidwai. Paying glowing tributes to the memory of Dr. Kidwai, the Chairman of IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam recalled his valuable services to society and state. He said that Dr. Kidwai was a strategist and a planner who proved that devotion to duty was key to success. He announced that IOS would discharge its moral duty to bring to light the multi-faceted personality of Dr. Kidwai. He urged Dr Kidwai's close family members to do their bit by establishing a foundation in his name to perpetuate his memory. He insisted that since Dr. Kidwai had an

unbounded interest in science, a scholarship in science could be instituted in his name. He also suggested that a book on his life and works should be brought out for the younger generation to take inspiration from him.

Dr. A.R. Kidwai's son, Monis Kidwai remarked that he always saw his father working since his childhood. He said that Dr. Kidwai's decision to prepare the UPSC for conducting the Civil Services examinations in all the 14 languages recognised by the Indian Constitution along with English was a challenging task which he successfully performed. It was another feather in his cap which he achieved by dint of sheer labour and firm conviction.

Dr. Kidwai's sister Najma Rizvi said that he always underlined the importance of education. He wanted every child including the Muslim child, to receive education as it was the spring-board for success in life. She remembered that Dr. Kidwai used to say that positive thinking was essential for achieving a goal.

Paying homage to Dr. Kidwai, scientist Khalid Ahmad said, "we must set a goal for ourselves and pursue it with all the resources at our command. This would be a true homage to Dr. Kidwai."

Dr. Abshar Ahmad, Irfan Kidwai, Rafi Ahsan Rizvi, Dr. Syed Md. Abbas, Azmat Husain Khan and Mirza Shamsi Beg also expressed their views on the occasion. Earlier, Maulana Abdullah Tariq recited from the Quranic verse, Al-Baqarah with its Urdu translation. The proceedings were conducted by Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadwi. A good number of Dr. Kidwai's admirers, university teachers, research scholars, prominent citizens, including Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish of Hamdard University, Prof. Hasina Hashiya and Dr. Eqbal Husain of Jamia Millia Islamia, Dr. Tariq Ashraf, Prof. M. Irfan Alam, Taufiqur Rahman Kidwai, Aqueel Khan, Saba Kidwai,

Amina Kidwai, Dr. Taazim Kidwai, Rehana Kidwai, Dr. Zeenat Kidwai, Syed Tahir Ali, Syed Shadab Ahmed, Iqbal Husain, Safi Akhtar, Khalid Husain Nadwi and Waseem Ahmad attended the condolence meeting.

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The greatest failure of today's Ulema is that they have studied only the religion and not the world they live and operate in. As a result they are not able to provide all-round guidance in every walk of life. Thus the Ulema's failure, as can be imagined, has contributed greatly to the overall decline of the Ummah, especially in the field of education. And it has been further aggravated by general Muslim apathy towards knowledge.

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OPINION

**Intellectual Decline in the Muslim World
by Ishtiyaque Danish**

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

There can't be two opinions about the all round Muslim decline. Muslims number over 1.5 billion in the world today. They sit over large reservoirs of mineral resources. They also occupy strategic locations in the world and constitute significant minorities in countries which matter most in the world today. Yet despite all these they hardly carry any weight in the comity of nations. They stand marginalized everywhere, their lands have been invaded and occupied and in many parts of the world they are subjected to various kinds and levels of persecution.

What are the reasons for the Ummah's sorry state of affairs? This question troubles a lot many Muslim minds everywhere. A good number of non-Muslim scholars have also written on the subject. Several reasons, political, military, economic, even religio-cultural, are ascribed to the Muslim decline. It is difficult to pinpoint which one reason is more responsible than others for the all pervasive Muslim decline.

But all agree on one thing. That the main reason for the Muslim decline is the failure of their Ulama and intellectuals. In other words the decline of Muslims in the field of knowledge is mainly responsible for their all-round decline and

marginalization. Obviously this is not the only reason but here we shall focus on this intellectual decline of the Ummah in detail.

The emphasis the Holy Quran has put on knowledge is well-known. Those who study the Holy Quran also know the emphasis it has put on Tadabbur, to think. And this thinking has to be not only about religious matters but also about worldly subjects. In fact the Muslim thinking must be all embracing. Only such a thinking would enable us to identify the real reasons of our decline.

While studying the Quranic emphasis on Knowledge, and the subsequent Muslim efforts for learning, their intellectual activities and pursuit of sciences, we clearly notice that being keen followers of the Quran, the early Muslims embarked on wide ranging pursuit of knowledge. That it was their attachment with the Quran that initiated the then glorious movement of Knowledge. Today, too, it is their relationship with the Quran which can singularly be responsible for intellectual and academic renaissance in the Muslim world.

There are both internal as well as external reasons for the intellectual decline of the Ummah. We generally blame the Mongol invasion and later

on the colonial onslaught for our intellectual decline. But these two are external reasons. Here we would like to focus on internal causes of our intellectual decline. And these internal reasons/causes are: the failure of the intellectuals/ulama, failure of the ruling class and general apathy of common Muslims towards knowledge.

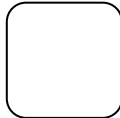
It is obvious that Muslim intellectuals/ulama have not played the desired leadership role. Here by the term Ulama we do not mean the degree holders of Madaris. An Alim is one who knows Islam as well as the world we are living and operating in. This Alim has to be gifted with the courage of conviction, fearlessness/ boldness and commitment to truth. He is God-fearing as well as conscience-keeper of the community. He is neither worldly nor otherworldly but he is the one who combines the two or maintains a balance between the two. In our time such Ulema may be called the Islamic intellectuals. In sum they ought to be the scholars whom our Prophet has described as heirs to the legacy of the Prophets.

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